

Virginia

# Escort Vehicle Driver's Manual

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles



## PROLOGUE

In recognition of the need to protect the public from unnecessary hazard and inconvenience, the Virginia General Assembly authorized the Department of Motor Vehicles to promulgate rules and regulations to govern the movement of vehicles and loads which exceed legal limits. Formal training and certification is required for drivers who provide escort services for overdimensional movements. Promoting safety, giving the traveling public advanced warning of the overdimensional load and ensuring the safe passage of the movement itself are the byproducts of the training and certification.

The purpose of this manual is to provide information, including rules and regulations, legal requirements, safety suggestions and reminders that should be helpful to those who conduct escort operations on the highways of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

An understanding of the provisions of this manual and other safe driving rules is essential for certification as an escort vehicle driver in Virginia. These should also be prerequisites for employment as an escort vehicle driver by firms engaged in transportation of overdimensional loads in Virginia. Failure to provide certified escorts when required by permit is a violation of state law and convictions carry stiff penalties.

Keep a copy of this manual in your escort vehicle as a handy reference.

## FOREWORD

This manual was initially prepared by the Transportation Research Council. The contents of the manual and the certification program have been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. The information included is based on research conducted by the Transportation Research Council, a review of state traffic laws, and regulations promulgated by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

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## Section 1: Escort Vehicle Driver Certification

### General Requirements for Providing Overdimensional Load Escort Service

Every person escorting overdimensional loads must:

- ▶ Have a valid Virginia driver's license or valid license in the state or jurisdiction in which he or she is a resident.
- ▶ Comply with the permit policy and regulations and all state traffic laws.
- ▶ Complete an eight-hour training course at a DMV-approved facility
- ▶ Have passed the escort vehicle driver's certification test.
- ▶ Pay a \$25 certification fee.

Failure to comply with any of these requirements may lead to legal action. Depending upon the nature of the violation, escort vehicle drivers are subject to the loss of their operator's license and, if convicted, may face fines and other penalties set forth in the Code of Virginia.

### Certification Required

The Virginia escort vehicle driver certification program resulted from a study of the movement of 12 and 14 foot wide overdimensional loads. The study, conducted by the Virginia Transportation Research Council, found the general performance of drivers who provided escort services was inadequate. In many cases escort vehicle drivers created hazards by engaging in negligent, unsafe, and sometimes illegal driving practices. Most of the problems observed could have been eliminated if the escort vehicle drivers were familiar with proper escort procedures, highway safety, and traffic control, and had been instructed about responding to emergency situations.

### Purpose

When properly conducted, escort services provide benefits to the public and to the manufactured housing, boating, construction, and other industries who occasionally need to transport overdimensional loads. This manual provides basic information concerning the duties and responsibilities of drivers who provide escort services. The purpose of testing and certifying escort vehicle drivers is to promote a clear understanding of proper escort operations. Specific objectives of the certification program are to:

- ▶ Enhance the safety of the traveling public.

## Section 1: Escort Vehicle Driver Certification

- ▶ Enhance the safety of the people involved in the movement of the overdimensional load.
- ▶ Prevent damage to the highway system.
- ▶ Prevent damage to the load being transported.
- ▶ Reduce undue delay to the normal flow of traffic.
- ▶ Assure continuation of the industry's safe transportation record.
- ▶ Prevent increases in insurance costs.
- ▶ Avoid costly damage suits.
- ▶ Encourage uniform escort operations.

### Applicability

Certification as an escort vehicle driver is mandatory for all drivers, regardless of their residence, who escort overdimensional loads in Virginia.

Escort vehicle drivers are not required to be certified if the escorts are for military convoys or for other federal or state government vehicles.



## Section 2: Certification Program

The Virginia escort vehicle driver certification program consists of an eight-hour classroom training course and a computer-based knowledge test which must be successfully completed before a certification is issued. The following are facts concerning the classroom training course and test.

### Where to Attend an Escort Vehicle Driver Certification Training Class

Classes are available at sites statewide. Visit [www.dmvNOW.com](http://www.dmvNOW.com) and click on Commercial Services/Hauling Permits to find a location near you.

### Where to Take the Test

The test may be taken at any Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles customer service center. An appointment is not necessary.

### What to Bring With You For Testing

All persons applying for certification as an escort vehicle driver must bring their valid driver's license and the training certificate showing the course was completed at a Virginia DMV-approved facility.

## Section 2: Certification Program

### Escort Vehicle Driver's Test

The escort vehicle driver's test is administered through DMV's automated testing system. The test is multiple-choice.

Applicants failing the escort vehicle driver's test are eligible to retake the exam three business days after failing.

Applicants failing the test three times shall not be eligible for retesting for at least 30 days. A reexamination fee of \$2 shall be charged for the second and subsequent tests.

