CHAPTER 16
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT (SE)

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16.000 Introduction

This chapter contains special equipment (SE) identification (ID) requirements and procedures.

Cemetery (CVC §4012)—Any vehicle, implement, or equipment specifically designed or altered for and used exclusively in the maintenance or operation of cemetery grounds, which is only incidentally operated or moved on a highway.

Farm Tractor Used for Towing (CVC §36015)—Implement of husbandry includes any farm tractor, otherwise an implement of husbandry, used upon a highway to draw a farm trailer, carrying farm produce, or to draw any trailer or semitrailer carrying other implements of husbandry, between farms, or from a farm to a processing or handling point and returning with or without the trailer.

Farm Trailer (CVC §36010)—A farm trailer is either of the following:

• A trailer or semitrailer owned and operated by a farmer in the conduct of agricultural operations, and used exclusively to transport agricultural products upon the highways to the point of first handling and return.

• A trailer or semitrailer equipped with rollers on the bed, with a frame not taller than 10 inches high, and with a gross vehicle weight (GVW) rating of 10,000 pounds or less, that is owned, rented, or leased by a farmer and operated by that farmer in the conduct of agricultural operations, used exclusively to transport fruit and vegetables upon the highway to the point of first handling and return, and that was manufactured and in use prior to January 1, 1997. These vehicles may also be operated on the highways without a load for the purpose of delivering a rented or leased vehicle to the renting or leasing farmer’s farm, or returning empty to the owner’s premises.

Farm Vehicles (CVC §36101)—The following farm vehicles are exempt from registration provided they have and display an SE plate as specified in CVC §5014. These vehicles are not implements of husbandry and are subject to all equipment and device requirements as if registered.

• An oversized farm vehicle requiring a permit under CVC §35780, owned and operated by a farmer, designed and used exclusively for carrying feed and seed products of farming from one part of a farm to another part thereof, or from one farm to another farm and returning empty (CVC §36101(a)) (formerly referred to as Oversize Feed and Seed Motor Vehicle).

• A vehicle equipped with a water tank owned by a farmer and used exclusively to service the farmer’s own implements of husbandry (CVC §36101(b)).

• A water tank truck, which is owned by a farmer, not operated for compensation, and used extensively in the conduct of agricultural operations, when used exclusively for sprinkling water on dirt roads providing access to agricultural fields or transportation of water for irrigation of crops or trees (CVC §36101(c)).
16.000 Introduction, continued

• A modular mover as defined in CVC §§36012 and 36101(d)).
• A trailer equipped with a plenum chamber for the drying of agricultural commodities (CVC §36101(e)).
• Except as provided in CVC §36005 (j), a trap wagon, as defined in CVC §36016, which is equipped with a fuel tank or tanks cannot exceed 3000 gallons total capacity (CVC §36101(f)).
• A forklift truck, operated by a farmer not for compensation. For purposes of this section a hay-squeeze shall be considered a forklift (CVC §36101(g)).
• A truck tractor or truck tractor and semitrailer combination which is owned by a farmer and operated on the highways only incidental to a farming operation and not for compensation (CVC §36101(h)).

This definition applies only to truck tractors with a manufacturer’s GVW rating over 10,000 pounds that are equipped with all-wheel drive and off-highway traction tires on all wheels, and only to semitrailers used in combination with such a truck tractor and exclusively in the production or harvesting of melons. These vehicles shall not be operated in excess of 25 miles per hour on the highways. These vehicles may be prohibited by law from operating on specific routes.

In order to maintain the exemption from registration granted under CVC §36101 for a truck tractor, when combined with a semitrailer, the owner of the truck tractor shall not operate it during the exemption period in any manner other than as a cotton module mover, as defined in CVC §36012, and shall do all of the following:
• Register the vehicle before operating it as a commercial motor vehicle.
• Apply annually to renew the exemption from registration. Refer to Truck Tractor/Semitrailer Combination Cotton Module Mover section in this chapter for procedures.

Note: These vehicles are exempt from payment of the vehicle license fee (VLF) and weight fees, but must pay the registration fee required under CVC §9250.1, the law enforcement fee required under CVC §9250.8, and the CHP fee required under CVC §9250.13 each year.

