

## **DO I WANT TO START A PILOT CAR BUSINESS?**

**By Sharon's Pilot Car Services**

Many people have called me asking "How do I start a pilot car/escort business and what is involved?" Hope the following answers some of your questions:

Pilot car operators have a lot of responsibility. You work as a team with the driver of the oversize load to ensure that the load is moved from point A to point B as safely as possible. State agencies say we are a "warning device for the general traveling public". The carrier of the oversize load expects the pilot car to know where they are going. Also to warn the public that the load is on the highway, block lanes, let the driver know when it is safe to change lanes, cross a narrow bridge, go into a tunnel or if the curve is clear. You also need to let him know if there is something in his lane of travel, on the side of the road or if there is anything that he has to be aware of. You are his eyes. You have to be alert and aware of everything that is going on around you and further up the road. Read the road ahead of you. You have a lot of responsibility and very few places to receive any training.

### **FINANCIAL:**

Decide if you have the financial resources to get started. You will need approximately \$700.00 to \$1000.00 to set your vehicle up as a pilot car. Most companies that you pilot for expect you to bill them. They pay in 30 to 45 days. So you will be working close to two months before you start receiving your income.

### **INSURANCE:**

You need to call your insurance company and find out if they will insure your vehicle for "Business use as a Pilot Car". If so find out how much higher your premium will be, if there is a limit on the miles you can drive and can you go out of your state. Then you need to purchase a "Business Liability Policy" to cover you for such things as telling a driver he is clear to move to the left and he hits a vehicle or that he can clear an overpass and he hits it. Your vehicle insurance will not cover this. If the company sues you and you don't have the proper type of coverage they will own everything you own now or in the future.

### **CERTIFICATIONS:**

To pilot in the State of Oregon you need to complete the Stationary Flaggers class and the Rolling Stop Certification.

### **VEHICLE:**

Your vehicle needs to be in excellent condition, minimum of 102" wheel base and comfortable. In the summer you may be in your vehicle 10 to 15 hours a day with only fuel stops. Money spent for maintenance is money well spent. Good tires is a must.

## **EQUIPMENT:**

Good CB radio and antenna.

“Oversize Load” sign 5' wide x 10" high with 8" black letters on a yellow solid background. Sign must be 5' above ground level on the roof of the vehicle.

Two (2) flashing amber lights at least 4" diameter or one (1) revolving amber light at least 125 square inch of dome surface with minimum 35 candlepower.

Two (2) - 18" red flags on 3' length staffs.

Eight (8) safety flares.

One (1) 18" reflective stop sign.

Safety orange reflective vest, shirt or jacket and hard hat.

First Aid Kit.

Five pound BC Fire Extinguisher.

### Recommended additional equipment but not required

Flashlight with red cone and extra batteries.

Three (3) 18" traffic cones.

Two (2) “Oversize Load” banners 7' wide 18" high Black letters on yellow background (for the oversize load not you).

Three (3) Reflecting triangles..

Handheld CB Radio and extra batteries.

Maps (State County & City) If you belong to Triple A they are a good source for maps.

Cellular Phone.

If you are going to work in other states you will need to find a source to find out what those states require regarding equipment, certifications, and the size of your vehicle. There is a Book out called the “United States Truckers Regulations on: Oversize Load & Pilot Car Directory. This book has the requirements of all the states and the sunrise and sunset schedules in it. You can purchase it at most truck stops for around \$10.00. It has a lot of information in it and is well worth the cost. You can also go to the Oregon Department of Transportation web page <http://www.odot.state.or.us/trucking/> and then click on the over dimensional. There is a lot of information to be had. You should read all of the permit attachments and have copies of them with you. The Internet is also an excellent place to check on requirements of other states. If you set your vehicle up as per the requirements in Utah you will be legal in most states.

You will need to set up a bookkeeping system or hire someone to do it for you. Start right now keeping track of every cent you spend and all of your mileage.

It is money well spent to hire someone to build and wire the light bar into your car. Will save a lot of problems down the road.

What you have read above is just the bare essentials of the business. If you decide you are serious about this business then call a pilot car driver and see if you can ride with them a few times or work with them. Hope this helps in some small way and GOOD LUCK.

<http://www.truckdown.com>.