

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Slow Moving Vehicle Emblems



Slow moving vehicles are sometimes taken for granted and to some seem not very important.

According to the National Safety Council, approximately 15,000 farm vehicles are involved in highway accidents each year. Studies of accidents between slow moving vehicles and motor vehicles conclude that almost 90% occur on dry road during daylight hours. Two-thirds of these accidents are rear end collisions. If a fatality occurs, it is usually a tractor driver.

The Mississippi Code of 1972, regarding the use of slow moving emblems, states that the Commissioner of Public Safety is authorized, empowered and directed to adopt rules and regulations establishing rules, standards and specifications for design, materials and installations of the signs on implements. It also states that the signs should be compatible with other states, whose recommendations come from the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE).

The approved emblem is a yellow-orange and red fluorescent triangle. Triangles can be recognized better from distances than other shapes, and the fluorescent center is highly visible. The emblem should be mounted on the rear of the vehicle, as close to the center as possible, with the point of the triangle aimed upwards and 2-6 feet up above the ground. The SMV should be on the unit in addition to the required lighting. The bright fluorescent triangle is visible from more than 1,000 feet (one-fifth mile). At night the reflective red border of the SMV sign is illuminated instantly by oncoming headlights, immediately identifying a slow moving vehicle.

The question is always brought up that with the extremely large tractors and implements that are highly visible on highways, why then should a SMV be required? Many residents, rural and urban, have little or no experience with farming, but they share the road with tractors and implements. Their lack of familiarity with farm equipment may be responsible for their poor judgment of gauging speeds and distances of slow moving vehicles. Cars are normally driving at 55 MPH and tractors are moving at 20 MPH or less. Typically, drivers do not instantly recognize the difference in speed and may not apply their brakes fast enough to avoid a collision. Motor vehicle drivers need to be able to identify slow moving vehicles in time to react safely.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SLOW-MOVING VEHICLE OPERATORS:

Be certain that every slow moving vehicle and piece of trailed equipment has a properly placed and legible SMV emblem mounted on it.

Replace worn, torn or faded signs as quickly as possible.

Do not use SMV emblems for stationary markers in driveway entrances or for mailboxes. Being a warning device, extended misuse can result in the loss of effectiveness for their real or intended use.

Anticipate problems that motorists might have because of their limited experience with SMV emblems and give them some extra room.

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Excerpts:Ms. Code of Regs.

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