WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §17c-15-48

§17C-15-48. Alteration of motor vehicles; bumper height limits; other modifications; exceptions; required inspection; and rules of division of public safety.

(a) No person may operate upon a public highway any motor vehicle registered or required to be registered in this state if it has been modified by alteration of its height from the ground to the extent that its bumpers, measured to any point on the lower edge of the main horizontal bumper bar, exclusive of any bumper guards, do not fall within the limits specified herein for its gross vehicle weight rating category. The front and rear bumper height of motor vehicles whose gross vehicle weight rating is ten thousand pounds or less may be no less than six inches and no more than thirty-one inches. In the absence of bumpers, and in cases where bumper heights have been altered or modified, height measurements shall be made to the bottom of the frame rail. If a motor vehicle has a bumper, the bumper must be at least three inches in vertical width, centered on the center line of the motor vehicle and not less than the width of the wheel track distance. The provisions of this subsection do not apply to motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating in excess of ten thousand pounds. For the purpose of this subsection, the term "gross vehicle weight ratings" means the manufacturer's gross vehicle weight ratings established for that vehicle.

(b) The maximum distance between the vehicle body to the vehicle frame may not exceed three inches. The distance from the vehicle body to the vehicle frame shall be measured from the vehicle body mount seat to the vehicle frame mount seat: Provided, That the maximum distance limitation shall not prohibit a body lift kit up to three inches to be added to the manufacturer's original spacer between the body and the frame. No vehicle may be modified to cause the vehicle body or chassis to come in contact with the ground, expose the fuel tank to damage from collision, or cause the wheels to come in contact with the body under normal operation. No part of the original suspension system may be disconnected to defeat the safe operation of the suspension system. Modification of the front end suspension by the use of lift blocks is expressly prohibited.

(c) Nothing contained in this section prevents the installation of heavy duty equipment, including shock absorbers and overload springs.

(d) Nothing contained in this section prohibits the operation on a public highway of a motor vehicle with normal wear to the suspension system if such normal wear does not adversely affect the control of the vehicle.

(e) This section does not apply to specially designed or modified motor vehicles when operated off the public highways in races and similar events. Such motor vehicles may be lawfully towed on the highways of this state.

(f) Modifications to motor vehicles, not prohibited herein, shall be made subject to inspection as provided in subsection (g) herein.

(g) Nothing contained in this section shall subject a vehicle modified solely by the installation of tires not larger than two sizes beyond the maximum specified by the manufacturer to inspection as provided in subsection (h) herein.

(h) Any motor vehicle which has been altered from the manufacturer's specification with respect to bumper height for that vehicle make and model but within the allowable limits of subsection (a) or any motor vehicle which has been altered from the manufacturer's specification for that vehicle make and model with respect to the distance from the vehicle body to vehicle frame but within the allowable limits of subsection (b) may be operated upon a public highway in this state, subject to inspection hereunder: Provided, That any motor vehicle which has been altered from the manufacturer's specification by lowering the bumper height for that vehicle make and model within the allowable limits of subsection (a) shall be exempt from the inspection requirements hereunder and may be operated upon a public highway in this state subject to provisions of article sixteen of this chapter. If a motor vehicle and its equipment subject to inspection under this section are inspected and found to be in compliance with the provisions of this section and to be otherwise in safe condition, an official "modified vehicle sticker" shall be issued for display on the vehicle. The fee for the modified vehicle stickers will be $25 with the division of public safety establishing rules concerning such inspection. Each municipal, county and state law-enforcement agency must record on accident report forms whether a modified vehicle was involved in the accident.

(i) The division of public safety shall promulgate rules governing a complete safety inspection of these vehicles and other rules as necessary to fully enforce and implement the provisions of this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, the division of public safety may promulgate emergency legislative rules relating to vehicle modifications under this section and such rules shall be effective for a period of fifteen months beginning with November, 1991.

WV Legislature