

Taking the Mystery Out of  
**Implements of Husbandry**  
(And Other Agricultural Vehicular Equipment)

*This summary is designed to identify different types of agricultural vehicular equipment as defined by the California Vehicle Code (VC). The VC distinguishes between **implements of husbandry, farm vehicles, farm trailers** and certain other trailers.*

*These are just some of the laws that may apply to you. For more information, consult the state Vehicle Code or contact the California Department of Motor Vehicles.*

### **Implements of Husbandry**

**Exemptions:** An *implement of husbandry* is exempt from registration, brakes, lights, size limitations (within specific guidelines and with the exception of weight) and identification plates when incidentally operated or moved over a highway.

**Definition:** An *implement of husbandry* is a vehicle used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations. An *implement of husbandry* does not include a vehicle whose existing design is primarily for the transportation of persons or property on a highway, unless specifically designated as such by some other VC provision. [VC § 36000]

**Examples:** The term *implement of husbandry* includes, but is not limited to:

1. A lift-carrier or other vehicle designed and used exclusively for the lifting and carrying of implements of husbandry or tools used exclusively for the production or harvesting of agricultural products, when operated or moved upon a highway. [VC § 36005(a)]
2. A trailer of the tip-bed type when used exclusively in the transportation of other implements of husbandry or tools used exclusively for the production or harvesting of agricultural products. [VC § 36005(b)]
3. A trailer or semitrailer having no bed, and designed and used solely for transporting a hay loader or swather. [VC § 36005(c)]
4. A spray or fertilizer applicator rig designed and used exclusively for spraying or fertilizing in the conduct of agricultural operations (but not an anhydrous ammonia fertilizer applicator rig with a transportation capacity in excess of 500 gallons). [VC § 36005(d)]
5. A trailer or semitrailer with a maximum transportation capacity between 500 and 1,000 gallons, used exclusively for the transportation and application of anhydrous ammonia, if the vehicle is either equipped with operating brakes or is towed upon a highway by a motor truck that is assigned a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating of  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton or more. These vehicles are subject to VC § 24603 (stoplamp requirements) if the stoplamps of the towing vehicle are not clearly visible. Under this provision, a combination of vehicles is limited to two vehicles in tandem. [VC § 36005(e)]
6. A nurse rig or equipment auxiliary to the use of and designed or modified for the fueling, repairing, or loading of an applicator rig or an airplane used for the dusting, spraying, fertilizing, or seeding of crops. [VC § 36005(f)]
7. A row duster. [VC § 36005(g)]
8. A wagon or van used exclusively for carrying products of farming from one part to another part of a farm, or from one farm to another farm, and used solely for agricultural purposes, including any van used in harvesting alfalfa or cotton, that is only incidentally operated or moved on a highway as a trailer. [VC § 36005(h)]
9. A wagon or portable house on wheels used solely by shepherds as a permanent residence in connection with sheep-raising operations and moved from one part to another part of a ranch or from one ranch to another ranch, that is only incidentally operated or moved on a highway as trailer. [VC § 36005(i)]

10. A trap wagon moved from one part to another part of a ranch or from one ranch to another, that is only operated or moved on a highway incidental to agricultural operations. The fuel tank or tanks of the trap wagon may not exceed 1,000 gallons total capacity. [VC § 36005(j)]  
A *trap wagon* is a trailer or semitrailer used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations to fuel, service, or repair implements of husbandry. A trap wagon may be equipped with tools, spare parts, lubricating supplies, or fuel tanks. [VC § 36016]
11. Any vehicle operated upon a highway only for the purpose of transporting agricultural products and never operated along a highway for a total distance greater than one mile from the trip's point of origin. [VC § 36005(k)]
12. A portable honey-extracting trailer or semitrailer. [VC § 36005(l)]
13. A fertilizer nurse tank or trailer that is not self-propelled and that is moved unladen on the highway and auxiliary to use of a spray or fertilize applicator rig. [VC § 36005(m)]
14. Any cotton trailer when used on the highways exclusively to transport cotton from a farm to a cotton gin, and returned empty to such farm. [VC § 36005(n)] (**Note: Cotton trailers are the only implement of husbandry on which identification plates are required.**)
15. A truck tractor or truck tractor and semitrailer combination owned by a farmer and operated on the highways, (1) only incidental to a farming operation, (2) not for compensation, and (3) for a distance of not more than two miles (on the highway) each way. This provision applies only to (1) truck tractors with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating of greater than 10,000 pounds that are equipped with all-wheel drive and off-highway traction tires on all wheels and (2) semitrailers used in combination with such a truck tractor and exclusively in production or harvesting of tomatoes. These vehicles may not be operated in excess of 25 miles per hour on the highways. [VC § 36005(o)]

## Other Farm Vehicles

**Exemption from Registration:** These farm vehicles are exempt from registration only and are subject to all equipment and device requirements as if registered. Except as noted, they are not deemed to be *implements of husbandry*. Identification plates are mandatory.

