September 27, 2011

Wrecker Owners/Operators

Red & Blue & Amber Lights

Effective November 1, 2010 the new law regarding tow lights reads:

TITLE 47 § 12-218.1. Flashing Lights on Wreckers and Tow Vehicles

Flashing red or blue lights or a combination of flashing red and blue lights may be used on Class AA wreckers or wrecker support vehicles at the scene of an emergency.

Any licensed Class AA wrecker or wrecker support vehicle may be equipped with a lamp displaying an amber light, visible from a distance of not less than five hundred (500) feet to the front of the vehicle or from a distance of not less than five hundred (500) feet to the rear of the vehicle. Such lamp shall only be used when leaving the scene of a tow service call and for the purpose of warning the operators of other vehicles to exercise care in approaching, overtaking or passing such vehicle.

This excluded Class G or General wreckers from having red, blue or amber lights. The Governor signed Department of Public Safety emergency rules October 29, 2010, now made permanent, that provides for a Class General wrecker to be considered a wrecker support vehicle for the purposes of the statute listed above. Therefore, all licensed wrecker vehicles may continue to have red, blue and amber lights. Red and blue lights are optional, but at least one amber light is required. Unlicensed wreckers or “Not for Hire” wrecker vehicles are not allowed any flashing lights on top.

The new emergency rule is as follows:

OAC 595:25-1-2. Definitions

“Wrecker” or “wrecker vehicle”, as defined by 47 O.S. § 951 et. seq., means any vehicle, other than a transport as defined in 47 O.S. § 1-181, equipped with a winch, cable or other device designed to lift, pull or move a disabled vehicle incapable of self-propulsion. (Does not include a vehicle with a push bumper only.)

(A) Class AA – Any wrecker vehicle not less than nine thousand pounds (9,000 lbs.) GVWR and meeting minimum requirements as established for Class AA Wreckers in this Chapter.

(B) Class AA-TM -- Any wrecker vehicle not less than twenty-four thousand pounds (24,000 lbs.) GVWR and meeting minimum requirements as established for Class AA-TM Wreckers in this Chapter.

(C) Class AA-TL -- Any wrecker vehicle not less than forty-four thousand pounds (44,000 lbs.) GVWR and meeting minimum requirements as established for Class AA-TL Wreckers in this Chapter.

(D) Class General -- All other wrecker vehicles as defined by 47 O.S. § 951 et. seq., provided a Class General wrecker shall also be considered a wrecker support vehicle for the purposes of 74 O.S. § 12-218.1.

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