

Trucking regulations may apply to turfgrass managers

Turfgrass managers' vehicles may fall under two provisions of U.S. Transportation Department (DOT) regulations. They are the Hazardous Materials regulations (HAZMAT) and Motor Carrier Safety regulations.

Federal regulations require that the transporter comply with the regulations if the product being transported is identified as a DOT regulated product. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), which are available from either the product supplier or the manufacturer, should identify the product as such. If the MSDS does not identify the product as being DOT regulated, then the transporter should contact the manufacturer for that information. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) has a hazardous materials table. Title 49, parts 100 - 180 of the CFR list all of the compliance requirements for transportation of HAZMAT listed products. If the product being transported is not listed as a HAZMAT material, it may still be subject to the requirements of the federal Motor Carrier Safety regulations.

Drug and alcohol rules set

Also, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has finalized the rules for drug and alcohol testing of interstate and intrastate truck drivers with commercial driver's licenses. The rules prohibit the use of any drug, unless prescribed by a doctor, and prohibit on-the-job consumption of alcohol. The rules require that employers must test employees before employing them, after any accident, and when the employer has reasonable suspicion that the employee may be violating the rules. Employers are subject to random record-keeping audits by the FHWA beginning Jan. 1, 1995 for companies with more than 50 employees and by Jan. 1, 1996 for companies with less than 50 employees.

Conditions under which vehicle may be regulated:

- vehicle is self powered or towed
- used to transport people or material
- gross vehicle weight more than 10,000 pounds
- used to transport more than 15 people, including the driver
- used to transport hazardous materials in large enough quantities to require that the vehicle be placarded.

Motor Carrier Safety rules include these categories:

- drivers required to have a commercial driver's license
- driver drug screening, physical exams, etc.
- driver working hour limitations
- safety inspections of vehicles by state and federal transportation agencies
- vehicle noise limitations
- liability insurance requirements
- examination of company records on vehicle safety inspections, repairs, and maintenance
- company policies that delineate HAZMAT rules and requirements.