

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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SENATE DRS55602-MAz-402 (4/7)

Short Title: Vehicle Size and Weight Changes. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Jenkins, Tillman and Preston.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE PERSONS WHO HOLD A CLASS C LICENSE TO
2 OPERATE SPECIFIED VEHICLE AND BOAT TRAILER COMBINATIONS; TO
3 PROVIDE DIRECTION FOR THE OPERATION OF SEMITRAILERS OF NOT
4 MORE THAN FIFTY-THREE FEET ON PRIMARY ROADS IN THIS STATE;
5 TO INCREASE THE ALLOWABLE AXLE AND TOTAL WEIGHT OF
6 SELF-PROPELLED, SELF-LOADING BEDS FOR COTTON TRANSPORT
7 FROM FARM TO GIN, REGARDLESS OF AXLE WEIGHT; TO REMOVE THE
8 WIDTH RESTRICTION ON FARM EQUIPMENT THAT IS SELF-PROPELLED,
9 HAULED, OR PULLED ON A PUBLIC HIGHWAY, AND TO INCREASE THE
10 WIDTH OF BOATS THAT MAY BE TRANSPORTED ON THE PRIMARY
11 HIGHWAY ROUTES DURING THE DAY AND NIGHT WITH A PERMIT AND
12 TO INCREASE THE WIDTH OF BOATS AND TRAILERS THAT MAY BE
13 TRANSPORTED OR HAULED ON A PRIMARY HIGHWAY ROUTE WITH A
14 PERMIT DURING THE DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY, AS RECOMMENDED BY
15 THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE TRANSPORTATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.
16

17 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

18 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 20-7(a)(3) reads as rewritten:

19 "(3) Class C. – A Class C license authorizes the holder to drive any of the
20 following:

- 21 a. A Class C motor vehicle that is not a commercial motor vehicle.
- 22 b. When operated by a volunteer member of a fire department, a
23 rescue squad, or an emergency medical service (EMS) in the
24 performance of duty, a Class A or Class B fire-fighting, rescue,
25 or EMS motor vehicle or a combination of these vehicles.

- 1 c. A combination of motor vehicles that has a combined actual
2 weight of less than 26,001 pounds, and includes as part of the
3 combination a boat and boat trailer, or a boat trailer."

4 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 20-115.1(b) reads as rewritten:

5 "(b) Motor vehicle combinations consisting of a semitrailer of not more than 53
6 feet in length and a truck tractor may be operated on ~~the interstate highways (except~~
7 ~~those exempted by the United States Secretary of Transportation pursuant to 49 U.S.C.~~
8 ~~2311(i)) and federal aid primary system highways designated by the United States~~
9 ~~Secretary of Transportation~~ all primary highway routes of North Carolina provided that:

- 10 (1) Any semitrailer in excess of 48 feet in length shall not be permitted
11 unless:
12 a. The distance between the kingpin of the trailer and the rearmost
13 axle, or a point midway between the two rear axles, if the two
14 rear axles are a tandem axle, does not exceed 41 feet; or
15 b. The semitrailer is used exclusively or primarily to transport
16 vehicles in connection with motorsports competition events,
17 and the distance between the kingpin of the trailer and the
18 rearmost axle, or a point midway between the two rear axles, if
19 the two rear axles are a tandem axle, does not exceed 46 feet;
20 and
21 (2) Any semitrailer in excess of 48 feet is equipped with a rear underride
22 guard of substantial construction consisting of a continuous lateral
23 beam extending to within four inches of the lateral extremities of the
24 semitrailer and located not more than 30 inches from the surface as
25 measured with the vehicle empty and on a level surface."

26 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 20-116(e) reads as rewritten:

27 "(e) Except as provided by G.S. 20-115.1, no combination of vehicles coupled
28 together shall consist of more than two units and no such combination of vehicles shall
29 exceed a total length of 60 feet inclusive of front and rear bumpers, subject to the
30 following exceptions: Motor vehicle combinations of one semitrailer of not more than
31 ~~48-53~~ feet in length and a truck tractor (power unit) may exceed the 60-foot maximum
32 length. Said length limitation shall not apply to vehicles operated in the daytime when
33 transporting poles, pipe, machinery or other objects of a structural nature which cannot
34 readily be dismembered, nor to such vehicles transporting such objects operated at
35 nighttime by a public utility when required for emergency repair of public service
36 facilities or properties, but in respect to such night transportation every such vehicle and
37 the load thereon shall be equipped with a sufficient number of clearance lamps on both
38 sides and marker lamps upon the extreme ends of said projecting load to clearly mark
39 the dimensions of such load: Provided that vehicles designed and used exclusively for
40 the transportation of motor vehicles shall be permitted an overhang tolerance front or
41 rear not to exceed five feet. Provided, that wreckers may tow a truck, combination
42 tractor and trailer, trailer, or any other disabled vehicle or combination of vehicles to a
43 place for repair, parking, or storage within 50 miles of the point where the vehicle was
44 disabled and may tow a truck, tractor, or other replacement vehicle to the site of the

1 disabled vehicle. Provided, however, that a combination of a house trailer used as a
2 mobile home, together with its towing vehicle, shall not exceed a total length of 55 feet
3 exclusive of front and rear bumpers. Provided further, that the said limitation that no
4 combination of vehicles coupled together shall consist of more than two units shall not
5 apply to trailers not exceeding three in number drawn by a motor vehicle used by
6 municipalities for the removal of domestic and commercial refuse and street rubbish,
7 but such combination of vehicles shall not exceed a total length of 50 feet inclusive of
8 front and rear bumpers. Provided further, that the said limitation that no combination of
9 vehicles coupled together shall consist of more than two units shall not apply to a
10 combination of vehicles coupled together by a saddle mount device used to transport
11 motor vehicles in a driveway service when no more than three saddle mounts are used
12 and provided further, that equipment used in said combination is approved by the safety
13 regulations of the Federal Highway Administration and the safety rules of the
14 Department of Crime Control and Public Safety."

