

Road Traffic Act

(This article should be retained for future reference)

FOLLOWING a flood of enquiries regarding the law which governs farm tractors and trailers on public roads the following is a reprint of the provisions of the Road Traffic Act.

The following notes summarise the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1976, with regard to the issue and use of Tractor Drivers Permits.

Application forms (reference No. RTLD 1) can be obtained from any Registering Officer, or District Administrator, as well as from the Commercial Farmers' Union. The farmer, miner or his manager may authorise on the application forms, the issue of a tractor drivers permit to a person who is employed by him to drive a tractor owned by the farmer or miner.

A self employed farmer can apply to the District Administrator of the area concerned for issue of such an authority.

The same form can be used for the issue of a duplicate tractor drivers permit to replace the original provided the person authorising the issue is satisfied that the original permit has been either destroyed, lost or defaced. Certain conditions are laid down concerning the persons authorising the issue of tractor drivers permits. These are as follows:

- a. A permit **MUST NOT** be issued to any person who:
 - i. Is under 16 years of age
 - ii. holds a Zimbabwe drivers licence in the class to which tractors belong
 - iii. at the time is prohibited by the Court from driving tractors.
- b. The issuer himself must hold a valid Zimbabwe drivers licence in the class to which tractors belong. If he holds a licence in class two or class four he is deemed to hold a licence in class five.
- c. The issuer must be satisfied that the person to whom the permit is to be issued knows all the rules of the road, road signals and road signs and that he is competent to drive and control such a vehicle. He must also be satisfied that the driver does not suffer from any disease or disability that may affect his ability to perform such duties.

On authorising the issue, the duplicate form must be handed to the tractor driver immediately. The original document, together with the prescribed fee of \$2, must be forwarded immediately by the issuer to the Registrar of Road Traffic Licences, P O Box CY 760. Cheques should be made payable to "Exchequer Account".

The duplicate RTLD 1 form will be treated as a tractor drivers permit for a period of up to 30 days or until the actual tractor drivers permit (RTLD 2) is processed and returned by the Registrar. (The fee of \$2 must be submitted irrespective of whether the application is for an original or duplicate tractor driven permit).

The tractor driver also has certain obligations and these are

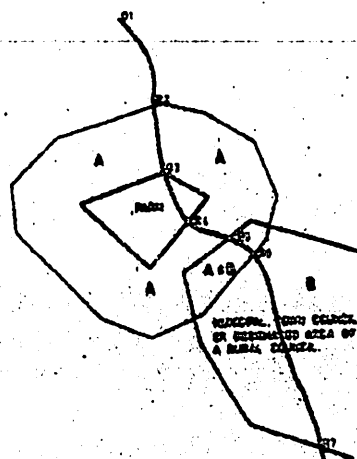
as follows:

- a. If he is under 18 years of age he may only drive tractors having a net mass of up to 2 300 kg.
- b. He must at all times carry the permit on him when driving a tractor.
- c. He may only drive the tractor on the farm or registered mining location specified on the permit as well as within a 10 km wide belt outside the boundaries of the farm or location provided this is not within the urban area of a local authority.
- d. He must surrender the tractor drivers permit to whoever authorised it if:
 - i. he ceases to be employed on the establishment in respect of which the permit was issued; or
 - ii. he becomes the holder of a drivers licence of a class of vehicle to which tractors belong; or
 - iii. he is required to do so.

The permit must be returned immediately to the Registrar for cancellation, together with particulars of the reasons for such surrender.

It must be noted that the tractor drivers permit will immediately become invalid once the holder is issued with a Zimbabwe drivers licence in a class which includes tractors.

Illustration depicting the limited use of unregistered and unlicensed farm transport and the tractor drivers permit



NOTES

1. 'A' marks the area 10 km from farm boundary.
2. 'B' marks the area of municipality, town council or designated area of a rural council.
3. 'R1-R7' marks a road.

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THE TRACTOR/TRAILER (ONLY IF OWNED BY THE FARMER)

1. May be used unregistered and unlicensed anywhere on the farm and in the adjacent area 'A', and in the area 'A & B'. If the road from R2-R3-R4-R5-R6 is used for even crossed, minimum act insurance cover is required.
2. May be used outside the 10 km boundary only if properly registered and licensed and therefore insured.

THE TRACTOR DRIVER

1. May operate with a tractor drivers permit for farming purposes only within the area of the farm and the adjacent area marked 'A'.
2. May operate in area 'B' and the area 'A & B' ONLY if he holds a national drivers licence to drive tractors (class 5).
3. May NOT drive any motor vehicle other than an agricultural tractor under authority of a 'tractor drivers permit'.
4. Legal matters concerning the issue and control of tractor drivers permits are dealt with under section 8 of the Road Traffic Act, 1976.

