

Safely Transport Oversized Loads

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Driving is something many of us often take for granted. But hitting the road to reach a destination comes with a responsibility towards safety. That's especially true for oversized farm loads since larger farm equipment means larger transportation challenges.

Of course, collisions with other vehicles are a major concern while transporting any farm equipment on public roadways. But the hazard risk is heightened when a load is wider and taller than the infrastructure is designed to accommodate – and plenty of farm equipment takes up more than one lane of a road. That means not only are collisions with motor vehicles a concern, but there's also the risk of coming into contact with guard rails, low-hanging wires, bridges, rail crossing markers, and other types of infrastructure.

Understanding some key points and taking precautions can help you safely get oversized loads from the farmyard to the field and back again.

Before You Go

Before hitting the road, take the time to perform a pre-operational check of the equipment you will be transporting. Ensure that all lights are working and that any warning signs are in good condition and visible.

Remember that it's challenging to monitor large loads once driving has started, so ensure your load is well-secured before you head out.

It's also crucial to plan the route carefully, particularly if it's not one that's familiar. However, planning the route is about more than just checking a map. Before leaving, take a drive to see what infrastructure is on your route and note the placement of any potential obstacles, such as low wires, bridges, or signs. If you're unsure about the clearance under overhead lines, call your power utility rather than take any chances.

The bottom line: If the load you're transporting is going to come into contact with any infrastructure, plan another route.

Consider a Pilot Vehicle

It's also important to evaluate whether you need a pilot vehicle to help transport an oversized load.

For example, when travelling on a route with high-speed roadways or high traffic, it's good practice to use a pilot vehicle whenever possible. You may also want to consider using a pilot vehicle when travelling a long distance. The benefit of using a pilot vehicle

is that it will warn other drivers about the oversized load, letting them know to use extra caution when approaching or passing.

Keep in mind that different jurisdictions have different requirements for pilot vehicles, so be sure to verify the laws applicable in your area.

On the Road

Paying close attention to what's happening around you is your number one priority while driving on public roadways. Make sure to watch for other motor vehicles, as they may be uncertain how to behave when approaching or trying to pass you.

When transporting an oversized load on a public roadway, it's often difficult to see if there is a motor vehicle following you. When trying to determine if a vehicle is behind you, don't suddenly swerve right to move your load out of your line of sight. A motorist driving behind you could misinterpret this manoeuvre as an indication that it's safe to pass, resulting in a collision.

Instead, if you really need to know whether a vehicle is behind you, pull over to the right as far as possible, park, and then get up from the operator's seat and carefully look around your load.

Don't forget that we all share the same goal of making it home safely at the end of the day. And each of us has a role to play in ensuring that happens.

For more information and resources about farm safety, visit casa-acsa.ca.