

VEHICLE LOAD PENALTIES AMENDMENTS

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jani Iwamoto

House Sponsor: Mike Winder

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill amends provisions related to penalties for operating a vehicle with an unsecured load.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- makes any repeat violator subject to an increased fine.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

72-7-409, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2017, Chapter 150

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **72-7-409** is amended to read:

72-7-409. Loads on vehicles -- Limitations -- Confining, securing, and fastening load required -- Penalty.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Agricultural product" means any raw product which is derived from agriculture,



including silage, hay, straw, grain, manure, and other similar product.

(b) (i) "Unsecured load" means the contents of a vehicle, operated on a highway, not sufficiently covered, confined, fastened, or otherwise secured in a way to prevent the contents from escaping the vehicle.

(ii) "Unsecured load" includes materials such as dirt, sand, gravel, rock fragments, pebbles, crushed base, aggregate, any other similar material, or scrap metal or other loose material on any portion of the vehicle not designed to carry the material.

(c) "Vehicle" means the same as that term is defined in Section 41-1a-102.

(2) Except as provided in Subsections (3) through (5), a person may not:

(a) operate a vehicle with an unsecured load on any highway; or

(b) operate a vehicle carrying trash or garbage without a covering over the entire load.

(3) (a) A vehicle carrying dirt, sand, gravel, rock fragments, pebbles, crushed base, aggregate, any other similar material, or scrap metal shall have a covering over the entire load unless:

(i) the highest point of the load does not extend above the top of any exterior wall or sideboard of the cargo compartment of the vehicle; and

(ii) the outer edges of the load are at least six inches below the top inside edges of the exterior walls or sideboards of the cargo compartment of the vehicle.

(b) The following material is exempt from the provisions of Subsection (3)(a):

(i) hot mix asphalt;

(ii) construction debris or scrap metal if the debris or scrap metal is a size and in a form not susceptible to being blown out of the vehicle;

(iii) material being transported across a highway between two parcels of property that would be contiguous but for the highway that is being crossed; and

(iv) material listed under Subsection (3)(a) that is enclosed on all sides by containers, bags, or packaging.

(c) A chemical substance capable of coating or bonding a load so that the load is confined on a vehicle, may be considered a covering for purposes of Subsection (3)(a) so long as the chemical substance remains effective at confining the load.

(4) Subsection (2) does not apply to a vehicle or implement of husbandry carrying an agricultural product, if the agricultural product is:

(a) being transported in a manner which is not a hazard or a potential hazard to the safe operation of the vehicle or to other highway users; and

(b) loaded in a manner that only allows minimal spillage.

(5) (a) An authorized vehicle performing snow removal services on a highway is exempt from the requirements of this section.

(b) This section does not prohibit the necessary spreading of any substance connected with highway maintenance, construction, securing traction, or snow removal.

(6) (a) Any person suspected of operating a vehicle with an unsecured load on a highway may be issued a warning.

(b) Any person who violates this section is guilty of:

(i) an infraction, if the violation creates a hazard but does not lead to a motor vehicle accident;

(ii) a class B misdemeanor, if the violation creates a hazard that leads to a motor vehicle accident; or

(iii) a class A misdemeanor, if the violation creates a hazard that leads to a motor vehicle accident that results in the serious bodily injury or death of a person.

(c) A person who violates a provision of this section shall be fined not less than:

(i) \$200 for a violation; or

(ii) \$500 for a second or subsequent violation [~~within three years of a previous violation~~] of this section.

(d) A person who violates a provision of this section while operating a commercial vehicle as defined in Section 72-9-102 shall be fined:

(i) not less than \$500 for a violation; or

(ii) \$1,000 for a second or subsequent violation [~~within three years of a previous violation~~] of this section.

(7) As resources and opportunities allow, the department shall implement programs or activities that increase public awareness on the importance of properly securing loads.