

Farm Practices in B.C. Reference Guide

Strengthening Farming Program



Ministry of
Agriculture
and Food

FACTSHEET

Version: July 2026

FARM ACTIVITY: TRANSPORTATION

Description

The ability to transport goods and equipment on public roads is essential for all farm operations. Goods and equipment may be transported by trucks, trains, ships, or airplanes. Overland transportation by truck is the most common.

Transportation activities associated with the business of farming are needed for the movement of:

- Materials and supplies such as feed, bedding, fertilizer, seed, plant materials, pest control products, and fuel;
- Farm products such as fruit, vegetables, hay, feed, processed or unprocessed farm goods, live animals, birds, and plants;
- Wastes such as compost, manure, spent plant material and growing media, mortalities, plastics, and spoiled feed;
- People, including employees, contract workers, farm supply representatives, service providers, and customers; and
- Equipment such as tractors, farm implements, and feed mixer wagons.

Proximity is a key consideration of any farm business. Proximity to transportation infrastructure, markets, labour, and other inputs has cost implications that impact business models and their viability.

Nuisance Concerns

The three main disturbances referred to in the provincial *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* are odour, noise and dust. Of particular concern in the context of transportation activities is noise.

Noise

Farmers engage in a variety of activities, which may occur day or night, that require the use of transportation vehicles and equipment which generate noise. Noise is any sound

audible but judged unwanted, irregular or erratic. Noise levels vary and may rise when equipment is run at higher speeds. Noise may be generated continuously or intermittently.

See also Nuisance Reference: [Noise](#)

Activities and Operations

Farm operations may occur at any time of the day or night (e.g., poultry catching or delivery of harvested fruit). All equipment should be well maintained, and motor vehicles and tractors should be equipped with good engine mufflers. Some transportation activities may be timed to occur as much as possible during regular working hours. Facilities at which loading and unloading operations occur should be sited to minimize disturbances to neighbours. If possible, buffers should be installed to reduce noise. Farmers should take measures to prevent debris and waste from falling onto public roadways.

Livestock and Poultry Transportation

The movement of livestock and poultry may require the loading and unloading of animals at the farm site, transportation to and from the farm site, and the herding of livestock on public or private roads. When transporting livestock by motor vehicle, farmers are required to observe the standards set out in the provincial *Motor Vehicle Act* and the *Passenger Transportation Act*, and federal *Health of Animals Act* and *Health of Animals Regulations*. In addition, while originally published in 2001 and now achieved, is considered out of date, the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council's (CARC) Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation (hosted online by the National Farm Animal Care Council) contains some information that is still considered useful guidance.

See also Farm Practices: [Animal Care and Handling](#)
[Mobile Equipment](#)

Public Road Use

Farm transportation activities include motorized equipment on public roadways and private roads associated with the farm property. Farmers using public roadways must comply with existing legislation, regulations, and bylaws. Provisions within legislation address the licensing of farm vehicles, lighting and marking, securement of loads, safety of trailers and trailer hitches, and requirements concerning oversize and slow-moving vehicles. On private property, safety and general considerations of neighbors are primary concerns.

The B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has a cattle drive policy which requires a permit to be issued to allow cattle to be moved on foot on public roads and highways. Cattle drives are not permitted on highways that carry more than 5000 vehicles a day.

Spills

The Spill Reporting Regulation under the *Environmental Management Act* prescribes the minimum quantities of various substances that must be reported if a spill occurs. For example, any pesticide spill in excess of five kilograms or litres, any fertilizer or manure spill greater than 50 kilograms or litres, and any spill of petroleum products greater than 100 litres must be reported.

The Regulation should be consulted for details on other substances and the reportable quantities associated with same. The Regulation requires a responsible person to report spills more than the quantities mentioned to the Emergency Coordination Centre at 1.800.663.3456.

