

DOT Number Required for Interstate Travel with Tow Vehicle and Trailer

More dealers have replaced their straight trucks and use tow vehicles and fifth-wheel trailers to move smaller equipment. Recently, four dealers were informed that if their tow vehicle/trailer gross combined weight rating (GCWR) was more than 10,000 lbs. and they crossed state lines, the vehicle would be considered a commercial motor vehicle and would require a U.S. DOT number. In addition, that vehicle must abide by interstate commerce commercial motor vehicle laws. The Illinois DOT informed two of the dealers, while the others involved the Missouri and South Dakota DOT.

Note: If this type of combination vehicle stays within the state (either Iowa or Nebraska), no U.S. DOT number is required at this time.

As tow vehicles and trailers become bigger, more combination vehicles will fall under commercial motor vehicle laws for in-state use. For example, if a tow unit is over 10,000 lbs. and the combination tow vehicle/trailer is over 26,000 lbs., it is considered a commercial motor vehicle. One dealer had the unfortunate experience where his combination vehicle weighed 27,000 lbs. and the vehicle was pulled over. The driver did not have a commercial driver's license, so he lost his driver's license for six months.

Don't be surprised to see more regulations regarding tow vehicle/fifth-wheel trailer combination vehicles. The DOT has noted a huge increase in the usage and size of these types of vehicles. Some states already require DOT numbers for in-state travel for these types of combination vehicles.

References:

Iowa: www.dot.state.ia.us/mvd/omve/truckguide.pdf