15 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 20-116(j) reads as rewritten:

16 "(j) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the operation of
17 ~~Self-propelled~~ self-propelled grain combines or other farm equipment self-propelled,
18 ~~pulled-pulled, hauled,~~ or otherwise, ~~not exceeding 18 feet in width may be operated on~~
19 any highway, except a highway or section of highway that is a part of the National
20 System of Interstate and Defense Highways. Farm equipment includes a vehicle that is
21 designed exclusively to transport compressed seed cotton from a farm to a gin and has a
22 self-loading bed. All such combines or equipment which exceed 10 feet in width may be
23 so operated only under the following conditions:

- 24 (1) Said equipment may only be so operated during daylight hours.
- 25 (2) Said equipment must display a red flag on front and rear, said flags
26 shall not be smaller than three feet wide and four feet long and be
27 attached to a stick, pole, staff, etc., not less than four feet long and
28 shall be so attached to said equipment as to be visible from both
29 directions at all times while being operated on the public highway for
30 not less than 300 feet.
- 31 (3) Equipment covered by this section, which by necessity must travel
32 more than 10 miles or where by nature of the terrain or obstacles the
33 flags referred to in subdivision (2) are not visible from both directions
34 for 300 feet at any point along the proposed route, must be preceded at
35 a distance of 300 feet and followed at a distance of 300 feet by a
36 flagman in a vehicle having mounted thereon an appropriate warning
37 light or flag. No flagman in a vehicle shall be required pursuant to this
38 subdivision if the equipment is being moved under its own power or
39 on a trailer from any field to another field, or from the normal place of
40 storage of the vehicle to any field, for no more than ten miles and if
41 visible from both directions for 300 feet at any point along the
42 proposed route.

- 1 (4) Every such piece of equipment so operated shall operate to the right of
2 the center line when meeting traffic coming from the opposite
3 direction and at all other times when possible and practical.
4 (5) Violation of this section shall not constitute negligence per se.
5 (6) When said equipment is causing a delay in traffic, the operator of said
6 equipment shall move the equipment off the paved portion of the
7 highway at the nearest practical location until the vehicles following
8 said equipment have passed."

9 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 20-116 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

10 **"§ 20-116. Size of vehicles and loads.**

11 ...

12 (m) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the towing of any boat or
13 boat trailer in excess of 102 inches in width but less than 120 inches shall not require a
14 permit to be issued pursuant to the requirements of G.S. 20-119 and may take place on
15 any day of the week, including weekends and holidays, and may take place at night.
16 With a properly issued permit, the towing of any boat or boat trailer of 120 inches or
17 more in width may take place on any day of the week, including weekends and
18 holidays, but shall not take place at night."

19 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 20-118(c)(12) reads as rewritten:

20 "(12) Subsections (b) and (e) of this section do not apply to a vehicle that (i)
21 ~~is hauling agricultural crops from the farm where they were grown to~~
22 ~~first market, (ii) is within 35 miles of that farm, (iii) does not operate~~
23 ~~on an interstate highway or posted bridge while hauling the crops, and~~
24 ~~meets one of the following descriptions:~~meets all of the conditions set
25 out below:

26 a. ~~Is a five axle combination with a gross weight of no more than~~
27 ~~90,000 pounds, a single axle weight of no more than 22,000~~
28 ~~pounds, a tandem axle weight of no more than 42,000 pounds,~~
29 ~~and a length of at least 51 feet between the first and last axles of~~
30 ~~the combination.~~Is hauling agricultural crops from the farm
31 where the crop is grown to the closest market.

32 b. Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 761, s.
33 13.

34 (b1) Does not operate on an interstate highway or exceed any posted
35 bridge weight limits during transportation or hauling of
36 agricultural products.

37 c. ~~Is a four axle combination with a gross weight that does not~~
38 ~~exceed the limit set in subdivision (b)(3) of this section,~~Does
39 not exceed a single-axle weight of no more than 22,000 pounds,
40 and a tandem-axle weight of no more than 42,000
41 pounds.pounds, or a gross weight of 90,000 pounds."

42 **SECTION 7.** G.S. 20-118(k) reads as rewritten:

43 "(k) From September 1 through March 1 of each year, a vehicle which is equipped
44 with a self-loading bed and which is designed and used exclusively to transport

1 compressed seed cotton from the farm to a cotton gin may operate on the highways of
2 the State, except interstate highways, ~~with a tandem axle weight not exceeding 44,000~~
3 ~~pounds not exceeding 64,000 pounds regardless of axel weight.~~ Such vehicles shall be
4 exempt from light-traffic road limitations only from point of origin on the light-traffic
5 road to the nearest State-maintained road which is not posted to prohibit the
6 transportation of statutory load limits. This exemption does not apply to restricted,
7 posted bridge structures."

8 **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.