



SEC. 390.21 MARKING OF COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES

- (a) **General.** Every self-propelled commercial motor vehicle, as defined in §390.5, subject to subchapter B of this chapter must be marked as specified in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.
- (b) **Nature of Marking.** The marking must display the following information:
- (1) The legal name or a single trade name of the motor carrier operating the self-propelled commercial motor vehicle, as listed on the Motor Carrier Identification Report (Form MCS-150) and submitted in accordance with §390.19.
 - (2) The motor carrier identification number issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, preceded by the letters “USDOT.”
 - (3) If the name of any person other than the operating carrier appears on the commercial motor vehicle, the name of the operating carrier must be followed by the information required by paragraphs (b)(1), and (2) of this section, and be preceded by the words “operated by.”
 - (4) Other identifying information may be displayed on the vehicle if it is not inconsistent with the information required by this paragraph.
 - (5) Each motor carrier shall meet the following requirements pertaining to its operation:
 - (i) All commercial motor vehicles that are part of a motor carrier’s existing fleet on July 3, 2000, and which are marked with an ICC/MC number must come into compliance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section by July 3, 2002.
 - (ii) All commercial motor vehicles that are part of a motor carrier’s existing fleet on July 3, 2000 and which are not marked with the legal name or a single trade name on both sides of their commercial motor vehicles, as shown on the Motor Carrier Identification Report, Form MCS-150, must come into compliance with paragraph (b)(1) of this section by July 5, 2005.
 - (iii) All commercial motor vehicles added to a motor carrier’s fleet on or after July 3, 2000, must meet the requirements of this section before being put in service and operating on public ways.



- (c) ***Size, shape, location, and color of marking.*** The marking must:
- (1) Appear on both sides of the self-propelled commercial motor vehicle;
 - (2) Be in letters that contrast sharply in color with the background on which the letters are placed;
 - (3) Be readily legible, during daylight hours, from a distance of 50 feet (15.24 meters) while the commercial motor vehicle is stationary; and
 - (4) Be kept and maintained in a manner that retains the legibility required by paragraph (c)(3) of this section.
- (d) ***Construction and durability.*** The marking may be painted on the commercial motor vehicle or may consist of a removable device, if that device meets the identification and legibility requirements of paragraph (c) of this section, and such marking must be maintained as required by paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

Truck cab marking requirements — Questions & Answers

Q: What do motor carriers need to put on the sides of their trucks?

A: A motor carrier displays two things on both sides of each power unit: (1) the carrier's legal name or a single trade name of the business that owns or controls operations, and (2) the carrier's U.S. DOT number.

Exceptions: The requirements don't apply to vehicles 26,000 lbs. or less (gross combination weight rating) if used only in intrastate private carriage, except vehicles hauling hazardous materials of a type or quantity requiring placarding, or passenger vehicles with a seating capacity of 15 or more including the driver. Carriers conducting for-hire operations with passenger vehicles with a seating capacity of 9 to 15, including driver, are only required to display the U.S. DOT number.

Q: Do these vehicle identification requirements apply to everybody around the country?

A: Yes, the U.S. DOT set these requirements in July 2000 and they apply to interstate carriers who operate throughout the country. They also apply to intrastate carriers who operate within a state because most states adopt and follow federal commercial vehicle regulations. (See 49 CFR 390.21, Marking of Commercial Motor Vehicles.)

With all carriers identified by a U.S. DOT number it's possible to accurately link them with safety inspection and accident data in a national databank of information.

Q: How do carriers get a U.S. DOT number?

A: Carriers get a U.S. DOT number by completing an MCS-150 registration form. Register online at the following Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Website:

https://li-public.fmcsa.dot.gov/LIVIEW/PKG_REGISTRATION.prc_option

Carriers already assigned a DOT number can also go online to update information, which they're required to do every two years.

Q: What if an intrastate carrier changes and starts operating interstate?

A: The carrier needs to complete a new MCS-150 form, update carrier information, and apply for MC Authority.

Q: What are the marking requirements if someone other than the operating carrier is operating the vehicle?

A: If someone other than the operating carrier is operating a commercial motor vehicle, the vehicle must be marked like the following example:

Joe Smith (name of lessor, owner-operator)

Operated by

John Doe Trucking

USDOT# 1234567

Q: How large should truck markings be?

A: Letters and numbers must “contrast sharply” with background colors and be large enough to be seen from a distance of 50 feet during daylight hours when the vehicle is stationary.