• A motor vehicle specifically designed for, and used exclusively in, an agricultural operation for purposes of carrying, or returning empty from carrying, silage and is operated by a farmer, an employee of the farmer, or a contracted employee of the farmer between one part of a farm to another part of that farm or from one farm to another farm, on a highway for a distance not to exceed 20 miles from the point of origin of the trip. This does not include a vehicle that is used for transportation of silage for retail sales. For purposes of this definition, “silage” includes field corn, sorghum, grass, legumes, cereals or cereal mixes, either green or mature, converted into feed for livestock (CVC §36101(i)).

Farm vehicles shall not be operated on the highway:
• Laden for more than two miles from the point of origin.
• Unladen for more than 30 miles from the point of origin.
• Unladen for more than 15 miles from the point of origin, unless accompanied by an escort vehicle to the front and rear.
16.000 Introduction, continued

**Note:** Farm vehicles do not have the same equipment requirements as implements of husbandry.

**Implements of Husbandry (CVC §§36000 and 36005)—**A vehicle which is used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations.

Vehicles that are designed primarily for transportation of persons or property on a highway are not implements of husbandry unless they are specifically designated as such by other provisions of the *California Vehicle Code*.

Implement of husbandry includes, but is not limited to:

- A lift carrier or other vehicle designed and used exclusively for the lifting and carrying of implements of husbandry or tools used exclusively for the production or harvesting of agricultural products, when operated or moved upon a highway (CVC §36005(a)).
- A trailer of the tip-bed type when used exclusively in the transportation of other implements of husbandry or tools used exclusively for the production or harvesting of agricultural products (CVC §36005(b)).
- A trailer or semitrailer having no bed, and designed and used solely for transporting a hay loader or swather (CVC §36005(c)).
- A spray or fertilizer applicator rig used exclusively for spraying or fertilizing in the conduct of agricultural operations. Excluded from this definition are anhydrous ammonia fertilizer applicator rigs which have a transportation capacity in excess of 500 gallons (CVC §36005(d)).
- A trailer or semitrailer which has a maximum transportation capacity in excess of 500 gallons, but not more than 1000 gallons, used exclusively for the transportation and application of anhydrous ammonia, if the vehicle is either equipped with operating brakes or is towed upon a highway by a motortruck that is assigned a manufacturer’s GVW rating of 3/4 ton or more. A combination of vehicles is limited to two vehicles operated one behind the other (CVC §36005(e)).
- A nurse rig or equipment auxiliary to the use of and designed or modified for the fueling, repairing, or loading of an applicator rig or an airplane used for the dusting, spraying, fertilizing, or seeding of crops (CVC §36005(f)).
- A row duster (CVC §36005(g)).
- A wagon or van used exclusively for carrying products of farming from one part of a farm to another part thereof, or from one farm to another farm, and used solely for agricultural purposes, including any van used in harvesting alfalfa or cotton, which is only incidentally operated or moved on a highway as a trailer (CVC §36005(h)).
- A wagon or portable house on wheels used solely by shepherds as a permanent residence in connection with sheep raising operations and moved from one part of a ranch to another part thereof or from one ranch to another ranch, which is only incidentally operated or moved on a highway as a trailer (CVC §36005(i)).
16.000 Introduction, continued

Implements of Husbandry, continued

- Notwithstanding of CVC §36101(f), a trap wagon, as defined in CVC §36016, moved from one part of a ranch to another part of the same ranch or from one ranch to another, which is only operated or moved on a highway incidental to agricultural operations. The fuel tank or tanks of the trap wagon shall not exceed 1000 gallons total capacity (CVC §36005(j)).
- Any vehicle which is operated upon a highway only for the purpose of transporting agricultural products for a total distance of one mile or less from the point of origin of the trip (CVC §36005(k)).
- A portable honey-extracting trailer or semitrailer (CVC §36005(l)).
- A nonself propelled fertilizer nurse tank or trailer which is moved unladen on the highway and auxiliary to the use of a spray or fertilizer applicator rig (CVC §36005(m)).
- Any cotton trailer when used on the highways for the exclusive purpose of transporting cotton from a farm to a cotton gin, and returning the empty trailer to such farm (CVC §36005(n)). An SE plate is required prior to movement on the highway (CVC §5014).
- A truck tractor or truck tractor and semitrailer combination which is owned by a farmer and operated on the highways only incidental to a farming operation, not for compensation, and for a distance of not more than two miles (on the highway) each way (CVC §36005(o)).