Applicants will be tested with questions on safe driving, rules of the road, regulations governing the movement of overdimensional loads, responsibilities of the escort vehicle driver, escort procedures, and Virginia's traffic laws. Applicants should also be familiar with the Virginia Driver's Manual, and the Virginia Hauling Permit Manual, which are available at [www.dmvNOW.com](http://www.dmvNOW.com).

Special questions regarding the test or material in this manual should be directed to:

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles  
Hauling Permit Section  
P.O. Box 26302  
Richmond, Virginia 23260  
Telephone: (804) 497-7135  
[haulingpermit@dmv.virginia.gov](mailto:haulingpermit@dmv.virginia.gov)

### Notification of Test Results

After passing the test, you will receive a temporary certificate that is valid for 30 days. The permanent certificate will be sent in the mail and should arrive within 30 days of passing the test.

### Testing and Certification Fees

No fee is required to take the first Escort Driver's Test.

Original Certification	\$25
Renewal Certification	\$25
Duplicate Certificate	\$15
Change Information	\$15
Second and Subsequent Tests	\$2

### Remote Testing

Remote testing is not allowed. Applicants desiring to take the Virginia escort vehicle driver's test must do so in person at any Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles customer service center.

### Duplicate Certificates and Change of Address and Name

If the original certificate has been lost, stolen, or destroyed a duplicate certificate may be issued. Also, certificate holders must request a duplicate certificate within 30 days if you change your address or name. Application for a duplicate certificate should be submitted to the Hauling Permit Office at P.O. Box 26302, Richmond, VA 23260.

### Expiration and Renewal

The escort vehicle driver certification is valid for five years and expires on the last day of the month five years from the date of issue. Application for renewal is required. Renewal forms may be obtained at any DMV customer service center. Applicants renewing their certification will be required to retake and successfully pass the computer-based knowledge test prior to being recertified.

### Certificate Revocation and Suspension

An escort vehicle driver's certificate is not valid if the driver's license is revoked or suspended. Escort driver certification may be revoked if the driver:

- ▶ Is convicted repeatedly of violating laws and safe escort procedures.
- ▶ Becomes physically or mentally unable to drive.
- ▶ Is found to have given false or fraudulent information on the application for certification as an escort driver.

### Important Reminders

- ▶ To provide escort services in Virginia, you are required to be a certified escort driver.
- ▶ The DMV-approved escort vehicle driver training course is available statewide at various locations. You are required to satisfactorily complete and provide evidence of course completion to DMV to qualify for testing.
- ▶ Escort vehicle driver certification testing is available at any of DMV's customer service centers.
- ▶ You must have a valid driver's license and have passed a computer-based knowledge test before you can be certified as an escort vehicle driver.
- ▶ Certificates must be renewed every five years by completing a renewal application and passing the computer-based examination.
- ▶ Your certificate is not valid if your driver's license is revoked or suspended.
- ▶ As a Virginia certified overdimensional load escort your name is a public record and may be distributed upon request.



Traffic crashes occur as a result of a breakdown in the highway transportation system. That system is made up of three elements: human, vehicle, and environment. Studies show that failures in each of the three elements contribute to crash causation. But, the human aspect (the driver) contributes most to crashes.

Drivers who exercise safe driving practices reduce the likelihood of crashes. However, not all drivers drive safely. Drivers must constantly be on the lookout for other drivers who may not be operating their vehicle in a safe manner. When unsafe drivers and other problems are encountered, the safe driver must make quick and sound decisions. The decision often makes the difference between whether or not a crash occurs. Escort vehicle drivers are professionals. And as professionals, they are expected to follow safe driving practices. Escort vehicle drivers must be constantly attentive to their driving, the driving of the overdimensional load and others in the driving environment. A safe escort vehicle driver will never take chances, always obey traffic laws, follow the rules of the road and sound escort driving procedures, and drive defensively.

## General Rules of the Road

**Traffic Signals and Signs:** All traffic signals and signs must be obeyed during escort operations. For example, escort vehicle drivers are required to stop for red lights and school buses and to drive strictly in accordance with all regulatory signage.

**Road Markings:** Road markings enhance highway safety by providing important traffic control information to motorists. Escort operators should carefully observe the road markings and never drive to the left of a solid yellow centerline.

**Driver's Signals:** Escort vehicle drivers should give proper signals in advance of turning at intersections or when changing lanes.

**Following Distance:** Space around your vehicle gives you distance to react in emergencies and avoid a crash. Use the two-, three-, and four-second rule to determine if you are following far enough behind the vehicle ahead of you. Vehicles traveling:

- ▶ under 35 mph should allow two seconds
- ▶ 36-45 mph should allow three seconds
- ▶ 46-70 mph should allow four seconds

Here's how the following distance rule works.

