

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2001 SESSION

CHAPTER 151

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 46.2-1105, 46.2-1112, 46.2-1113, and 46.2-1139 of the Code of Virginia, relating to lengths and widths of travel trailers and motor homes.

[H 2088]

Approved March 13, 2001

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 46.2-1105, 46.2-1112, 46.2-1113, and 46.2-1139 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 46.2-1105. Width of vehicles generally; exceptions.

A. No vehicle, including any load thereon, but excluding the mirror required by § 46.2-1082 and any warning device installed on a school bus pursuant to § 46.2-1090, shall exceed a total outside width as follows:

1. Passenger bus operated in an incorporated city or town when authorized under § 46.2-1300 - 102 inches;

2. School buses - 100 inches;

3. Vehicles hauling boats or other watercraft - 102 inches;

4. Other vehicles - 102 inches.

B. *Notwithstanding subsection A of this section, a travel trailer as defined in § 46.2-1900 or a motor home may exceed 102 inches if such excess width is attributable to an appurtenance that extends no more than six inches beyond the body of the vehicle. For the purposes of this subsection, "appurtenance" includes (i) an awning and its support hardware and (ii) any appendage that is installed by the manufacturer or dealer intended to be an integral part of a motor home or travel trailer, but does not include any item that is temporarily attached to the exterior of the vehicle by the vehicle's owner for the purposes of transporting the item from one location to another.*

§ 46.2-1112. Length of vehicles, generally; special permits; tractor truck semitrailer combinations, etc., operating on certain highways.

Except for buses *and motor homes*, no motor vehicle longer than forty feet shall be operated on any highway in the Commonwealth. The actual length of any combination of vehicles coupled together including any load thereon shall not exceed a total of sixty-five feet. No bus *or motor home* longer than forty-five feet shall be operated on any highway in the Commonwealth. No tolerance shall be allowed that exceeds twelve inches.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board, however, when good cause is shown, may issue a special permit for combinations either in excess of sixty-five feet, including any load thereon, or where the object or objects to be carried cannot be moved otherwise. Such permits may also be issued by the Board when the total number of otherwise overdimensional loads of modular housing of no more than two units may be reduced by permitting the use of an overlength trailer not exceeding fifty-four feet.

No overall length restrictions, however, shall be imposed on any tractor truck semitrailer combinations drawing one trailer or any tractor truck semitrailer combinations when operated on any interstate highway or on any highway as designated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. No such designation shall be made, however, until notice of any proposed designation has been provided by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner to the governing body of every locality wherein any highway affected by the proposed designation is located.

No individual semitrailer or trailer being drawn in a tractor truck semitrailer trailer combination, however, shall exceed twenty-eight and one-half feet in length, and no semitrailer being operated in a tractor truck semitrailer combination shall exceed forty-eight feet in length, except when semitrailers have a distance of not more than forty-one feet between the kingpin of the semitrailer and the rearmost axle or a point midway between the rear tandem axles, such semitrailer shall be allowed not more than fifty-three feet in length.

The length limitations on semitrailers and trailers in the foregoing provisions of this section shall be exclusive of safety and energy conservation devices, steps and handholds for entry and egress, rubber dock guards, flexible fender extensions, mudflaps, refrigeration units, and air compressors. The Commonwealth Transportation Board shall designate reasonable access to terminals, facilities for food, fuel, repairs and rest. Household goods carriers and any tractor truck semitrailer combination in which the semitrailer has a length of no more than twenty-eight and one-half feet shall not be denied reasonable access to points of loading and unloading, except as designated, based on safety considerations, by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

§ 46.2-1113. Length exceptions for certain passenger buses and motor homes.

Passenger buses *and motor homes* longer than thirty-five feet, but not longer than forty-five feet, may

be operated on the streets of cities and towns when authorized pursuant to § 46.2-1300. Passenger buses *and motor homes* may exceed the forty-five-foot limitation when such excess length is caused by the projection of a front or rear safety bumper or both. Such safety bumper shall not cause the length of the bus to exceed the maximum legal limit by more than one foot in the front and one foot in the rear. "Safety bumper" means any device which may be fitted on an existing bumper or which replaces the bumper and is so constructed, treated, or manufactured to absorb energy upon impact.

§ 46.2-1139. Permits for excessive size and weight generally; penalty.

A. The Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner and local authorities of cities and towns, in their respective jurisdictions, may, upon written application and good cause being shown, issue a permit authorizing the applicant to operate on a highway a vehicle of a size or weight exceeding the maximum specified in this title. Any such permit may designate the route to be traversed and contain any other restrictions or conditions deemed necessary by the body granting the permit.

B. Except for permits issued under § 46.2-1141 for overweight vehicles transporting containerized freight and permits issued for overweight vehicles transporting irreducible loads, no overweight permit issued by the Commissioner or any local authority under any provision of this article shall be valid for the operation of any vehicle on an interstate highway if the vehicle has:

1. A single axle weight in excess of 20,000 pounds; or
2. A tandem axle weight in excess of 34,000 pounds; or
3. A gross weight, based on axle spacing, greater than that permitted in § 46.2-1127; or
4. A gross weight, regardless of axle spacing, in excess of 80,000 pounds.

C. *The Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner may issue permits to operate or tow one or more travel trailers as defined in § 46.2-1900 or motor homes when any of such vehicles exceed the maximum width specified by law, provided the movement of the vehicle is prior to its retail sale and it complies with the provisions of § 46.2-1105. A copy of each such permit shall be carried in the vehicle for which it is issued.*

D. Every permit issued under this article for the operation of oversize or overweight vehicles shall be carried in the vehicle to which it refers and may be inspected by any officer. Violation of any term of any permit issued under this article shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor.

~~D.~~ E. Any permit issued by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner or local authorities of cities and towns pursuant to state law may be restricted so as to prevent travel on any federal-aid highway if the continuation of travel on such highway would result in a loss of federal-aid funds. Before any such permit is restricted by the Commissioner, or local authority, written notice shall be given to the permittee.

~~E.~~ F. When application is made for permits issued by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner as well as local authorities of one or more cities and towns, any fees imposed therefor by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner as well as all affected local authorities may be paid by the applicant, at the applicant's option, to the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner, who shall promptly transmit the local portion of the total fee to the appropriate locality or localities.