This definition applies only to truck tractors with a manufacturer’s GVW rating over 10,000 pounds that are equipped with all-wheel drive and off-highway traction tires on all wheels, and only to semitrailers used in combination with such a truck tractor and exclusively in production or harvesting of tomatoes. These vehicles cannot be operated in excess of 25 miles per hour on the highways.
- An all or utility-terrain vehicle used exclusively in agricultural operations.

**Note:** Implements of husbandry which are only incidentally operated or moved over a highway and those listed in CVC §§36005 or 36015 are exempt from registration. The owner of an implement of husbandry exempt from registration may, at the owner’s option, secure a SE plate for the implement of husbandry vehicle (CVC §36115).

Logging Dolly (CVC 385.2)—A vehicle designed for carrying logs, having one or more axels not more than 54 inches apart and used in connection with a motor truck solely for the purpose of transporting logs and securely connected with the towing vehicle both by a reach and by the load. It is used exclusively in logging operations and not designed for the transportation of persons or property on a highway.
16.000 Introduction, continued

Implements of Husbandry, continued

Modular Mobile Equipment—Modular mobile equipment is defined as a vehicle containing permanently attached equipment attendant to the efficient operation of the body, requiring human habitation for operation of that equipment.

Modular mobile equipment does not contain cargo space or space for carrying passengers for hire.

Incidental use on the highway, such as movement from one location to another, does not exclude these vehicles from registration requirements or qualify them as special mobile equipment.

Modular Mover (CVC §§36012 and 36101)—(Formerly referred to as Cotton Module Mover) A modular mover is a motortruck, semitrailer, or a truck tractor in combination with a semitrailer, that is equipped with a self-loading bed and is designed and used exclusively to transport field manufactured cotton modules to a cotton gin. An SE ID plate for the vehicle is optional unless it is a truck tractor in combination with a semitrailer. Refer to the Truck Tractor/Semitrailer Combination Modular Mover section in this chapter for procedures.

Other Farm Vehicles (CVC §36102)—The following vehicles are exempt from registration if they have and display SE plates as specified in CVC §5014. These vehicles shall not be deemed to be implements of husbandry, except when operated pursuant to CVC §36005(k). Refer to the Implements of Husbandry (CVC §36005) information in this section.

- An automatic bale wagon operated unladen on the highway (CVC §36102(a)). An automatic bale wagon is a motor vehicle capable of transporting property on a highway and equipped with apparatus specifically designed to pick up single bales of hay or straw from a field and to load and unload baled hay or straw (CVC §36011).
- An automatic bale wagon when transporting baled hay or straw for a distance of not more than five continuous road miles on a highway from one parcel of property owned, leased, or controlled by a farmer to another parcel of property owned, leased, or controlled by that farmer (CVC §36102(b)).
- A motor vehicle, also known as a livestock feed hauler, which is designed for, and used exclusively to, haul feed for livestock and which is owned and operated exclusively by a farmer or an employee of a farmer (CVC §36102(c)).

These vehicles may be operated only on those highways that are maintained by local authorities and pursuant to a permit issued by the local authority having jurisdiction over the highways used, and for a distance of not more than five continuous road miles from one parcel of property owned, leased, or controlled by a farmer to another parcel of property owned, leased, or controlled by that farmer. The vehicle cannot be used for transportation for compensation.
16.000 Introduction, continued

Special Construction Equipment (CVC §565)—Includes the following:
• Any vehicle (including a water-well drilling rig) used primarily off the highways for construction purposes and which moves only occasionally over the highways and which because of the length, height, width, or unladen weight may not move over public highways unladen without the permit (issued by the California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] or local authorities) as specified in CVC §35780.

**Note:** Special construction equipment **does not** include concrete pumps, pumper booms, and oil well service rigs. These vehicles meet the definition of a “crane” and are **not** qualified for issuance of SE plates as special construction equipment. Refer to the Special Construction Equipment Exclusions in this section.

• Any vehicle which is designed and used primarily either for grading or paving of highways, earth moving, and other highway construction work or construction or maintenance work on railroad rights-of-way, is not designed or used primarily for transportation of persons or property, and only incidentally (secondary to the use of the equipment) operated or moved on the highway. “Primary use” shall mean at least 51 percent of the time.

