

Ohio Law on Speed Identification Symbols for Farm Machinery



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A new law addressing fast moving farm machinery went into effect in Ohio on October 18, 2007. The law allows farm machinery to be operated on streets and highways in excess of the traditional 25 mph limit established by the “slow moving vehicle” (SMV) designation. However, a person must display a “speed identification symbol” (SIS) on the machinery in addition to the SMV vehicle emblem.

Here’s a summary of the SIS law:

1. Any farm machinery *designed* to travel in excess of 25 mph, irregardless of whether it is *actually* operated at the higher speed, must display an SIS sign in addition to an SMV sign.
2. In addition to persons operating the machinery, the law extends to any person who “sells, rents or leases” the machinery.
3. The SIS sign must signify the maximum speed at which the machinery is designed to operate, and the operator must possess documentation from the manufacturer indicating the machinery’s maximum design speed.
4. The SIS sign must also be in accordance with specifications of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers standards.
5. Display requirements for the SIS are the same as for the SMV—it shall be mounted so that it is visible at a distance of at least 500 feet to the rear of the machinery.
6. A unit of machinery being pulled or towed by fast moving farm machinery must also display both the SMV and SIS.
7. As with SMVs, fast moving machinery may also display a red flashing light on the rear of the equipment.

In addition to the SIS requirements, the new law contains two other important changes for farm machinery operation:

1. A person may not drive, operate, draw, move or propel an agricultural tractor or implement in excess of 25 mph without a valid driver’s or commercial driver’s license. Note that this provision applies to *actually* surpassing the 25 mph limit—a driver’s license is not required for driving machinery at less than 25 mph, even it is designed to operate at a higher speed.
2. The law creates a duty to operate any agricultural tractor with “reasonable control,” a provision long imposed on motor vehicle operators from which farm machinery operators historically have been exempt.

Violation of the laws can result in minor misdemeanor charges, with the exception of the requirement for documentation of design speed, which does not have a criminal penalty.

The SIS provisions are in Ohio Revised Code sections 4501.01, 4507.03, 4511.01, 4511.202, 4513.11, and 4513.99. To view the bill that created the SIS legislation, go [here](#). For more information on speed identification symbols, visit the American Society of Agricultural Engineers website at <http://asae.frymulti.com/abstract.asp?aid=22230&t=1>.

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