

189.222 Increased height, length, and weight limits on designated highways -- Exceptions -- Cabinet may promulgate administrative regulations to implement federal regulations -- Restriction of cabinet's enforcement powers on locally maintained roads. (Effective July 15, 2026)

- (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet in respect to highways which are a part of the state-maintained system, by official order, may increase on designated highways or portions thereof, the maximum height, length, and gross weight prescribed in KRS 189.221, if in the opinion of the secretary, the increased height, length, and weight designated by him or her are justified by the strength, safety, and durability of the designated highways, and the highways do not appear susceptible to unreasonable and unusual damage by reason of the increases and the secretary may establish reasonable classification of state maintained roads and fix a different maximum for each classification. Any increase in the height, length, or width of any motor truck or tractor semitrailer combinations or any other vehicle combinations including any part of the body or load or designation of highways to be used by the vehicles, shall not, in any way, exceed the federal law or regulations thereunder or jeopardize the allotment or qualification for federal aid funds of the Commonwealth of Kentucky or exceed the following dimensions and weights:
 - (a)
 1. Height, for vehicles transporting motor vehicles, fourteen (14) feet; and
 2. Height, for all other vehicles, thirteen and one-half (13-1/2) feet;
 - (b) Length, semitrailers, fifty-three (53) feet; trailers, twenty-eight (28) feet; motor trucks, forty-five (45) feet, not to exceed two (2) trailers per truck tractor;
 - (c) Weight, twenty thousand (20,000) pounds per single axle, with axles less than forty-two (42) inches apart to be considered as a single axle; thirty-four thousand (34,000) pounds on two (2) axles in tandem arrangement which are spaced forty-two (42) inches or more apart and less than ninety-six (96) inches apart; forty-eight thousand (48,000) pounds on three (3) axles which are spaced forty-two (42) inches or more apart and less than one hundred twenty (120) inches apart. No single axle in any arrangement shall exceed twenty thousand (20,000) pounds or seven hundred (700) pounds per inch of the aggregate width of all the tires on a single axle, whichever is less. The total gross weight of the vehicle and load shall not exceed eighty thousand (80,000) pounds;
 - (d) Except on the interstate highway system, a tolerance of not more than five percent (5%) per axle load shall be permitted before a carrier is deemed to have violated paragraph (c) of this subsection. The gross weight shall not exceed eighty thousand (80,000) pounds;
 - (e) Except as provided for in paragraph (f) of this subsection, truck tractor, semitrailer and trailer combinations, and other vehicle combinations may be operated only on the interstate system and on those parts of the federal aid highway system and the state-maintained system which have been designated by the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet by official order as safely allowing same; and

- (f) A vehicle or combination of vehicles that is one hundred two (102) inches wide or less and has a gross weight of not more than eighty thousand (80,000) pounds may be driven on any state highway, for a distance of up to fifteen (15) miles from an interstate or parkway exit.
- (2) In addition to the provisions of KRS 189.2226, vehicles with a gross weight of up to eighty thousand (80,000) pounds may travel on any state highway in the Commonwealth without obtaining a special permit, if the weight does not exceed any limits mandated by federal law or regulation, any posted bridge weight limit, or the weight limits for the size and type of vehicle established under subsection (1)(c) of this section, and if the vehicle is transporting any of the following:
 - (a) Meats or agricultural crop products originating from a farm to first market;
 - (b) Livestock or poultry from their point of origin to first market. As used in this paragraph and in paragraph (d) of this subsection, "livestock" means cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, alpacas, llamas, buffaloes, or any other animals of the bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine, equine, or camelid species;
 - (c) Primary forest products, including, but not limited to, sawdust, wood chips, bark, slabs, or logs originating from their points of origin to first market; or
 - (d) Supplies, materials, or equipment necessary to carry out a farming operation engaged in the production of agricultural crop products, meats, livestock, or poultry.
 - (3) The following vehicles registered under KRS 186.050 may exceed the gross weight provisions set forth in subsection (1)(c) of this section by a weight tolerance of ten percent (10%), except on the interstate highway system:
 - (a) Vehicles that are engaged exclusively in the transportation of items listed in subsection (2)(a), (b), and (c) of this section; and
 - (b) Vehicles that are engaged exclusively in the transportation of feed for livestock or poultry.
 - (4) (a) Notwithstanding KRS 189.269, vehicles with a gross weight of up to ninety thousand (90,000) pounds transporting fluid milk originating from a farm to first market may travel on any state highway in the Commonwealth without obtaining a special permit, except that:
 - 1. The weight of the vehicle and load under this subsection shall not exceed any limits mandated by federal law or regulation, or any posted bridge weight limit; and
 - 2. A vehicle being operated on the interstate highway system shall not exceed eighty thousand (80,000) pounds.
 - (b) A vehicle may exceed the weight provisions established by this subsection by a weight tolerance of ten percent (10%), except on the interstate highway system.
 - (5) Vehicles exclusively engaged in the transportation of motor vehicles, unmanufactured tobacco, or unmanufactured tobacco products may, on those highways which are a part of the state-maintained system and which have been designated by the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet by official order as safely allowing same, attain the maximum lengths as provided by subsection (1)(b) of this

section, excluding the usual and ordinary bumper overhang of the transported vehicles.

