



Section 156 of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law defines a trailer as:

“Any vehicle not propelled by its own power, drawn on the public highways by a motor vehicle as defined in section one hundred twenty-five operated thereon, except motorcycle side cars, vehicles being towed by a non-rigid support and vehicles designed and primarily used for other purposes and only occasionally drawn by such a motor vehicle.”

Based on this definition, the vehicles listed below do not have to be registered in New York State. This list is not complete, but it does provide some examples of this type of vehicle.

These vehicles can not be used to carry anything other than the devices mounted on them. If a vehicle is equipped with boxes or bins, and is used to carry tools and accessories, it is no longer exempt from registration.

Because these vehicles do not operate under their own power, they never require a registration, but the vehicle that tows them must be registered.

If you have any question about whether your vehicle must be registered, call (518) 474-5282 or write to:

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles
Technical Services Bureau
6 Empire State Plaza, Room 220
Albany, New York 12228

If writing, send a picture of the unit and a full description of its use.

This information is based on a series of opinions issued by the Counsel to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.

EXAMPLES OF TRAILER-TYPE VEHICLES THAT DO NOT HAVE TO BE REGISTERED Not limited to these vehicles

- ◆ Welding machine mounted on a chassis
- ◆ Well drillers mounted on a chassis
- ◆ Wood sawing outfit mounted on a chassis
- ◆ Wood chipper mounted on a chassis
- ◆ Electrical transformer mounted on wheels
- ◆ Air compressor mounted on wheels
- ◆ Water pump mounted on wheels
- ◆ Pipe threading machine mounted on wheels
- ◆ Concrete mixer mounted on wheels
- ◆ Generator mounted on wheels
- ◆ Portable lighting units mounted on wheels
- ◆ Paint outfit (air compressor and tank) mounted on wheels
- ◆ Insecticide spray outfit mounted on wheels
- ◆ Portable sheep dipping vat mounted on wheels
- ◆ Trailer used as an office on a job site
- ◆ Trailer used for tools and equipment when equipped with shelves and bins, etc., on a job site (shelves and bins must be empty when towed on the road)
- ◆ Food vending trailer (shelves and bins must be empty when towed on the road). For example, hot dog cart or a barbeque grill on wheels
- ◆ Tow dolly
- ◆ Tar kettle mounted on wheels