Special construction equipment includes, but is not limited to:
Air drills, asphalt spreaders, biruminous mixers, bucket loaders, earth-moving scrapers and carryalls, finishing machines, leveling graders, lighting plants, motor graders, paving mixers, portable air compressors, power shovels and draglines, road rollers, scarifiers, self-propelled and tractor-drawn earth-moving equipment and machinery, skip loaders, speed swings, track-type or crawler tractors, water wagons (self-propelled or trailer), weed mowers, welders, oversize and/or overweight dump trucks, and tractor-dump trailer combinations that may not be moved over the highways without a permit as specified in CVC §35780, and which are not operated laden except within the boundaries of the job construction site.

Special Construction Equipment Exclusions (CVC §570)—The following are **excluded** from special construction equipment:
• A vehicle originally designed to transport persons or property to which machinery has been attached, unless specifically designated in CVC §565.
• Dump trucks originally designed to comply with the size and weight provisions of the California Vehicle Code.
• Truck-mounted transit mixers.
• Shovels.
• Cranes. This **includes** concrete pumps/pumper booms, oil well service rigs, and other vehicles fitting the definition of a crane.
16.000 Introduction, continued

**IMPORTANT:** Do not issue SE plates to any vehicle included in the definition of “crane.” A crane must be registered auto or commercial.

Special Mobile Equipment (CVC §575)—A vehicle not self-propelled, not designed or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property, and only incidentally (secondary to the use of the equipment) operated or moved over a highway (other than implements of husbandry) qualifies as special mobile equipment.

**EXAMPLE:** A cement mixer mounted on rubber tires and towed to/from jobs.

Special mobile equipment does not include:

- Camp trailers (CVC §242).
- Trailer coaches (CVC §635).
- Trailers or semitrailers that have been modified and are used as:
  - Business or engineering offices, etc.
  - Concession stands.
  - Dressing rooms.
  - Mobile medical service units.
  - Television remote studios.

These trailers are designed for transporting the specialized equipment from location to location and must be registered as commercial trailers unless the trailer weighs 1,999 pounds or less. The body type model for these trailers is “MMETLR” (for modular mobile).

**Trap Wagon (CVC §36016)**—A trap wagon is a trailer or semitrailer used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations to fuel, service, or repair implements of husbandry. A trap wagon may be equipped with tools, spare parts, lubricating supplies, or fuel tanks.

16.005 Dealer/Manufacturer SE Plates (CVC §§5016.5 and 36115(b))

SE dealers and manufacturers are not required to be occupational licensees of DMV. SE dealers and manufacturers may operate or move special construction equipment, tow dollies, special mobile equipment, cemetery equipment, or implements of husbandry upon the highways during the delivery of, or during the demonstration for the sale of, such equipment provided an identification (ID) plate is displayed upon the equipment. A special series of plates is issued to SE dealers and manufacturers pursuant to CVC §5016. The plates identify the dealer/manufacturer by appropriate abbreviations in addition to a distinguishing number. More than one plate may be issued to a SE dealer/manufacturer.
16.005 Dealer/Manufacturer SE Plates, continued

The following must be submitted:

- A completed Application for Special Identification Plate Dealer or Manufacturer (REG 353) form for each plate being requested. The local business license (city or county) number must be included.
- The required fee(s). Refer to Appendix 1F for fees.

Surrender of Plate(s) for Dealer/Manufacturer No Longer in Business—Any dealer/manufacturer plates and ID cards issued under the provisions of CVC §5016 must be surrendered within 10 days of the date a dealer or manufacturer ceases business with a Statement of Facts (REG 256) form regarding termination of business as a dealer/manufacturer.

The procedures below must be followed:

- Destroy the surrendered plates.
- Send the ID card and REG 256 to the Special Processing Unit (SPU) in DMV headquarters.

Substitute SE Plate/Stickers—Refer to the Substitute Special Equipment (SE) Plate/Stickers and/or Duplicate ID Card section in Chapter 20.

16.010 Identification Plates (CVC §§5011, 5015-5016, and 36115)

Special construction equipment, special mobile equipment, cemetery equipment, and logging vehicles must display an SE identification (ID) plate. SE plates have a fixed expiration of 12/31 every five years and must be renewed between January 1 and February 4 following the expiration date. Fees are not prorated on original or renewal applications. Refer to Appendix 1F for fees.

Note: Government-owned vehicles subject to SE plate requirements are exempt from the SE plate fee. These applications are only processed by SPU in DMV headquarters.