- ▶ Glance at the vehicle ahead as it passes a fixed object, such as an overpass, sign, fence or other fixed mark.
- ▶ Begin counting the seconds it takes you to reach the same place on the road.
- ▶ If you reach the mark before you have counted off two, three or four seconds, depending on speed, you're following too closely. Slow down and increase your following distance.
- ▶ For bad weather conditions, heavy traffic, poor pavement or if your vehicle is in poor condition, add extra seconds to increase your following distance.

**Stopping Under Special Conditions:** When the driver of the overdimensional load or the escort operator is forced to stop (except momentarily) on any part of the road, the drivers should immediately set out three warning flares, torches, or reflectorized triangles to warn approaching traffic of the hazard. Every precaution should be taken to remove the overdimensional vehicle and escort vehicles from the roadway.

**Right of Way Rules:** Escort vehicle drivers are required to obey all right of way rules, especially at intersections in urban areas and when entering or leaving an interstate or other limited access highway. The size of the load is not justification for assuming that other drivers must yield to the load or the escort vehicles.

## Defensive Driving

As defensive drivers, escort vehicle drivers should adopt the crash prevention formula shown in the box below.

A defensive driver is a person who is always alert and takes every precaution to prevent traffic mishaps. Because the movement of every overdimensional load affects the normal flow of traffic on the highway, the escort vehicle driver must develop a positive attitude toward safe driving. Defensive driving involves maintaining a positive attitude toward crash prevention. A defensive driver must anticipate potential crash situations by evaluating constantly changing situations and planning preventive measures.

### CRASH PREVENTION FORMULA

#### SEE THE HAZARD

Think about what is going to happen or what might happen as far ahead of encountering the situation as possible. Never assume everything is "all right."

#### UNDERSTAND THE DEFENSE

There are special ways of handling specific situations. Learn these ways and be prepared to apply them when the need arises.

#### ACT IN TIME

Once you have perceived the hazard and determined the defense, act immediately. Never take a "wait and see" attitude.



- ▶ Warn motorists to stop at narrow structures and other roadway restrictions to permit safe passage of the load through narrow passage.

### Authority of Escort Vehicle Drivers

The purpose of the escort vehicle is to enhance the safety of moving overdimensional loads by highway and to reduce delays and inconveniences to the normal flow of traffic. Escort vehicle drivers do not have police powers to direct or control traffic and they should never wear clothing that might cause others to mistake them for police officers. The escort vehicle driver must not operate a vehicle as an emergency vehicle such as police, fire, or rescue squad. This requirement does not apply to official police escorts, military convoys, and vehicles of other federal and state agencies.

Hauling permits are not issued to escort vehicle drivers; but every escort must comply with permit regulations pertaining to escort operations.



Wherever escort vehicles are required, the following requirements must be met for each vehicle.

### Mandatory Equipment and Other Safety Requirements

- ▶ The escort vehicle shall be a truck not less than one-quarter ton-rated load capacity but not more than 17,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or a passenger vehicle of not less than 2,000 pounds gross weight. Escort vehicles shall not resemble nor be confused with law-enforcement or safety-assistance vehicles. Escort vehicles shall be in compliance with all state and local registration processes required by the state in which the vehicle is registered. Escort vehicles shall not be overdimensional or overweight while in use performing escorting duties. They are not permitted to pull a trailer of any kind while performing escorting duties and shall have an unobstructed view through the rear window.
- ▶ All escort vehicles shall be equipped with a two-way radio communication system to maintain communications between the permitted vehicle driver and all escort vehicles in the group.

### General Duties

The purpose of an escort vehicle is to alert the traveling public to the presence or approach of an overdimensional load. Escort vehicle drivers are also responsible for assisting the driver of the load and should be courteous to the public and obey all traffic laws. Specific duties of front and rear escort vehicle drivers are given below.

### Front Escorts

Responsibilities of the front escort operator include but are not limited to the following:

- ▶ Warn oncoming traffic of the presence of the overdimensional load.
- ▶ Assist the driver of the overdimensional load by using the two-way radio to provide notification of hazards, obstructions, pedestrians, and other potential problems that will affect the safe movement of the load and the traveling public.
- ▶ Ensure that the route prescribed on the permit is being followed.
- ▶ Locate safe places to allow the overdimensional load and the escort vehicles to clear the roadway so traffic following the load can safely pass.
- ▶ Warn motorists to stop at the end of narrow structures to permit safe passage of the load through the narrow passage.

### Rear Escorts

Responsibilities of the rear escort operator include but are not limited to the following:

- ▶ Warn traffic approaching from behind that an overdimensional load is ahead.
- ▶ Assist the overdimensional load driver by providing notification of flat tires, objects coming loose from the load and other occurrences that the driver may not be aware of.
- ▶ Notify the front escort vehicle driver and overdimensional load operator of traffic buildup and other delays to the normal flow of traffic.
- ▶ Notify the overdimensional load operator of motorists attempting to pass the load.