TRACTORS, TRAILERS AND THE LAW

Among the numerous traffic laws which regulate the use of vehicles on roads there are some which have a very wide application to all kinds of vehicular traffic and others which are more directly concerned with traffic of a specific nature. Legislation concerning the use of the agricultural tractor often falls into this latter category and, due to its specific application, it is not generally well known.

Legislation affecting the use of tractors and tractor/trailer combinations on roads is discussed under the following headings and, where appropriate, this information has been supplemented by diagrammatic illustration.

BRAKES

a. Tractors

Brakes must be capable of bringing the vehicle to rest from a speed of 25 km/hour within a distance of 12 m, whether drawing a trailer or not

b. Trailers

- i. With the exception of light trailers (ie, a trailer with a load capacity of up to 350 kg) having no more than two wheels and construction trailers, all trailers are required to be equipped with an efficient independent braking system.
- ii. Where the brakes of a trailer having four or more wheels cannot be operated from the drawing vehicle, a person responsible for operating the brakes must be carried on the trailer when it is in motion. This requirement does not apply to construction trailers or light trailers.
- iii. A trailer having a gross mass of not more than

2 000 kg which is fitted with an overrun brake is treated as having its braking system operated from the drawing vehicle.

In these circumstances a special brake operator is not required.

LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS

Tractors are no different from other vehicles in this respect. General requirements are:

a. Headlamps:

The vehicle must be equipped with at least one headlamp and may be fitted with a maximum of four. The headlamp must be capable of illuminating the road directly ahead of the vehicle for a minimum distance of fifty metres and must be equipped with a dip-switch with which the driver can adjust the headlight beam. A tractor which has only one headlamp must also be fitted with sidelights

b. Tail lamps: tractors and trailers

A tractor must be equipped with at least one red tail lamp or, if the vehicle width exceeds 2.75m minimum of two tail lamps must be fitted. When used in combination with a trailer or trailers the last vehicle in tow is required to display the appropriate number of tail lamps. In the case of a registered tractor/trailer the rear registration plate must be illuminated by white light from a concealed source, this being the only rear white light permissible.

REFLECTORS

The various types of reflectors prescribed for tractors, trailers and combinations of these vehicles are illustrated in Appendix 'A' and briefly described as follows:

a. Front reflectors:

i. Tractors:

All tractors are required to display white reflectors to the front which when illuminated by headlamps, are visible from a distance of at least fifty metres.

ii. Trailers:

Trailers must display a white reflective letter 'T' on the extreme front offside of the vehicle. Construction trailers are excluded from this requirement.

b. Rear reflectors:

i. Tractors:

A heavy tractor, ie, with a net mass of more than 2 300 kg, must display to the rear, a warning sign in the chevron pattern consisting of red reflective and yellow non-reflective materials. The warning sign need not be displayed on the tractor if a trailer is in tow, the trailer itself is required to display certain reflective warning signs which are considered sufficient. Any tractor with a net mass of less than 2 300 kg need only display two red reflectors to the rear.

ii. Trailers

Two red rear reflectors must be displayed by the following classes of trailers: (→ p. 43)

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- Light trailers (ie, trailers with a factory rated load capacity not exceeding 550 kg);
- trailers owned by farmers and miners and used exclusively for farming or mining purposes, and
- trailers not constructed to carry goods.

Construction trailers and trailers which are constructed to carry goods, provided they do not fall into the categories a or b above, are required to display the chevron warning sign of red reflective and yellow non-reflective material. With the exception of construction trailers every trailer is required to display a red reflective letter "T" to the rear on the extreme offside.

c. Reflectors: sides of vehicles

A motor vehicle which alone or in combination with other vehicles exceeds an overall length of 8 m is required to display amber reflectors placed within 400 mm of each end of the body of each vehicle and thereafter at intervals of not more than 4m.

d. Special visual warning device: tractors and trailers

A device in the form of a red reflective triangle is required to be carried on every tractor which has a net mass greater than 2 300 kg. It is also necessary for a warning device to be carried in respect of each trailer drawn by this class of tractor.

This device serves to warn approaching traffic of the presence of a stationary vehicle on or near a road and is required to be placed behind the vehicle at a distance of between 30 and 50 m, in such a position as to face traffic approaching from the rear. While being carried on a vehicle it should be in a protective container.

SAFETY CHAINS: TRACTOR/TRAILER COMBINATIONS

Trailers in tow are required to be coupled to the drawing vehicle and to each other by means of a safety chain or cable, fitted so as to prevent a drawbar which has become uncoupled from falling to the ground. It should be noted that a maximum number of three trailers only may be towed by any motor vehicle. No tractor or trailer may exceed 12,5 metres in length and no combination of tractor and trailers may exceed 22 metres.

VIEW TO THE REAR: TRACTOR/TRAILER COMBINATION

The law requires that if, for any reason, the driver of a motor

vehicle (tractor) drawing a trailer is unable to have a clear view of vehicles behind him, a person must be carried on the trailer in such a position as to be clearly visible to the driver.

