

Agricultural guidance for escort vehicles

The NFU, NFUS and NAAC (National Association of Agricultural Contractors) have worked in conjunction with the NPCC (National Police Chief's Council) to provide the guidance below. However, this is not legislation and is to be considered as guidance and will not necessarily be followed and enforced by each individual police force.

Please contact your local police force to understand the precise requirements for the movement of agricultural abnormal loads.

Note – * symbol at the beginning of sections in yellow boxes means the following statement is a legal requirement.

The legislation referenced in this document can be found in [The Road Vehicles \(Authorisation of Special Types\) \(General\) Order 2003](#), specifically [Part 3 – Special vehicles for agriculture, Article 12\(1\)](#), and [Schedule 6](#).

This document is **specific to agriculture**. However, further information on general escort vehicle best practice can be found in the National Highways' [Code of Practice](#).

Escort vehicles

When do I require an attendant?

* It is a legal requirement to have an attendant present with the movement of any abnormal load if the: width exceeds 3.5 metres; length of any forward or rearward projection of the load exceeds 6 metres or the load exceeds a length of 25.9 metres (as per [Part 3 – Special vehicles for agriculture](#)).

If an abnormal load meets the requirements of needing an attendant, the police must be informed of this movement. More information on advanced notice to the police can be found in [Sections 23 and 24 of the STGO \(Standard Type General Order\) Regulations](#).

Most police forces issue an annual agricultural dispensation, removing the need to notify each time an abnormal load is moved. Contact your local police force about its approach to notifying for agricultural abnormal loads.

Attendant requirements

* The attendant must have appropriate training or experience (as per [Schedule 6](#) and [Article 12\(1\)](#) of the STGO regulations).

* Furthermore (as per Schedule 6) a person ("an attendant") must be employed:

- a) to accompany the vehicle or vehicle-combination;
- b) to attend to the vehicle or to all vehicles comprised in the combination;
- c) to attend to any load or loads carried on such vehicle or vehicles; and
- d) to give warning to the driver of the vehicle or vehicle-combination, and to any other person, of any danger likely to be caused to such other person by reason of the presence on the road of the vehicle or vehicle-combination.

The attendant should be appropriately dressed to undertake all necessary actions in assisting the movement of the abnormal load. It is recommended that the attendant should wear a hi-viz vest or jacket to ensure visibility.

Despite the attendant's role including giving warning to oncoming traffic of the presence of the abnormal load, the attendant **is not** allowed to stop or direct traffic under any circumstances.

Requirements of the attendant driving an escort vehicle

* It is a requirement to ensure a direct radio voice link is in operation at all times between the abnormal load and the escorting vehicle (as per [Schedule 6](#)). While it is not an offence to use a two-way radio while driving, the drivers must always be in full control of the vehicle. Additionally, as far as is reasonably practicable, the attendant in the escort vehicle should be able to see the vehicle it's escorting at all times during the journey.

It is important that the designated escort driver knows exactly what is expected of them **before** starting the journey.

In addition to familiarising themselves with the load and the proposed route, the escort driver should ensure that the escort vehicle(s) is fit for purpose.

Suitable escort vehicles

Although there are no specific legal vehicle requirements, there are recognised best practice guidelines which **should be** followed wherever possible.

It is recommended that, wherever possible, a pickup or similar vehicle is used as this is more conspicuous.

The escort vehicle must afford the driver good visibility. To facilitate this to the rear and side, the vehicle should be fitted with exterior mirrors on both sides. In addition, it is preferable, but not essential, to have side windows to the rear of the driver as well as a rear window to aid driver visibility.

The attendant must be dedicated to the task. This means that they can't tow a trailer or implement as they would be carrying out another operation.

A tractor can be used as an escort vehicle, but the tractor **must not** exceed the width, forward and rearward projection, and length limits which if exceeded would require advanced notice to the police/need for an attendant.

An attendant must be dedicated to the escort task, which means not being involved in another operation eg, towing a trailer or implement.

Lighting for escort vehicles

It is not a legal requirement for the escorting vehicle to have a particular form of lighting. However, it is best practice to exhibit two beacons, one on each side of the roof, **or** one beacon stretching the width of the roof, ensuring that there is at least one beacon visible from 360 degrees around the escort vehicle.

If beacons are used, they should not be in a position or style that they can be confused with other lighting systems on the vehicle

Signage for escort vehicles

It is not a legal requirement for the escorting vehicle to exhibit any signage. However, it is best practice that the vehicle displays some form of signage identifying it as an escort vehicle eg, wide load or escort vehicle.

When using an escort vehicle, where should it be located on the road?

The type of road will determine whether the escort vehicle should travel ahead of, or behind, the abnormal vehicle:

- On dual carriageways, the escort vehicle should be situated behind the abnormal vehicle.
- On single carriageway, the escort vehicle should be ahead of the abnormal vehicle.

Disclaimer and important information

Please note that this guidance is intended for general information purposes only. It is not intended to be, and does not constitute, a definitive guide to the law or professional legal, health and safety advice. It cannot be a substitute for independent, situation-specific advice. The NFU, NFUS, and NAAC have taken all reasonable care in preparing this material. However, we can accept no responsibility for any errors, omissions, or subsequent legislative changes, or for any consequences arising from individual circumstances which cannot be fully accounted for herein.

It is the sole responsibility of the operator, driver, and any other duty holder to ensure that their activities are fully compliant with all current and applicable laws and regulations. Before undertaking any operation, you should satisfy yourself that you have understood and met all legal requirements.

We strongly recommend that you seek specific professional advice tailored to your individual operations and circumstances.

NFU members can obtain free initial Legal and Professional advice from NFU CallFirst on **0370 845 8458**.

NAAC members can call **01780 784631** for more information.

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