- ▶ Front or lead escort vehicles are required to have a height pole/hot-pole when required by permit. While performing escorting duties the pole shall be extended at least three inches above the specified height of the vehicle configuration being escorted.
- ▶ Escort vehicles headlamps shall be on at all times while escorting overdimensional/overweight movements.
- ▶ All escort vehicles shall have at least one light, rotating or strobe, positioned on top of the escort vehicle. The light must be visible for a distance of at least 500 feet in all directions by approaching vehicles.
- ▶ Paddles shall be at least 18 inches by 18 inches with six-inch high lettering. For greater visibility, a high-intensity flashing stop/slow paddle may be used.
- ▶ All flags used for flagging purposes shall be red or any highly fluorescent color, not less than 18 inches square and in good condition. Flags shall be placed at the extremities of a vehicle load to identify overwidth or secured at the end of the load to identify overhang.
- ▶ Individuals performing flagging activities shall wear a hard hat and a red or any highly visible fluorescent traffic vest or jacket of approved Type ANSI II or III.
- ▶ Escort vehicles shall have signs, descriptive of the load being escorted, i.e., "Wide Load" or "Oversize Load" or "Overweight Load." At a minimum, the signs shall be displayed in black eight-inch high letters with a minimum of 1-1/4 inch brush strokes on a yellow banner. The banner shall be mounted on the front and rear bumper of the escort vehicle. If displayed on the roof of the escort vehicle other drivers must be able to read the signs when approaching or following the escort vehicle.
- ▶ A minimum of one Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual Laboratories (FM) approved, five pounds or greater, Type "BC" or "ABC" fire extinguisher shall be carried in the escort vehicle or escort vehicles.
- ▶ Reflective triangles or road flares shall be used to warn oncoming or approaching vehicles of a breakdown.

### Overdimensional Vehicles and Loads — Flags and Amber Flashing Lights

Red flags or highly visible fluorescent orange flags must be displayed at each of the four corners of any vehicle configuration that is overwidth or overlength. Flags must be placed at the extremities of the width or length. Flags must be 18 inches square and in good condition.

One amber flashing light must be located on top of the towing vehicle plus one amber flashing light must be located on the upper rear of vehicle or load being hauled, towed or self-propelled. Lights must be visible for a distance of 500 feet or more.



The overdimensional load driver is responsible for the overall movement of the load. Escort vehicle drivers should enhance the movement by properly performing their assigned duties. It is important to remember that the overdimensional load driver and the escort(s) function as a team. Each person must contribute his skills and complete attention to accomplishing the safe movement of the load. Escort vehicle drivers are not merely along for the ride. Constant alertness is necessary to anticipate and avoid problems. Escort vehicle drivers have specific tasks to perform during each phase of the overdimensional load movement. A summary of the procedures that should be followed before, during, and after the movement is given in this section.

### Before the Trip Begins

When escort services are required, the overdimensional load operator and the escort driver(s) should arrange for an appropriate safe place to meet off the roadway and discuss various aspects of the move. Specific items that must be covered include:

- ▶ The escort vehicle driver(s) should ask the overdimensional load operator to review the permit for any special requirements or instructions.
- ▶ The routing prescribed on the permit should be carefully reviewed to make sure the directions are understood by everyone involved with the move. It is essential that everyone clearly understands the routes that must be followed during the move.
- ▶ The position of each escort vehicle, e.g., front escort, etc. should be determined.
- ▶ Mandatory equipment required for the escort vehicle should be checked prior to beginning the move. The sign must be mounted and secured, the vehicle mirrors must be properly adjusted, and the vehicle lights must be turned on.
- ▶ An appropriate two-way radio channel must be selected and a check made of each radio to assure clear communication.
- ▶ Each escort vehicle driver must check to be sure his driver's license and escort certification are in his possession at all times during the trip and available for inspection by appropriate authorities.
- ▶ Overdimensional load operator must also check to assure all escort vehicle drivers are certified.

## Section 6: Escort Procedures

### During the Trip

Once the wide load movement begins, the escort vehicle driver(s) and the load operator act as a team to ensure that safety of the traveling public is enhanced. Guidelines for conducting proper escort activities are listed below.

**Traffic Laws:** Escort vehicle drivers must obey all traffic laws and regulations.

**Speed Limits:** Unless otherwise specified within the permit, the speed limit for hauling permits is the posted speed limit not to exceed 55 mph.

**Lights:** All vehicle headlights and other steady burning exterior lights must be turned on, including those of the escort vehicle(s).