- SE plates are optional for implements of husbandry (CVC §36000).
- SE plates are required for:
  - Special mobile equipment (CVC §575).
  - Special construction equipment (CVC §565).
  - Cemetery equipment (CVC §4012).
  - Farm vehicles (CVC §36101).
  - Logging vehicles (CVC §379).

Water Tank Trucks Owned by an Equipment Rental Company—A water tank truck owned by an equipment rental company may be issued SE plates if usage is limited on the rental contract to highway construction or railroad right-of-way construction or maintenance. A REG 256 must be submitted with the plate application, as listed in SE Plate Applications in this section.
16.010 Identification Plates, continued

SE Plate Applications—The applicant must submit:
• A completed Application for Special Equipment Identification Plate (REG 88) form, which fully describes the use of the vehicle and/or equipment.
• A photo of the entire vehicle/equipment. The photo should not exceed the size of the REG 88. One photo is acceptable for multiple applications for identical vehicles/equipment presented at the same time. Cross-reference each application without a photo to the application with the photo. Write “Refer to ID# for photo” on the face of those applications.
• An SE fee for each vehicle.
• A REG 256 for water tank trucks owned by an equipment rental company which certifies “The vehicle is limited by contract for use on highway construction or railroad rights-of-way construction or maintenance.”

DMV will not process the application if any of the following apply, the:
— Use is not adequately explained.
— Use or design conflicts with the specifications in the California Vehicle Code.
— Photo or required fee is not submitted.
• For a utility-terrain vehicle (UTV), change the body type model (BTM) to “FARM”.
• Collect the fee due. A late penalty is not assessed for SE plates.
— Process an exempt agency application as a no-fee transaction. An Application for Title or Registration (REG 343) form is not required.
— If a “title only” or “transfer only” application is made at the same time, collect the title/transfer only fee in addition to the SE fee.
• Send the application to SPU in DMV headquarters.

IMPORTANT: Do not issue SE plates to concrete pumps/pumper booms, oil well drilling rigs, and other similar equipment. These vehicles meet the definition of, and must be registered as a “crane.”

16.015 Title Only (CVC §§4010 and 36100)

A “title only” may be issued for implements of husbandry which are only incidentally operated or moved over a highway (CVC §§36000 through 36017), special construction equipment (CVC §§565 and 570), and special mobile equipment (CVC §575) which are exempt from registration or required to display an SE identification (ID) plate.

The following must be submitted:
• A completed REG 343.
• A Verification of Vehicle (REG 31) form.
16.015 Title Only

- A photograph of the vehicle and/or equipment.
- Proof of ownership and any bills of sale needed to establish a complete chain of ownership.
- For new vehicles—a REG 256 or bill or sale, on which the seller states: “I hereby certify that I am authorized by (company) to sell the above described vehicle.” or the dealer’s invoice (certification not needed if the invoice on the dealer’s letterhead shows the seller is authorized to sell vehicle).
- The title only fee shown in Appendix 1F.

**NOTE:** A licensed dealer selling SE vehicles must complete a report of sale as usual.

16.020 Transfers (CVC §§5017 and 5018)

Each time SE is transferred, the new owner must qualify for issuance of SE plates.

**The following must be submitted:**

- The same documents as shown in the Identification Plates section in this chapter.

**NOTE:** The seller/owner of record completes the information on the back of the SE ID card and forwards it to DMV to report the transfer.

Forward any SE ID cards with transfer information received in the field office to the Special Processing Unit (SPU) in DMV headquarters.

Refer to the Substitute Special Equipment (SE) Plate/Stickers and/or Duplicate ID Card section in Chapter 20.

16.025 Truck Tractor/Semitrailer Combination Modular Mover (CVC §§36012 and 36101)

A “modular mover” includes a truck tractor in combination with a semitrailer that is equipped with a self-loading bed and is designed and used exclusively to transport a cotton module to a cotton gin. These vehicles are issued an SE plate from the series beginning with SE800000. They are exempt from the vehicle license fee (VLF) and weight fee, but are subject to the annual registration, law enforcement, and CHP fees.

The law specifies that to maintain the modular mover exemption:

- The vehicle cannot be operated during the exemption period in any manner other than as a cotton module mover.
- The exemption must be renewed annually.
- The vehicle must be registered before it is operated as a commercial vehicle.