

# Are Your Trucks And Employees MN DOT Compliant?

By Jeramie Gossman

Assistant Golf Course Superintendent  
Town and Country Club

Recently an employee of our golf course was returning back to work after picking up a load of shredded wood mulch. He was driving one of our one-ton dump trucks. Unfortunately for this employee, he did not realize that one of the brake lights was out. An observant state patrol officer pulled us over for this violation. The state patrol officer also noticed that there were Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN DOT) violations with the truck. At that point, he called a MN DOT inspection officer for a more thorough vehicle inspection. A big bright orange OUT-OF-SERVICE sticker was placed on the windshield and a fine for the violations was handed over. This was a complete surprise to Superintendent William Larson CGCS of Town and Country Club in Saint Paul MN, since we were completely unaware that the truck qualified as a commercial vehicle. The truck was registered and plated with the state and there was not any mention from the licensing office of this issue. Apparently, any vehicle over 10,000 pounds gross weight is considered a commercial vehicle. The fines for the violations totaled \$480.00. These violations specified on the OUT-OF-SERVICE sticker had to be rectified before the sticker could be removed and the truck cleared to drive. There were also many other items that did not meet MN DOT standards. For those not familiar with MN DOT requirements we are listing what we have recently learned.

## Vehicle Requirements

In order for trucks that are over 10,000 pounds to be compliant they must meet the following:

- + The vehicle must possess the proper license plates that contain the letters Y and A vertically over one another.
- + A sticker on the plates specifying that the vehicle weighs over 10,000 pounds.
- + Vehicle must be identified with the companies name, city and state on the exterior of the power unit of the vehicle. It must be clearly legible from 50 feet during daylight hours while the vehicle is stationary and the colors must contrast that of

the vehicles background color.

- + A US DOT # is required and must be displayed if the vehicle is going to be used for interstate driving.

- + Must have a filled and secured fire extinguisher in the passenger area of the vehicle.

- + Carry spare fuses and light bulbs and a screwdriver for changing them.

- + Safety triangles must be carried in the vehicle.

- + The load must be properly secured and not obscure the drivers vision.

- + There are required bumper and mud flap specifications that must be met.

## Driver Requirements

- + The driver must have access to the proper vehicle registration form for the vehicle in which they are driving.

- + There must be proof that the vehicle has proper insurance coverage.

- + The driver of the vehicle must possess a current license for the vehicle of which they are operating.

- + You must be 18 years of age or older to operate a commercial vehicle.

- + A medical examination certificate, which is acquired from a certified physician for MN DOT licensing must be in the driver's possession at all times while operating a commercial vehicle. The medical certificate must be renewed every two years.

- + The driver must be able to adequately read and speak English well enough to do the job.

- + Must be able to drive the vehicle safely.

- + Know how to properly load and secure cargo.

- + The driver is responsible for inspecting the vehicle prior to departure to ensure that safe operating conditions and all compliance regulations are met.

Even though a vehicle that has a gross weight of 10,000 pounds or over is considered a commercial vehicle, does not mean that the driver has to possess a commercial drivers license. If the gross weight of the vehicle is over 26,000 pounds then a commercial drivers license must be obtained. If a vehicle has been labeled

with an OUT-OF-SERVICE sticker and is driven from the scene of which it has been ticketed without rectifying the compliance issues, the driver may be disqualified for at least 90 days and fined not less than \$1000, and the employer may be fined up to \$10,000.

This experience has been an eye opener for us. Hopefully the information provided in this article will prevent other courses from running into similar problems. All of this information is easily obtained by calling MN DOT. One simple phone call can save a lot of headaches DOWN THE ROAD.

## Further Information Can Be Obtained by Calling:

MN DOT - (651) 215-5691  
or toll free 1 (888) 472-3389

1110 Center Pointe Curve  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120-4152  
*\* Request the handbook Minnesota  
Commercial Truck and  
Passenger Regulations*

MN DOT office of Freight and  
Commercial Vehicle Operations  
(651) 405-6060

Minnesota State Patrol  
(651) 405-6171

## Websites Where Information Can Be Found:

For Federal Motor Carrier Safety  
Administration and medical forms:  
[www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Minnesota Department  
of Public Safety  
[www.dps.state.mn.us](http://www.dps.state.mn.us)

Minnesota Department  
of Transportation  
[www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us)