**Maintain Proper Following Distance:** Front and rear escort vehicle drivers must maintain a safe distance between their vehicles and the overdimensional load. Use the two-, three-, and four-second rule explained on page 6 of this manual to determine if you are following far enough behind the vehicle ahead of you. Depending upon highway and traffic conditions, a distance of 500 to 1,000 feet is usually appropriate. In urban areas and at narrow bridges, shorter following distances are desirable. In rural areas and on narrow winding roads, the front escort vehicle driver should maneuver his vehicle well ahead of the load to warn oncoming traffic of the hazard. Also the rear escort vehicle driver should position his vehicle well behind the load to warn motorists following the load.

**Traffic Signals:** When traveling on a route where traffic signals control the movement of traffic, if the escort vehicle passes through the intersection and the load is required to stop for a red light, the escort vehicle driver should stop as soon as possible on the right side of the road and should not resume travel until the load approaches at the required following distance.

When the escort vehicle driver following the overdimensional load is required to stop at a traffic light and the load has passed through the intersection, the load operator should proceed with the move as planned. The front escort vehicle driver should proceed with the move as planned and the rear escort vehicle driver should resume a normal following distance as soon as the driver can proceed through the intersection. The escort vehicle drivers must be alert and avoid sudden stops at signals.

**Emergency Flashers:** When stopped or slowing at a traffic hazard or when traveling at a speed of less than 30 miles per hour, the escort vehicle driver should use the emergency flashers. The flashers should not be used when operations exceed 30 miles per hour.

**Two-Way Radio Communication:** Each escort vehicle driver and the overdimensional load operator are required to maintain radio communication. The escort operators are responsible for advising the overdimensional load operator of any condition that may require precautionary action such

as reducing speed or pulling off the roadway. Escort vehicle drivers should use the radio to inform the overdimensional load driver of obstructions, pedestrians, and other problems that require advance warning. Appropriate Federal Communication Commission procedures should be followed during all transmissions. Special attention should be given to maintaining radio contact in mountainous areas by reducing following distances if necessary.

**Reducing Traffic Build Up:** When traffic following the unit exceeds six vehicles or when traffic is detained for more than 10 minutes, the escort vehicle driver(s) should assist the overdimensional load driver in finding a suitable location where the overdimensional load and the escort vehicles can be completely removed from the roadway to allow traffic to pass.

**Passing:** Unless roadway hazards exist, the driver of the rear escort vehicle should not prevent motorists from passing the overdimensional load. The escort vehicle driver should inform the overdimensional load operator that a motorist is attempting to pass so appropriate precautions can be taken. Advance warning is especially important when large trucks pass the load.

On narrow roads or when hazards exist the rear escort vehicle driver should discourage passing by maneuvering his vehicle near the centerline of the road. When it is necessary for the load to pass other vehicles, the rear escort vehicle driver should clearly signal an intention to pass and move into the passing lane well before the overdimensional load driver initiates the maneuver. The rear escort vehicle driver should stay in the passing lane until the load completes the pass.

**Inclement Weather and Mechanical Breakdowns:** During periods of unforeseen inclement weather and when mechanical, physical or other problems occur, the escort vehicle drivers should assist the overdimensional load operator in locating a safe place to remove the load from the roadway until operations can again be initiated.

Special safety precautions shall be utilized during vehicle breakdowns and the unit must be immediately removed from the traveled portion of the roadway. The disabled unit must be removed from the highway system at the earliest possible time after breakdown.

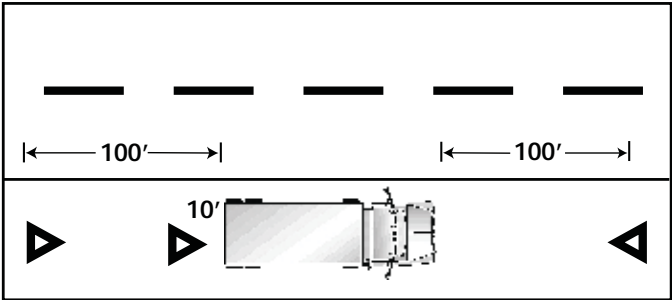
**Narrow Structures:** In cases where narrow structures or obstructions exist near the road or where sight distances are limited, one or more escort vehicle drivers should warn approaching and/or oncoming traffic of the presence of the overdimensional load. The escort vehicle driver(s) should proceed to a point where the sight distance is adequate and use flags, the two-way radio or other methods to warn traffic. The escort vehicle should, however, be close enough to the load to be readily identified with the movement.

The overdimensional load driver is responsible for all horizontal and vertical clearances along the proposed route of travel to ensure that proper clearances exist. Travel must not commence without proper clearances along all proposed routes of travel.

