



Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) Placarding

Objective: Follow required guidelines for federal DOT placarding.

How to Use This Module

A vehicle carrying hazardous materials, or HAZMAT, can be in an accident. Then, there is a real danger. For this module:

- Review the information below on types of HAZMAT and requirements for placards and shipping papers.
- Ask your supervisor to show you a vehicle that meets required guidelines for placards and shipping papers.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

Background

What are hazardous materials, or HAZMAT? According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), HAZMAT is any substance that has corrosive, ignitable, reactive, or toxic properties. HAZMAT can harm people or the environment when handled improperly. HAZMAT must be stored separately from non-hazardous materials. HAZMAT must be disposed of separately. And HAZMAT must be documented separately.

HAZMAT commonly used in landscaping and horticulture includes:

- Fertilizers and pesticides.
- Paints and solvents.
- Fuels like gasoline, liquid propane (LP) gas, or heating oil.

Under most circumstances, HAZMAT poses little risk to the surrounding area. But nursery operators, sod farmers, large growers, or landscapers might haul HAZMAT on the road. If there is an accident, the HAZMAT can spill or catch fire. This would put the driver, the emergency response teams (ERTs), and the surrounding area in danger. ERTs must identify the HAZMAT quickly.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) developed a system to help ERTs identify HAZMAT quickly. The system has two parts:

- DOT placards like signs, labels, and signals.
- Proper placement of shipping papers.

ERTs are trained to look for warning signs and labels. So, HAZMAT must have placards. The placards must be correct. With no placards or the wrong ones, lives are in jeopardy.

Placarding

Placards identify hazard classes. Placards must be placed on all four sides of a vehicle hauling more than 1,000 pounds of HAZMAT. There are exceptions, however. Explosive chemicals (Class 1) must always have placards regardless of weight.

Shipping Papers

Suppliers provide shipping papers. The papers must be with a driver hauling HAZMAT. ERT crews must be able to find the shipping papers quickly in an accident.

- Papers should be in a separate envelope.
- Papers should be visible. They should be within the driver's reach when restrained by a seat belt. They may also be in a pouch on the driver's door.
- When the driver is not in the vehicle, the papers should be in the driver's door pouch or on the driver's seat.

Liabilities

DOT regulations cover anyone hauling HAZMAT in a vehicle on a public road. There may be some exemptions when crossing a road between adjacent properties. The driver must have a special driver's license. In case of an accident, the driver may be held liable if the proper license or shipping papers are not present. The driver may be liable if the load is not properly placarded. Contact a lawyer for specifics of potential liability.

Review These Important Points

- DOT placards and shipping papers are extremely important in case of an accident hauling HAZMAT.
- Placards that quickly identify the HAZMAT should be placed on all four sides of the vehicle.
- The driver and ERT crews should be able to find shipping papers easily.
- HAZMAT with no placards can endanger lives.
- HAZMAT with the wrong placards can endanger lives.

About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean, Agricultural Safety Specialist. Modules were developed with funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant Number 46E3-HT09.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the U.S. Department of Labor.

Answer Key: 1 = T, 2 = F, 3 = T, 4 = T, 5 = T.

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Name _____

True or False?

1. Shipping papers should be carried in a separate envelope. T F
2. The shipping papers should be kept under the seat so they are out of the way. T F
3. Placards should be placed on all four sides of the vehicle hauling more than 1,000 pounds of HAZMAT. T F
4. ERTs are trained to look for DOT placards and HAZMAT shipping papers. T F
5. In case of an accident, drivers may be held liable if they do not have shipping papers or proper placards for HAZMAT. T F