

Tow Truck 101



Central Services Division-Overweight & Overdimensional Permits
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Towing vehicle- a vehicle used to tow wrecked, disabled, or abandoned vehicles.

No towing vehicle or combination of towing vehicle and towed vehicle will be authorized to exceed any **total gross vehicle weight limits or axle weight limits** posted on any bridge or highway by the public official having jurisdiction over such bridge or highway.

1. Maximum Tow Truck Size and Weight Limits without a Special Permit

A tow truck by itself shall not exceed the following legal limits without a special permit:

- A. 45' in length
- B. 13'6" in height
- C. 8'6" in width
- D. 80,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight
- E. 20,000 lbs. per single axle
- F. 34,000 lbs. per tandem axle

2. Maximum Tow Truck and Towed Vehicle Size and Weight Limits without a Special Permit

A tow truck and towed vehicle in combination shall not exceed the following legal limits without a special permit:

- A. 52' in length of towed vehicle from point of attachment (unless engaged in an emergency towing movement of a disabled vehicle from the point where the vehicle became disabled along a highway to a repair or terminal facility within 100 miles)
- B. 13'6" in height
- C. 8'6" in width
- D. 80,000 lbs. combined gross vehicle weight
- E. 20,000 lbs. per single axle
- F. 34,000 lbs. per tandem axle

3. Maximum Tow Truck Size and Weight Limits with a Special Permit (Single Trip or Annual)

A tow truck by itself shall not exceed the following limits when operating under a special permit (single trip or annual) whether or not the tow truck is engaged in towing operations:

- A. 45' in length
- B. 13'6" in height
- C. 9' in width
- D. 85,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight
- E. 23,000 lbs. on any single axle
- F. 46,000 lbs. on any tandem axle group
- G. 60,000 lbs. on any tridem axle group

4. Maximum Tow Truck and Towed Vehicle Size and Weight Limits with a Special Permit

A. Annual Permits

A tow truck and towed vehicle in combination shall not exceed the following size and weight limits when engaged in towing operations under an annual permit:

- i. 90' in combined length (unless engaged in an emergency towing movement of a disabled vehicle from the point where the vehicle became disabled along a highway to a repair or terminal facility within 100 miles)
- ii. 13'10" in height

- iii. 12'6" in width
- iv. 165,000 lbs. combined gross vehicle weight
- v. 25,000 lbs. on any single axle
- vi. 50,000 lbs. on any tandem axle group
- vii. 75,000 lbs. on any tridem axle group

B. Single Trip Permits

A tow truck and towed vehicle in combination may obtain a single trip permit to engage in towing operations up to and exceeding the size and weight limits under an annual permit, subject to escort vehicle requirements and to the following size and weight limits:

- i. No maximum length limitation (escort required above 90' long)
- ii. 15' in height (escort required above 13'10" high)
- iii. 16' in width (escort required above 12'6" wide)
- iv. No maximum combined gross vehicle weight (but subject to bridge analysis fees for combined weights exceeding 165,000 lbs.)
- v. 25,000 lbs. on any single axle
- vi. 50,000 lbs. on any tandem axle group
- vii. 75,000 lbs. on any tridem axle group

A towing movement exceeding the size limits set above, but not exceeding fifteen feet (15') in height or sixteen feet (16') in width, may be permitted under Single Trip Permit accordance with TDOT's rules of the department if the movement is accompanied by an escort vehicle or escort vehicles. The escort may substitute for a front escort vehicle so long as the towing vehicle is operating with Flashing Amber Lights displayed at front of vehicle.

5. Emergency Towing Movements

A tow truck may be authorized to conduct emergency towing movements where the combined vehicle height, width, weight or axle weights exceeds the maximum size and weight limits available under an annual or single trip permit, subject to the following conditions:

- A. The tow truck must have a current, valid annual or single trip permit
- B. The tow truck must be acting in response to a call from TDOT, the Department of Safety/Tennessee Highway Patrol, or local law enforcement to remove a wrecked, disabled, or abandoned vehicle from a highway
- C. The wrecked, disabled, or abandoned vehicle may be towed only to the nearest rest area, weight station, truck parking area, or other safe location away from the traffic lanes and shoulders as designated by the agency calling for the towing service
- D. The towing movement may be subject to route restrictions and/or a bridge analysis

6. Tow Truck Annual Permit Cost

\$500 per tow truck

7. Single Trip Permit Cost

- A. Excess length: \$20.00
- B. Excess height: \$20.00
- C. Excess width up to 14': \$20.00
- D. Excess width >14' up to 16': \$30.00
- E. Excess weight (combined):
 - i. \$20.00 + \$.06 per ton mile for weight up to 165,000 lbs.
 - ii. \$.12 per ton mile for all additional excess weight over 165,000 lbs.

8. Single Trip Permit Duration

10 calendar days