- (6) Vehicles engaged exclusively in the transportation of farm or primary forestry products and registered under KRS 186.050(4) or 186.050(9) and vehicles engaged exclusively in the transportation of ready-mixed concrete shall be excluded from the axle weight provisions, except on interstate highways, and subject only to total gross weight provisions.
- (7) Vehicles registered pursuant to KRS 186.050(3)(b) and engaged in the transportation of primary forest products, including, but not limited to, vehicles transporting sawdust, wood chips, bark, slabs, or logs, may exceed the axle, or gross weight provisions as set forth in accordance with subsection (1)(c) of this section by a weight tolerance of ten percent (10%), except on the interstate highway system.
- (8) Vehicles designed for and engaged exclusively in the collection and hauling of refuse and registered under KRS 186.050(3)(b) shall be excluded from the axle weight provisions, except when in operation on the federal interstate system, and subject only to total gross weight provisions.
- (9) The secretary of the Transportation Cabinet may by order increase the weight and height limits prescribed by this chapter for motor vehicles while being operated exclusively on roads or highways being constructed, reconstructed, or repaired under contract with the Transportation Cabinet by the contractor or subcontractor, agent, or employee thereof.
- (10) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet shall not authorize the operation of any vehicle or combination of vehicles, upon any part of the federal aid highway system or state parkway system, which exceeds the following dimensions and weights:
 - (a) Width, one hundred two (102) inches, including any part of the body or load; or
 - (b) Weight, twenty thousand (20,000) pounds per single axle, with axles less than forty-two (42) inches apart to be considered as a single axle; thirty-four thousand (34,000) pounds on two (2) axles in tandem arrangement which are spaced forty-two (42) inches or more apart and less than ninety-six (96) inches apart; forty-eight thousand (48,000) pounds on three (3) axles which are spaced forty-two (42) inches or more apart and less than one hundred twenty (120) inches apart. The total gross weight of the vehicle and load shall not exceed eighty thousand (80,000) pounds. If any federal law or laws or regulations thereunder are hereafter enacted authorizing weights and dimensions in excess of those set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subsection, the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet may by official order increase the maximum weights and dimensions but the increased weights and dimensions shall not exceed those set out in this section.
- (11) Except on the interstate highway system, vehicles engaged exclusively in the transportation of crushed stone, fill dirt and rock, soil, bulk sand, coal, phosphate muck, asphalt, concrete, solid waste, tankage or animal residues, livestock, feed for livestock or poultry, and agricultural products shall be permitted a tolerance of ten

percent (10%) of the axle weight provisions before a carrier is deemed to have violated subsection (1)(c) of this section.

- (12) For any vehicle which is equipped with an auxiliary power unit, the weight limits set forth in this section shall be increased by four hundred (400) pounds.
- (13) The Transportation Cabinet may promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A, relating to the implementation of 23 C.F.R. pt. 658 as it relates to state-maintained or locally maintained roads. The enforcement of the provisions of KRS 189.221 and this section on locally maintained roads shall not be the responsibility of the law enforcement officers of the Transportation Cabinet, unless the head of the corresponding local government unit has requested, in writing, enforcement assistance from the Transportation Cabinet.

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History: Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 133, sec. 2, effective July 15, 2026. -- Amended 2024 Ky. Acts ch. 198, sec. 5, effective July 15, 2024. -- Amended 2018 Ky. Acts ch. 175, sec. 2, effective July 14, 2018. -- Amended 2017 Ky. Acts ch. 8, sec. 1, effective June 29, 2017; ch. 129, sec. 10, effective June 29, 2017; ch. 146, sec. 3, effective June 29, 2017; and ch. 146, sec. 9, effective June 29, 2017. -- Amended 2009 Ky. Acts ch. 34, sec. 1, effective June 25, 2009. -- Amended 2003 Ky. Acts ch. 30, sec. 1, effective June 24, 2003; and ch. 124, sec. 36, effective June 24, 2003. -- Amended 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 111, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1994. -- Amended 1992 Ky. Acts ch. 132, sec. 2, effective July 14, 1992. -- Amended 1990 Ky. Acts ch. 71, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1990; and ch. 179, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1990. -- Amended 1984 Ky. Acts ch. 393, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1984. -- Amended 1982 Ky. Acts ch. 85, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1982. -- Amended 1980 Ky. Acts ch. 39, sec. 3, effective July 15, 1980. -- Amended 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 368, sec. 1. -- Amended 1972 Ky. Acts ch. 150, sec. 1. -- Amended 1966 Ky. Acts ch. 261, sec. 1. -- Amended 1964 Ky. Acts ch. 95, sec. 3. -- Amended 1962 Ky. Acts ch. 108, sec. 1. -- Amended 1960 Ky. Acts ch. 254, sec. 2. -- Amended 1958 Ky. Acts ch. 70, sec. 29. -- Amended 1956 (2nd Extra. Sess.) Ky. Acts ch. 1, sec. 2. -- Created 1950 Ky. Acts ch. 115, sec. 3.