

## South Dakota Codified Law

### Trailer Summary:

**Dimensions:** Dimensions shall not exceed: a total length of 80 feet, a trailer length of 53 feet, a trailer width of 102 inches, and a total height of 14 feet.

**Brakes:** Every trailer and semitrailer must be equipped with a braking system that is arranged so that 1 control device can be used to operate all of the service brakes.

Every motor vehicle manufactured or assembled after July 1, 1967, and used to tow a trailer equipped with brakes, shall be equipped with means for providing that in case of breakaway of the towed vehicle, the towing vehicle will be capable of being stopped by the use of its service brakes.

**Lighting/Reflectors:** All trailers shall be equipped with: 1 red reflector, 2 front clearance lamps (one on each side), 2 rear clearance lamps (one on each side), 2 tail lamps, 2 stop lamps (one on each side).

**Hitch/Signals:** Every trailer which shall be towed on the public highways at a speed in excess of twenty miles per hour shall be coupled to the towing vehicle by means of a safety chain, chains, cables, or equivalent devices in addition to the regular trailer hitch or coupling.

**Mirrors:** Every motor vehicle entitled to be licensed in South Dakota shall be equipped with a mirror so located as to reflect to the driver a view of the highway for a distance of at least two hundred feet to the rear of such vehicle.

**Speed Limits:** As posted.

**Towing:** N/A

**Other:** N/A

## Title 32 - Motor Vehicles

32-3-1. **Definition of terms.** Terms used in chapters 32-3 to 32-5B, inclusive, mean:

(13) "Noncommercial motor vehicle," any motor vehicle not classified as a commercial motor vehicle;

(14) "Noncommercial trailer or semitrailer," any trailer or semitrailer not used or maintained for the transportation of persons or property for hire, compensation, or profit;

(23) "Trailer," any vehicle without motive power designed for carrying property or passengers wholly on its own structure and for being drawn by a motor vehicle;

32-22-5. **Maximum length of vehicle**--Violation as misdemeanor. No motor vehicle may be operated upon a public highway if it has an overall length, inclusive of front and rear bumpers, in excess of forty-five feet. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

**32-22-8.1. Length limitations on trailers, semitrailers, and auto and boat transporters--** Violation as misdemeanor. Unless otherwise signed, any motor vehicle may travel upon any segment of the national system of interstate and defense highways and the state trunk highway system if the vehicle is operated within the following length limitation:

- (1) Fifty-three feet on the length of the semitrailer unit operating in a truck tractor-semitrailer combination;
- (2) Twenty-eight and one-half feet on each trailer unit operating in a road tractor-trailer-trailer combination if the towbars do not exceed nineteen feet and the overall length of the trailer-trailer unit including towbars does not exceed eighty feet;
- (3) Eighty feet on the overall length of a straight truck-trailer combination, provided that, if the towbar between the straight truck and trailer exceeds nineteen feet, the towbar is flagged during daylight hours and lighted at night; or
- (4) The maximum length of a semitrailer-semitrailer or semitrailer-trailer combination, excluding the length of the truck-tractor, is eighty-one and one-half feet provided the maximum length of either unit does not exceed forty-five feet. If the towbar length exceeds nineteen feet, the towbar shall be flagged during daylight hours and lighted at night. The weight of the second unit may not exceed the weight of the first unit by more than three thousand pounds.

No other length limitation may be imposed on the vehicles described in this section. Length limitations are exclusive of load overhang, retractable extensions used to support overhanging load and safety and energy conservation devices, including but not limited to mirrors, turn signal lamps, hand holds, flexible fender extensions, and mud flaps. Load overhang and retractable extensions on any vehicle may not extend more than four feet beyond the rear bumper, bed, or body nor more than three feet beyond the front bumper, bed, or body of the vehicle carried thereon. Retractable extensions shall be retracted if not being used to support overhanging load. If a vehicle exceeds the length limitations of this section, the driver of the vehicle is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

**32-22-9. Combination of vehicles of more than two units--**Violation as misdemeanor. Except as provided by §§ 32-19-8, 32-22-8.1, 32-22-10, 32-22-11, 32-22-12.1, and 32-22-12.2, any combination of vehicles consisting of more than two units, including a truck, tractor, or towing vehicle, may not operate on a public highway. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

**32-22-10. Requirements for combination vehicles.** Combinations of vehicles of not more than three units may be operated upon a public highway if the combinations consist of truck tractor-semitrailer-semitrailer converted to full trailer by use of a dolly equipped with fifth wheel which

is considered a part of the trailer for all purposes and not as a separate unit; truck tractor--semitrailer--full trailer; or truck tractor--semitrailer--semitrailer. If a combination consists of more than two units, the rear unit of the combination shall have breakaway brakes.

#### **32-22-14. Maximum height of vehicles—**

Except for farm machinery and fire department equipment for which there is no maximum height limit and for trailers carrying baled feed for which the maximum height limit is fifteen feet, no motor vehicle may operate upon a public highway if the maximum height of the vehicle, including the load on the vehicle, exceeds fourteen feet. Nothing in this section requires the public authorities to provide sufficient vertical clearance to permit the operation of such vehicles. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

#### **32-15-8. Rear view mirror — Minimum afforded view — Petty offense.**

Every motor **vehicle** entitled to be licensed in South Dakota shall be equipped with a **mirror** so located as to reflect to the driver a view of the highway for a distance of at least two hundred feet to the rear of such **vehicle**, whether operated singly or towing another **vehicle**. A violation of this section is a petty offense.