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operations. The provincial *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that a “farm operation” must meet the *Public Health Act*, *Integrated Pest Management Act*, *Environmental Management Act* and the regulations under those Acts, as well as any land use regulation (amongst other requirements), to be protected from liability in nuisance, from being prevented from conducting that farm operation by court order, and from the application of certain local government bylaws. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices, and farmers affected should contact their relevant local government for more information.

Some of the Acts, regulations, and bylaws that may be relevant to this topic may include the following:

Federal Legislation

The *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act* regulates the transport of all “dangerous goods”, including some pesticides.

The *Health of Animals Act* protects human and animal health through the control or elimination of diseases and toxic substances and governs humane treatment of animals. Conditions for the humane transportation of farm animals set out in Part XII of the Health of Animals Regulations.

Provincial Legislation

The *Commercial Transport Act* regulates the registration, licensing and operation of all commercial vehicles.

The *Environmental Management Act* protects land, water and air environments from “pollution” and “waste”, and regulates the handling and disposal of hazardous materials. Below is a list of some of the regulation(s) under this Act:

- The Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) applies to all “agricultural operations” in British Columbia, from small hobby farms to large commercial operations and, among other things, regulates the storage and use of manure and other agricultural by-products, and allows farmers to operate without a waste permit in certain circumstances when storing and managing mortalities, manure, or other byproducts and managing agricultural composting operations.
- The Hazardous Waste Regulation provides minimum standards and guidelines for handling and disposal of dangerous goods such as batteries, waste oil, solvents and waste asbestos from buildings. The regulations also specify the types of pesticides and empty pesticide containers which are considered hazardous waste. Pesticide containers are considered hazardous waste unless rinsed and disposed of according to the regulation.
- The Spill Reporting Regulation describes the minimum quantities and types of spills that must be reported. This includes waste that contains a pest control product registered under the *Pest Control Products Act* (Canada), that spills more than five kilograms by weight or five litres by volume be reported to the Ministry of Environment’s Environmental Emergency Program at 1.800.663.3456. The quantity threshold for reporting varies for other substances, depending on the substance spilled. See the regulation for specifics.

The *Forest Act* stipulates, among other things, that whole logs must show a timber mark to be transported on public roads. Local BC Ministry of Forests offices should be consulted on details associated with the moving of log products.

The *Integrated Pest Management Act* regulates all aspects of pesticide sale, storage, use, and transport on public roadways.

The *Motor Vehicle Act* and Motor Vehicle Act Regulation protect people traveling on public roads, in part by regulating hazards – including the operation and movement of farm

equipment, implements, vehicles, and animals on public roads. The Act requires that loads must be securely fastened and/or sealed to prevent loss during shipment.

The *Passenger Transportation Act* requires the registration of motor carrier operators for hire and outlines licensing and commercial vehicle safety requirements for the transportation of passengers between residences and places of employment. “Car pool vehicles” (a driver and up to 11 passengers) and “passenger transportation pool vehicles” are exempt from the Act and regulation.

The *Transport of Dangerous Goods Act* regulates the transport of dangerous goods not covered by federal legislation.

The *Transportation Act* and its regulations govern subject areas, including signage and structure placement, safe road access and restriction of farm implements and machines on certain defined structures (like specific bridges and tunnels) within the province. In addition, it provides the power for enforcement action against responsible persons in situations where objects, items, or situations on land may be distracting or impair a driver’s ability to safely operate a vehicle (such as lighting which may be distracting).

Local Government

Municipalities and Regional Districts in which a farm resides are likely to have bylaws that prescribe trucking routes. Trucking routes must be abided by as closely as possible and access to local roads should only be done at the latest point possible for local delivery and receiving.

Publications

Publications providing more information on transportation include the following:

[*British Columbia Environmental Farm Practice Reference Guide*](#)

[*Farm Vehicles on the Move*](#)

[*Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation*](#)

Recommended codes of practice for the care and handling of various farm animal species are also available.