Under no circumstances are bridge railings to be removed or adjusted, or any roadway structures to be modified or tampered with to allow passage without first obtaining written permission from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

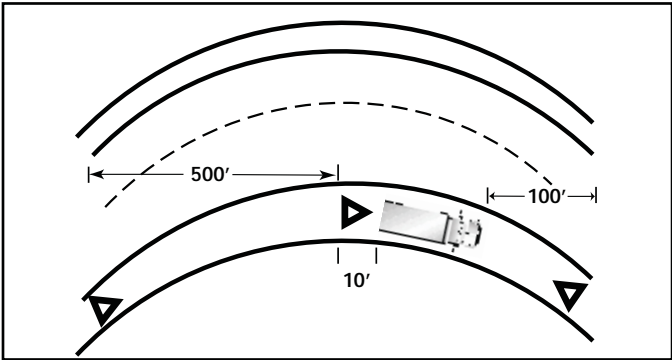
**Stopping Traffic:** When an overdimensional load is routed upon any highway which is too narrow for two-way travel at all points, the front escort vehicle or a flagman must advance to a point where two-way traffic can be maintained, and warn oncoming traffic to stop at that location. When the load reaches the location where traffic is stopped, the overdimensional load must halt and allow traffic to clear from both directions, with assistance being given by the flagman. The front escort vehicle or flagman must then advance to the next point to warn traffic to stop. Traffic must not be detained for more than ten minutes. When flagging or stopping traffic is required, the proper flagging requirements and methods outlined in the following section must be observed.

**Emergency Stopping:** When it is absolutely necessary to stop the load and escort vehicles near the roadway (except for momentary stops) warning devices should be set as indicated by the figures below.

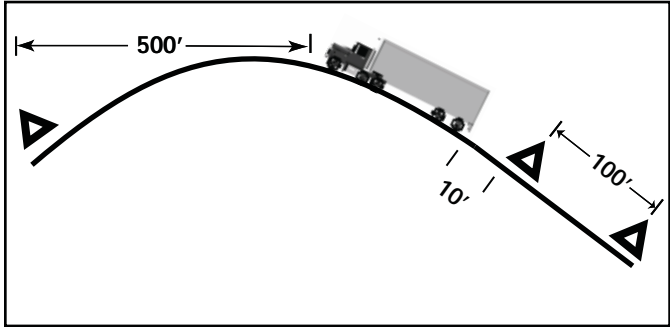


Stopping on a Straight Roadway

If the sight distance along the roadway is restricted, the warning devices should be placed at a point to give motorists proper advance warning of the load as shown.



Stopping on a curve



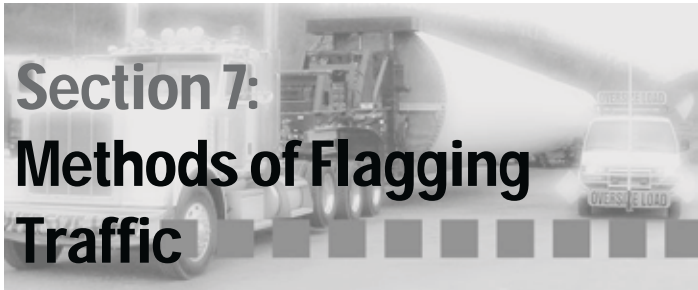
Stopping on a hill

**Special Requirements:** From time to time the movement of overdimensional loads necessitates special escort procedures. These special requirements are noted on the hauling permit or may be required by the driver of the load. The driver of the load will call any special conditions to the attention of the escort vehicle drivers and advise them of any action necessary to enhance the safe movement of the load

**Flagging Traffic:** The flagman is responsible for safeguarding traffic and the overdimensional load by warning motorists of danger ahead and guiding them safely through an area. A sufficient number of competent, courteous, neat and fully dressed flagmen must be provided and available at all times when required. Also when necessary, flagmen must be available to warn traffic to stop, advise the motorists of any delay, and to keep vehicles in the proper lanes.

After the Trip is Completed

When the escort operation is completed, the driver should turn off all exterior lights, amber flashing lights, and must remove or cover the overdimensional load sign.



Duties and Responsibilities

The flagman is responsible for the safety of the overdimensional load as well as all the other vehicles and pedestrians in surrounding traffic. Flagmen must be at least age 18 and must be capable of carrying out flagging responsibilities. Flagging should be conducted in a courteous manner and in accordance with proper procedures.

## Section 7: Methods of Flagging Traffic

Flagmen must perform their duties in the following manner:

- ▶ Be alert at all times.
- ▶ Do not stand with a group.
- ▶ Stand where you can be easily seen by approaching motorists.
- ▶ Always stand while waiting for traffic.
- ▶ Do not leave your post until you are properly relieved.

### Required Equipment

- ▶ Hard hat
- ▶ Red or any highly visible fluorescent colored jacket or vest
- ▶ Fully clothed (removal of shirts is prohibited)
- ▶ Flag or paddle

### Flagging Devices

**Flag:** The flag should be red or fluorescent color, not less than 18 inches x 18 inches on a staff at least 36 inches long and should be weighted at the bottom with a 3/16 inch rod, or some other adequate weight.