#### **32-19-9. Towed trailer — Coupling requirement — Class 2 misdemeanor.**

Every trailer which shall be towed on the public highways at a speed in excess of twenty miles per hour shall be coupled to the towing vehicle by means of a safety chain, chains, cables, or equivalent devices in addition to the regular trailer hitch or coupling. This requirement does not apply to a semitrailer having a connecting device composed of a fifth wheel and kingpin assembly meeting the requirement of the interstate commerce commission, nor to a pole, pipe, casing, log or piling dolly. Any person who violates this section is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

#### **32-17-8.1. Stop lamps required--Mounting--Visibility--Violation as petty offense**

Except for a vehicle equipped with a slow-moving vehicle emblem in compliance with §§ 32-15-20 and 32-15-21, each motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer shall be equipped with at least two stop lamps with at least one on each side. The side stop lamps shall be mounted on the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable.

However, each motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer manufactured and assembled before July 1, 1973, and each motorcycle and motor-driven cycle shall be equipped with at least one stop lamp. A stop lamp shall be mounted on the rear of the vehicle at a height of no more than seventy inches nor less than fifteen inches. Each stop lamp shall display a red light visible

from a distance of not less than three hundred feet to the rear in normal sunlight, except for a moped, which shall be visible from a distance of not less than one hundred fifty feet. Each stop lamp shall be actuated upon application of the brake which may be incorporated with one or more rear lamps. A violation of this section is a petty offense.

**32-17-8. Rear lamps required--Visibility--Combination of vehicles--Height of mounting--  
Violation as petty offense**

Every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer, except as otherwise provided in this section, and any other vehicle which is being drawn at the end of a combination of vehicles shall be equipped with at least two tail lamps mounted on the rear, which when lighted as required in § 32-17-4 shall emit a red light plainly visible from a distance of one thousand feet to the rear. However, motor vehicles, trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers manufactured and assembled prior to July 1, 1973, shall have one tail lamp mounted on the left side of the rear which when lighted as required in § 32-17-4 shall emit a red light plainly visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the rear. Motorcycles and motor driven cycles, except mopeds as defined in § 32-20-1, shall have at least one tail lamp, which when lighted as required in § 32-17-4 shall emit a red light plainly visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the rear. Mopeds shall have at least one tail lamp which when lighted as required in § 32-17-4 shall emit a red light plainly visible from a distance of two hundred and fifty feet to the rear. Farm vehicles which are being drawn at the end of a train of vehicles may be equipped with two four-inch reflectors in lieu of lighted lamps as provided in this section so as to exhibit a red light plainly visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the rear. On a combination of vehicles, only the tail lamps on the rearmost vehicle need actually be seen from the distance specified.

On vehicles with more than one tail lamp, the lamps shall be mounted on the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable. Every tail lamp upon every vehicle shall be located at a height of not more than seventy-two inches nor less than fifteen inches. A violation of this section is a petty offense.

**32-17-14. Vehicles requiring clearance lamps--Location and visibility of clearance lamps--  
Violation as petty offense**

Every truck, truck tractor, bus with a capacity of ten or more passengers, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer having a width at any part in excess of eighty inches shall be equipped with four clearance lamps. Two of such lamps shall be located at the extreme right and left sides of the front of such vehicle, and displaying an amber light visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the front of the vehicle, and the remaining two lamps located at the extreme right and left sides of the rear of the vehicle and displaying red lights visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the rear of the vehicle, which rear clearance lamps shall be in addition to the red lamps required in § 32-17-8. A violation of this section is a petty offense.

**32-17-12. Rear reflector required--Mounting and construction of rear reflector--Visibility--  
Violation as petty offense**

Every new motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer hereafter sold and every commercial vehicle hereafter operated on a highway shall also carry at the rear, either as a part of the rear lamp or separately, a red reflector located at the extreme rear of the vehicle at a height not to exceed sixty inches above the ground upon which the vehicle stands, which reflector is so designed and maintained as to be visible at night from all distances within three hundred feet to fifty feet, except that on a commercial vehicle the reflector shall be visible from all distances within five hundred feet to fifty feet, when directly in front of a motor vehicle displaying lawfully lighted headlamps as provided in §§ 32-17-5 and 32-17-6. A violation of this section is a petty offense.

**32-18-18. Brakes on towing vehicle in case towed vehicle breaks away--Violation as  
misdemeanor**

Every motor vehicle manufactured or assembled after July 1, 1967, and used to tow a trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer equipped with brakes, shall be equipped with means for providing that in case of breakaway of the towed vehicle, the towing vehicle will be capable of being stopped by the use of its service brakes. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor

**32-18-10. Single control device operating all service brakes--Violation as misdemeanor--  
Additional control devices**

Every motor vehicle described in § 32-18-1, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer, and every combination of such vehicles, except motorcycles and motor-driven cycles, equipped with brakes shall have the braking system so arranged that one control device can be used to operate all service brakes. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

This section does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped with an additional control device to be used to operate brakes on the towed vehicles. This section does not apply to driveaway or towaway operations unless the brakes on the individual vehicles are designed to be operated by a single control on the towing vehicle.

**32-22-3. Maximum width of vehicle and load--Violation as misdemeanor—Farm  
machinery and recreation vehicle exceptions**

Except for self-propelled or towed farm machinery operated pursuant to § 32-22-3.2 or a recreation vehicle, no motor vehicle may operate upon a public highway if the width, measured at the widest points, either of the vehicle or the load, exceeds one hundred two inches, excluding any required safety equipment. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor. The farm machinery exception provided by this section does not apply to farm machinery being transported or delivered by an equipment dealer or manufacturer.

The recreation vehicle exception provided by this section applies to excess width which is attributable to an appurtenance, excluding required safety equipment, which does not exceed six inches beyond either sidewall of the vehicle. For the purposes of this section, an appurtenance is

an integral part of a vehicle and includes awnings, grab handles, lighting equipment, cameras, and vents. No appurtenance may be used as a load carrying device.