1. An oversized motor vehicle owned and operated by a farmer, designed and used exclusively for carrying, or returning empty from carrying, feed and seed products of farming, and used on a highway between parts of a farm or between farms. [VC § 36101(a)]
2. A vehicle with a water tank owned by a farmer and used exclusively to service the farmer's own implements of husbandry. [VC § 36101(b)]
3. A water tank truck that is owned by a farmer, not operated for compensation, and used extensively in the conduct of agricultural operations, when used exclusively for sprinkling water on dirt roads providing access to agricultural fields or for transporting water for irrigation of crops or trees. [VC § 36101(c)]
4. A cotton module mover. [VC § 36101(d)] (**Note: See statute for detailed provisions.**)
5. A trailer with a plenum chamber for drying agricultural commodities. [VC § 36101(e)]
6. A trap wagon (see definition under **Implements of Husbandry, Example 10**) equipped with a fuel tank or tanks not exceeding 3,000 gallons total capacity. [VC § 36101(f)] (**Note: The operating parameters for such a trap wagon are not limited to movements between fields or between farms, as specified in Item 10 of "Implements of Husbandry," if it is equipped with brakes, lights and identification plates.**)
7. A forklift truck (including a hay-squeeze) operated by a farmer without compensation. [VC § 36101(g)]

8. A truck tractor or truck tractor and semitrailer combination specified in this subdivision that is owned by a farmer and operated on the highways only incidental to a farming operation and not for compensation. This provision applies only to a truck tractor with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating over 10,000 pounds and with all-wheel drive and off-highway tractor tires on all wheels, and only to semitrailers used in combination with such a truck tractor and exclusively in the production or harvesting of melons. These vehicles may not be operated in excess of 25 miles per hour on the highways. The Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol may, by regulation, prohibit these vehicles from operating on specific routes. These vehicles may not be operated laden on the highway for more than two miles from the point of origin and may not be operated for more than 30 miles unladen on the highway from the point of origin. These vehicles may not be operated for more than 15 miles unladen on the highway from the point of origin, unless accompanied by an escort vehicle to the front and an escort vehicle to the rear. [VC § 36101(h)]
9. A motor vehicle designed for, and used exclusively in, an agricultural operation to carry, or to return empty from carrying, silage that is operated by a farmer, or employee or contracted employee of a farmer, between parts of a farm or between farms, on a highway for a distance not to exceed 20 miles from the trip's point of origin. This provision does not include a vehicle used to transport silage for retail sales. [VC § 36101(i)]
10. An automatic bale wagon operated unladen on a highway. [VC § 36102(a)]
11. An automatic bale wagon when transporting baled hay or straw for a distance of not more than five continuous road miles on a highway between parcels of property owned, leased, or controlled by the same farmer. [VC § 36102(b)]
12. A motor vehicle that is designed and used exclusively to haul feed for livestock and owned and operated exclusively for no compensation by a farmer or a farmer's employee. Such a vehicle may be operated only on highways maintained by local authorities for a distance of not more than five continuous road miles between parcels of property owned, leased, or controlled by the same farmer. [VC § 36102(c)] (*Note: Items 9,10 and 11 may be considered implements of husbandry if operated in accordance with Implements of Husbandry, Example 11.*)

## **Farm Trailers**

**Exemptions:** These farm trailers (if they have a gross vehicle weight of 6,000 pounds or less) are exempt from registration, brakes and lights. Identification plates are mandatory.

1. A trailer that is owned and operated by a farmer in the conduct of agricultural operations and used exclusively to transport agricultural products upon the highway to the point of first handling and return. [VC § 36010(a)]
2. A trailer or semitrailer with rollers on the bed, a frame not taller than 10 inches, and a gross vehicle weight rating of 6,000 pounds or less, and that is owned, rented, or leased by a farmer and operated by that farmer in the conduct of agricultural operations, used exclusively to transport fruit and vegetables upon the highway to the point of first handling and return, and was manufactured and in use before 1997. These vehicles may also be operated on the highways without a load for the purposes of delivering a rented or leased vehicle to the renting or leasing farmer's farm, or returning empty to the owner's premises. [VC § 36010(b)]

*(Note: Empty bins, pallets, and tiedown straps are not considered a load when transported within the parameters of agricultural operations. The total outside width of any of these items may not exceed 102 inches. [VC § 36017])*

## **Other Trailers**

**Exemptions:** These trailers are exempt from registration, brakes, lights and identification plates. Size limitations apply.

A trailer or semitrailer owned and used exclusively by a farmer to haul his own implements of husbandry, a portable sanitary facility, or tools used exclusively for the production or harvesting of agricultural products. [VC § 36105]

*This brochure was produced by the California Farm Bureau Federation's Rural Health and Safety Committee as a service to Farm Bureau members in California. To order, contact Mike Scholl at (916) 561-5598 or e-mail [mscholl@cfbf.com](mailto:mscholl@cfbf.com).*

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