

DID YOU KNOW???

SLOW MOVING VEHICLE SYMPOSIUM ADDRESSES SAFETY

A March 6th symposium held in Syracuse presented information on the requirements under NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) as applicable to slow-moving vehicles, including Amish buggies. This article will present some of the do's and don'ts that involve slow moving vehicles including farm equipment, construction equipment, and horse-drawn vehicles such as Amish buggies.

By law and/or the Commissioner's Rules and Regulations, animal-drawn vehicles must display a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) sign OR a lighted lantern with a red lens near the left edge of the vehicle and at least 72 square inches of a high quality white or gray reflective tape. For farm or construction equipment designed to operate at 25 mph or less, the SMV emblem is required by VTL 375.36.

If a tractor is pulling another implement such as a hay wagon, both the tractor and the wagon must display a SMV emblem. Furthermore, if a vehicle bearing the SMV emblem is being transported by another vehicle at a speed of greater than 25 mph, the SMV emblem must be covered.

Two other legalities relative to the SMV emblems are that they must be kept clean and clearly visible and they cannot be used on a stationary object such as a marker for a rural mailbox or as a driveway marker.

After dark and when visibility is less than 1000 feet, VTL 376.1 requires farm machinery to be equipped with signaling devices visible from the front and rear, reflectors on the rear as far apart as possible, two white colored headlights, one red tail light on the far left of the rear, and two amber lamps at least 42 inches high visible from the front and rear.

As a driver, you must learn to safely share the road with a variety of other users. These include, but are not limited to, large vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, pedestrians, bicyclists, in-line skaters, roller skaters, skateboarders, slow moving vehicles, non-motorized scooters and horseback riders. Use caution whenever you approach a Slow Moving Vehicle and make sure it is safe before you pass. Although it is legally permissible to cross a solid yellow line on your side when passing bicyclists or pedestrians, it is not allowed when passing a SMV – you must wait for a broken line.

The symposium also detailed dimensional requirements for vehicles in use or in possession by a farmer and used solely for farm purposes and what is required should an oversized vehicle or load be 17 feet in width or greater. Also, operation of agricultural equipment by youths was explained, including at what age youths may work in any farm job and what is required of minors aged 14 and 15. Because these issues apply only to farmers and youths working on a farm, I shall not elaborate on either subject.

Of interest to owners and operators of SMVs, effective June 26, 2019, SMV regulations will change to include slow moving vehicles capable of speeds from 25 mph to 40 mph. This will be the subject of a future Did You Know article as we get closer to the effective date.

Lastly, changes are coming to forms used in NYS crash reports that will enhance the crash information of SMVs and of horse drawn buggies. The form will likely be changed to identify more accurately and gather data on slow moving vehicle crashes.