**Sign Paddle:** The sign paddle should be at least 18 inches x 18 inches with 6 inch letters reading "STOP" in white letters with a red background. For greater visibility, a high-intensity flashing stop/slow paddle may be used.

### Where to Stand

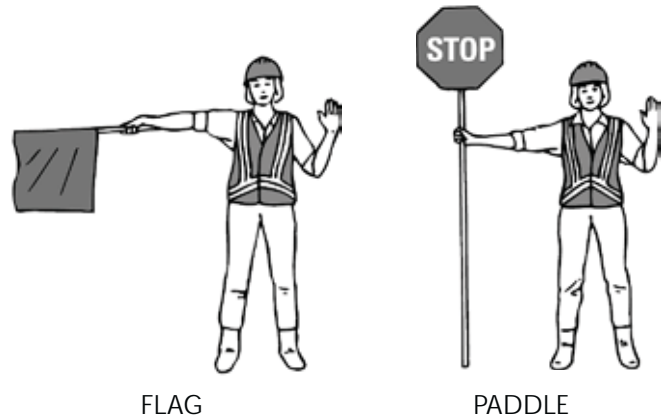
Flagmen should be located far enough in advance of a problem area so that approaching traffic will have sufficient distance to reduce speed and come to a stop. Depending upon approaching speed and physical conditions at the site, a distance of 200 to 300 feet is usually desirable. However, in urban areas where speeds are low and streets are closely spaced, a shorter distance is sometimes desirable.

Stand facing traffic on the edge of the shoulder of the road just outside of the traffic lane. Always stand where you can see and be seen by approaching traffic.

## Flagging Procedures

Proper techniques for warning traffic to stop, for moving traffic, and for slowing traffic are discussed below.

### How to Warn Traffic to Stop



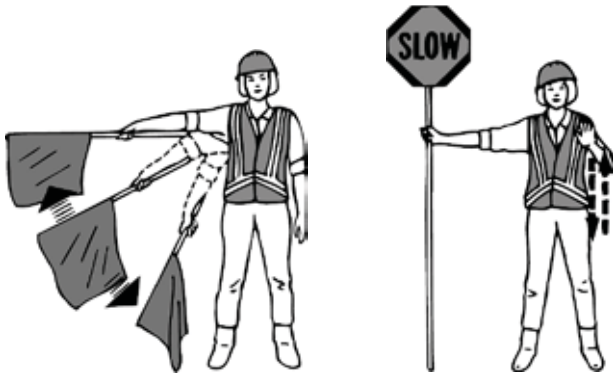
- ▶ Stand facing traffic but keep out of the traffic lane.
- ▶ To warn traffic to stop, hold the flagstaff in a horizontal position in the path of the vehicle. The free arm should be raised with the palm of the hand toward approaching traffic.
- ▶ When using a paddle hold the paddle upright and turn the paddle so that the oncoming traffic can see the word STOP. The free hand should be raised with the palm of the hand toward the oncoming traffic.
- ▶ If time permits, drivers may be informed concerning the reason for the delay. (Be courteous. Be brief. Use, for example: "An overdimensional load is being moved through this area.")

### How to Move Traffic



- ▶ When signaling traffic to move ahead, lower the flag behind you and signal with the free hand, using a sweeping motion in the direction traffic is to move.
- ▶ When using a paddle hold the paddle upright and turn the paddle so that the oncoming traffic can see the word SLOW. With the free hand use a sweeping motion to signal the direction the traffic is to move.
- ▶ Never use a flag or paddle to signal traffic to move ahead.

How to Slow Traffic



FLAG

PADDLE

- ▶ To slow traffic but not to stop it, extend flag into the traffic lane. The flag must be lowered before traffic is completely stopped. Never wave your flag.
- ▶ When using the paddle hold the paddle upright and turn the paddle so that the oncoming traffic can see the word SLOW.
- ▶ Signals must be clear and distinct.
- ▶ Don't make drivers guess what they should do.
- ▶ Never wave your flag or paddle, either to stop or slow traffic or to inform motorists to proceed.

- ▶ NEVER run traffic lights, stop signs, cross the double yellow centerline, run motorists off the roadway or commit other violations of the state traffic code.



What To Do If There Is A Crash

The following procedures should be followed in the event of a crash involving the overdimensional load or escort vehicle(s).

