

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE BILL NO. 127

BY SENATOR DORSEY-COLOMB

ROADS/HIGHWAYS. Provides relative to safety devices for trailers and semitrailers.  
(8/1/14)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 32:384(D) and (E) and to enact R.S. 32:384(F), relative to

3 trailers and semitrailers; to require trailers and semitrailers with a certain gross

4 weight capacity to be equipped with a safety device; to provide for approval of safety

5 devices; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 32:384(D) and (E) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S.  
8 32:384(F) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 §384. Trailers and towed vehicles

10 \* \* \*

11 D. Every trailer and semitrailer with a loaded gross weight capacity of up to

12 ~~six~~ **ten** thousand pounds shall be equipped with ~~safety chains or other~~ **a** safety device

13 approved in accordance with Subsection E **of this Section**. The ~~safety chains or other~~

14 ~~approved~~ safety device shall be securely attached **to the tongue of the trailer or**

15 **semitrailer and** to the towing vehicle when the trailer or semitrailer is in motion **on**

16 **a public road or highway** and shall be of sufficient strength to hold the trailer **or**

17 **semitrailer** behind the towing vehicle ~~in case the connection~~ **if the regular coupling**

1 device fastening the trailer or semitrailer to the towing vehicle breaks, fails, or  
2 otherwise becomes disconnected between the two vehicles ~~detaches~~.

3 E.(1) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections, office of state police,  
4 shall have the authority to approve any and all safety devices ~~other than safety~~  
5 ~~chains to be used when towing trailers or semitrailers~~ to prevent a trailer or  
6 semitrailer from separating from its towing vehicle. Any safety device used for  
7 such purposes shall be proven through scientific testing by a qualified  
8 laboratory and by a licensed mechanical engineer prior to its presentation to the  
9 office of state police for approval. The approval of a safety device shall be in  
10 writing. Any such device shall be inspected by the office of state police before  
11 written approval is given. The following criteria shall be considered in making the  
12 determination of whether or not to approve such safety device ~~as an alternative to~~  
13 ~~safety chains~~:

14 (a) The physical characteristics of the device, including but not limited to the  
15 material or materials used in constructing the device.

16 (b) The method by which the device is attached to the trailer or semitrailer,  
17 provided that welding is not allowable to attach such devices to safety chains.

18 (c) The overall strength of the device.

19 (d) The design, construction, and installation of the device prevents the  
20 coupling device from dropping to the ground if such device breaks, fails, or  
21 otherwise becomes disconnected.

22 (e) The device provides strength, security of attachment, and directional  
23 stability control.

24 (2) The office of state police shall promulgate rules and regulations in  
25 accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement the provisions of  
26 this Subsection, including but not limited to the procedure for accepting and  
27 processing applications for approval of ~~alternative~~ safety devices.

28 F. The provisions of this Section shall be known as the "Louisiana  
29 Trailer Safety Law".

---

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Sharon F. Lyles.

---

DIGEST

Dorsey-Colomb (SB 127)

Present law requires every trailer and semitrailer with a loaded gross weight capacity of up to 6,000 pounds to be equipped with safety chains or another safety device approved by the office of state police.

Proposed law changes loaded gross weight capacity to up to 10,000 pounds.

Present law authorizes the state police to approve safety devices other than safety chains to be used when towing trailers or semitrailers. Requires such approval of safety devices to be in writing. Requires state police to inspect such devices before approval. Requires state police to consider the following criteria to determine whether or not to approve a safety device: physical characteristics of the device; methods by which the device is attached to the trailer or semitrailer; overall strength of the device.

Proposed law changes present law to require approval of any and all safety devices. Requires that any safety device used to prevent a trailer or semitrailer from separating from a towing vehicle shall be proven through scientific testing by a qualified laboratory and by a licensed mechanical engineer prior to its presentation to state police for approval.

Proposed law adds the following criteria state police must consider: design, construction, and installation of the device prevents the coupling device from dropping to the ground if such device breaks, fails, or otherwise becomes disconnected; the device provides strength, security of attachment, and directional stability control. Further provides that welding is not allowed to attach safety devices to chains.

Proposed law shall be known as the "Louisiana Trailer Safety Law".

Effective August 1, 2014.

(Amends R.S. 32:384(D) and (E); adds R.S. 32:384(F))