

Towing the line – are you road legal?



With the approach of the silage and cereal harvesting season, do you know what traffic regulations apply when driving your forage harvester or combine on the road?

In order to try and clarify the rules relating to agricultural harvesting machinery, in consultation with the Department for Transport and the Police, here we outline our interpretation of the regulations as they currently stand.

For full details, please refer to the UK Road Regulations which are covered by: "Statutory Instrument 1986 No 1078 Road Traffic - The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986"

Industry negotiations to change the Construction & Use (C&U) regulations have been ongoing with the Department for Transport for the past five years, without any satisfactory outcome. However, in due course it is expected that new European regulations will be introduced which will cover all these requirements.

In the meantime, continued use of agricultural harvesting equipment is expected to be permitted using the basis of the following guidelines, as discussed with Department of Transport officers; however this cannot be taken as an exemption to the law as it currently stands, within the C & U regulations SI number 1078:1986.

COMBINE & FORAGE HARVESTERS ON THE ROAD:

A combine over 4.3 metres wide:

(e.g. all LEXION's with 1050/50R32 tyres)

- This needs to be treated under an "STGO" (Special Type Goods Order)
- Movements require a VSE (Vehicle Special Exemption) order from DfT.
- Contact your local Police Abnormal Loads Officer
- It cannot tow trailers of any kind
- Speed on the road is limited to 12 mph (19 km/h)

A combine between 3.5 and 4.3 metres wide:

(e.g. LEXION 770 to 620 & TUCANO 480 to 320 with 800/65R32 tyres or above).

- It should not tow a trailer of any kind
- Speed is restricted to 12 mph (19 km/h)
- An escort vehicle must be provided
- Local Police should be notified of any movement on the road.
- Some local Police forces may provide dispensation, on prior request

A Combine or Forager under 3.5 metres wide:

(e.g. LEXION 750TT, 750,740,630 & 620 with 680/85R32 tyres or smaller. TUCANO 430 & 320 with 680/85R32 tyres or smaller and all AVERO's and JAGUARS)

- It can tow an Agricultural Trailed Appliance Conveyor (ATAC) which is in effect a Cutterbar transporter
- Speed is restricted to 20 mph (32 km/h)
- Local Police should be notified of any movement on the road
- Some local Police forces may provide dispensation, on prior request
- An escort vehicle is recommended.

CUTTERBARS / FRONT ATTACHMENTS TRAILED BEHIND A COMBINE / FORAGER:

An Agricultural Trailed Appliance Conveyor (ATAC) is a purpose made transporter, which is intended for one purpose only - to carry a piece of agricultural equipment such as a combine cutterbar. It is in effect a Cutterbar or Front Attachment transporter.

- It is restricted to 20 mph (32 km/h)
- It must have pneumatic tyres
- It should have a maximum of 510 kg unladen weight.
- It should have one axle
- Extremities must be marked
- Lights are required, including turn indicators.

All cutterbars of 7.5m or less behind a LEXION, TUCANO or AVERO:

An ATAC which complies with all of the rules above and is less than 3500kg gross weight, can be towed behind a combine of less than 3.5 metres wide.

All cutterbars of 9.0m and above from 2011 onwards. All DIRECT CUT DD 610 & DD 520 Forager Front attachments:

An ATAC over 750kg unladen weight should have brakes. Over-run brakes are acceptable, provided they meet the minimum braking requirements and the combination is restricted to 20 mph.

CUTTERBARS / FRONT ATTACHMENTS TOWED BEHIND A TRACTOR:

A cutterbar on a purpose made transporter - such as an ATAC - and towed behind an agricultural tractor, becomes an "Agricultural Trailed Appliance" (ATA) for which different regulations apply.

- It is restricted to 20 mph (32 km/h)
- It must have pneumatic tyres
- Extremities must be marked
- Lights are required, including turn indicators

All CLAAS Cutterbars up to 12m towed by a tractor:

There is a special section within C & U, which allows a vehicle combination to include a trailer, constructed for the conveyance of specific exceptional length indivisible loads:

- The maximum length limit is 27.4 metres.

All Cutterbars 9.0m and above. All Forager Direct Disc headers, 520 and above:

- Brakes are required where the unladen weight is above 750 kgs. Over-run brakes are acceptable, provided they meet the minimum braking requirements and the combination is restricted to 20 mph.

For further information www.roadtransport.com is a useful website.