It is then the duty of the person carried on the trailer to assist the driver by receiving and communicating signals which would normally pass between the driver and other motor traffic travelling in the rear.

FARM TRANSPORT: REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND INSURANCE

a. Vehicle registration and licensing:

Subject to the insurance requirements set out under item b, a farmer may use any unregistered and/or unlicensed vehicle which belongs to him on any road within the boundary of his farm. In the case of a tractor and trailer the law offers a further concession in allowing, as a general rule, an unregistered and/or unlicensed tractor to operate outside the farm area up to a distance of 10 kilometres from the farm boundary. Where the declared area of 10km from the farm boundary extends into an urban area (ie, municipality, town council) the use of the tractor within that urban area will depend on the licensing position of the driver. The holder of a tractor permit or any other person who does not have a national drivers licence in a class which includes tractors is not permitted to drive anywhere within these urban areas.

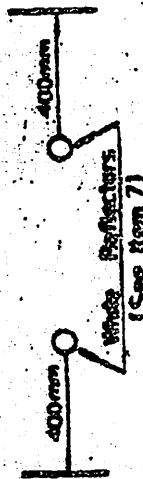
b. Insurance

Any motor vehicles and any trailer used on any road must be covered by insurance. The display of a licence disc is prima facie evidence of insurance but any motor vehicle which is not licensed, must, when used on any road, display an insurance disc (see section 27 of the Road Traffic Act 1976). Note that the mere crossing of a road constitutes use of road.

In conclusion, let it be clearly understood that, apart from the specific requirements listed, it is incumbent upon the owner of every vehicle which is used on a road to ensure that the vehicle is kept in a safe, roadworthy condition.

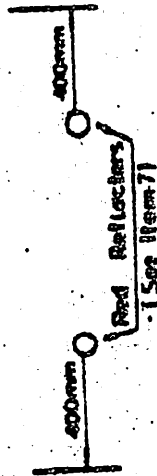
(→ p. 45)

TRACTORS FRONT ELEVATION



TRACTORS REAR ELEVATION

(a) LIGHT TRACTORS



(b) HEAVY TRACTORS

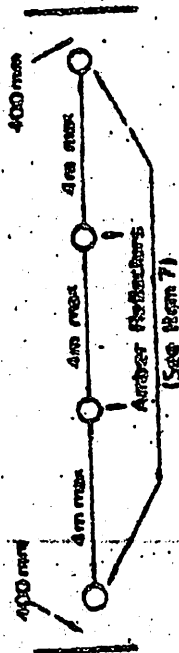


Red/Yellow Chevron

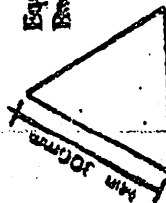
Red-Reflective
Yellow-Non-Reflective
(See Item 7)

REFLECTORS: TRACTORS/TRAILERS

**LONG VEHICLES OR COMBINATIONS OF VEHICLES
OVERALL LENGTH EXCEEDING 8m
SIDE ELEVATION**



VISUAL WARNING DEVICE



Equilateral Triangle - Red reflective
Back to be coloured black

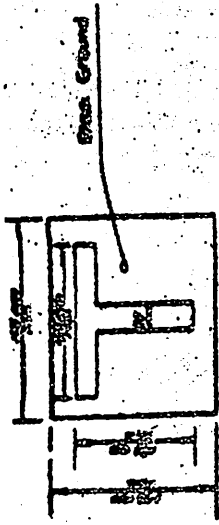
NOTES ON ITEMS 1.2 (a) 3 & 5 (a)

Reflectors may be circular, rectangular or triangular
Minimum area equal to that of a circle of 60 mm
diameter

PRESCRIPTION FOR CHEVRON SIGN

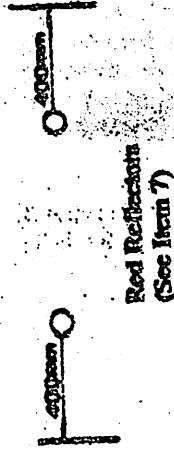
Height min 200mm max 500mm
Width red strip min 50mm max 75mm
Width yellow strip min 100mm max 125mm

TRAILERS FRONT ELEVATION

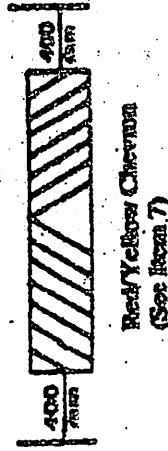


White reflective 'T' fixed to extreme offside

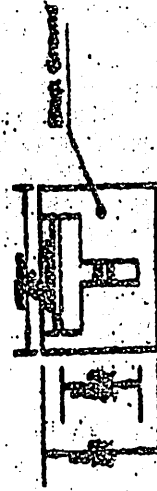
**TRAILERS REAR ELEVATION
(a) LIGHT TRAILERS**



(b) OTHER TRAILERS



(c) ALL TRAILERS (Except Construction)



Red reflective 'T' fixed to extreme offside