

Removal of Certain Snowplow Hitching Mechanisms Required in Mass. During Warm-Weather Months (May 15th-October 15th)

Massachusetts Law

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90, Section 19K requires the removal of certain snow plows and hitching mechanisms now that the warm weather is here. Non-complying vehicles may not be operated on public-ways.

What is Required:

Between May 15 and October 15 of each year, vehicles equipped with a plow (unless exempt) shall be required to have the plow and hitching mechanism used with the plow to be removed. The hitching mechanism includes the lift cylinder and lift arm. (The lift cylinder is the hydraulic cylinder that raises and lowers the lift arm. The lift arm supports the plow blade).

Exempted Hitching Mechanisms:

- (1) Vehicles equipped with an apparatus that allows the hitching mechanism to be folded flat leaving no protruding surfaces, shall only be required to have the plow itself removed if the hitching mechanism is in the folded flat position while the vehicle is in operation.
- (2) Hitching mechanisms which were permanently affixed through welding or other means prior to July 1, 2004 (the date of enactment). (Permanently affixing a hitching mechanism after that date is prohibited and a violation is subject to fine and revocation of registration).

If it Snows During the Period:

If snowfall occurs before October 15 or after May 15, vehicles subject to this act may be re-equipped with the plow and any apparatus necessary for clearing snow but must abide by this law within 72 hours of the conclusion of the snowfall.

Exempted Vehicles:

This act does not apply to any vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of more than 26,000 pounds nor to state, county or municipally owned or operated vehicles.

Purpose of the Law:

The law was passed following numerous crashes resulting in serious injuries, fatalities and property damage to other vehicles when impacted by plows and hitching mechanisms during warm weather months when plows and mechanisms on many vehicles could easily have been removed.

Penalties:

For operating a vehicle in violation of this act, a warning for a first (1st) offense; \$250 fine for a second (2nd) offense; \$500 fine and revocation of the registration for a third (3rd) offense and the registration will not be reinstated until the vehicle is in compliance. A reinstatement fee will apply.



Massachusetts Registry of
Motor Vehicles Advisory

Questions? Contact Vehicle Safety &
Compliance Services at 857-368-8130