- ▶ Prevent a second crash by pulling completely off the roadway.
- ▶ Turn on the four-way emergency flashers.
- ▶ Warn approaching traffic of the problem by placing the appropriate warning devices.
- ▶ Get help. Ask a person who stops to phone for the police and rescue squad. Use the two-way radio but do not rely on it as sole means of requesting aid. The Virginia State Police can be reached on cellular phones by touching #77.
- ▶ To reduce the fire hazard, turn off ignition of the wrecked vehicles. Keep smokers away.
- ▶ DO NOT move the injured unless they're in a burning car or in immediate danger. Unnecessary movement often complicates injuries.
- ▶ Search the area for victims that may have been thrown from the crash and hidden by tall underbrush.

When trained personnel arrive (rescue squad, police, and fire) give a brief summary of what you've done and ask if you can be of further assistance, but do not interfere with their efforts to care for the injured and stabilize the scene.

Virginia law provides that persons who give emergency care without compensation at the scene of a crash or fire are exempt from liability and any civil damages resulting from giving care or assistance.

**Reporting a Crash:** The driver of any vehicle involved in a crash in which a person is killed or injured or in which an attended vehicle or other attended property is damaged must immediately stop as close to the scene of the crash as possible without obstructing traffic and report his name, address, driver's license number, and vehicle registration number to the Virginia State Police or local law enforcement. Report immediately to police authorities any crash in which:

- ▶ A person is killed or injured, or
- ▶ A vehicle or other property is damaged.



- ▶ If your operator license is revoked or suspended and/ or you fail to pass the escort driver's examination, and/ or your escort vehicle driver's certification has expired, DO NOT engage in escorting overdimensional loads.
- ▶ DO NOT assume police powers or operate your escort vehicle as an emergency vehicle while escorting overdimensional loads.
- ▶ NEVER stop in the roadway. If emergency stopping is necessary, pull off the roadway and employ appropriate warning devices such as flags, flares or reflectors.
- ▶ DO NOT use the emergency flashing signals when escorting operations exceed 30 miles per hour.
- ▶ DO NOT drive the escort vehicle with the wideload sign displayed after the overdimensional load movement has been completed.

## Section 9: Emergencies

In addition to reporting the crash to the authorities, an exchange of information is necessary in all crashes so that you can make a complete and detailed report of the crash. Get the following information from all involved parties:

- ▶ Names, addresses and driver's license numbers of all drivers.
- ▶ Make, model and license plate numbers of all vehicles involved.
- ▶ Names and addresses of injured or killed persons.
- ▶ Names, addresses and policy numbers of the insurance companies covering the vehicles and property involved in the crash. Always carry insurance information while driving.

Make a reasonable effort to find the owner or caretaker of an unattended vehicle or other unattended property that may be damaged. If you cannot locate the owner or caretaker you must leave a note that can be easily found at the scene of the crash. The note should include your name, address, driver's license number and vehicle registration number. In addition, report the crash in writing within 24 hours to the Virginia State Police or the local law enforcement agency if the crash occurred within a city or town limits.



The following questions are not necessarily the questions that will be given on the escort vehicle driver's test. The questions are designed to aid in studying the material in this manual.

1. Under what conditions are you required to become a certified escort vehicle driver?
2. Name at least three reasons for requiring the certification of escort vehicle drivers.
3. Is it necessary to have a valid Virginia driver's license when applying for certification as an escort vehicle driver?
4. Are you permitted to use the manual or other notes when taking the certification test?
5. What information do you need to apply for an escort vehicle driver certificate?
6. How many times may you take the escort test in a single day?
7. When you change your address or your name, whom should you notify concerning your escort certificate?
8. Name two conditions which may lead to the revocation or suspension of your escort certificate.
9. As an escort vehicle driver you are required to obey some, but not all the road markings, signs, and signals. True or False?
10. Why is defensive driving important to escort vehicle driving?
11. Are special hauling permits issued to overdimensional load operators and to every escort vehicle driver involved in the movement of the overdimensional load?
12. Are escort vehicle drivers required to display on their vehicles red flags, 18-inches square, and in good condition?
13. Is the front escort vehicle driver required to be in touch with the overdimensional load operator by two-way radio communications?
14. The overdimensional load is permitted to travel the posted speed limit. True or False?
15. Is it permissible to use emergency flashers during escort operations if the average speed of the movement is 45 miles per hour?
16. Under what conditions is it necessary to report a traffic crash?
17. Name three major responsibilities of escort vehicle drivers.
18. Do escort vehicle drivers have police power to control and direct traffic during the movement of overdimensional loads?
19. What equipment is mandatory on an escort vehicle?
20. Name three items that must be checked before starting on an overdimensional load movement?
21. Should the escort vehicle driver ever permit a motorist to overtake and pass an overdimensional load on a narrow road?
22. Outline the proper method of flagging.
23. Is it permissible to use revolving, flashing amber lights on top of the escort vehicle to attract motorists' attention?
24. What procedures should be followed in case you are involved in a crash which occurs during the movement of an overdimensional load?

Answers to study questions can be found in this manual.





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