

Tail Light Obstruction Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Scott H. Chew

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill addresses vehicle lighting requirements relating to cargo carriers and bicycle racks.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- prohibits operating a motor vehicle when a cargo carrier obscures required tail lights unless auxiliary lighting equipment or reflectors are installed;
- establishes compliance requirements for operators;
- provides standards for auxiliary lighting equipment and reflectors;
- establishes exemptions for certain vehicles; and
- provides penalties for violations.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:**ENACTS:**

41-6a-1647, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **41-6a-1647** is enacted to read:

41-6a-1647 . Tail light obstruction prohibited -- Cargo carriers and bicycle racks.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Bicycle rack" means any device attached to a vehicle for the purpose of transporting bicycles.
- (b) "Cargo carrier" means any device attached to a vehicle for the purpose of transporting cargo, luggage, or equipment, including:
 - (i) a hitch-mounted cargo carrier;

- (ii) a bicycle rack;
- (iii) a cargo tray; and
- (iv) a cargo basket.
- (c) "Reflector" means a device designed to reflect light from another light source to provide visibility of the device.
- (d) "Tail light" or "tail lamp" means the rear lighting equipment required under Section 41-6a-1603.
- (2)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (2)(b), an individual may not operate a vehicle to which a cargo carrier is attached on a highway if the cargo carrier obscures, obstructs, or blocks a required tail light such that the tail light is not clearly visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear of the vehicle.
- (b) An individual may operate a vehicle as described in Subsection (2)(a) if the individual installs auxiliary lighting equipment or reflectors in accordance with Subsection (3).
- (3)(a) If an individual operates a vehicle on a highway with a cargo carrier that obscures, obstructs, or blocks a tail light, the individual shall install auxiliary lighting equipment or reflectors installed as described in Subsection (3)(b).
- (b) An individual required to install auxiliary lighting or reflectors required under Subsection (3)(a) shall:
- (i) mount or attach the auxiliary light or reflector onto the cargo carrier;
- (ii) if auxiliary lighting equipment is installed, ensure that the auxiliary lighting:
- (A) is wired to activate simultaneously with the vehicle's standard tail lights and brake lights;
- (B) is red in color and visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the rear; and
- (iii) meet or exceed the standards established by the Department of Public Safety under Section 41-6a-1601;
- (c) if reflectors are installed, ensure that the reflectors:
- (i) are red in color;
- (ii) are visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the rear when illuminated by the headlights of a motor vehicle; and
- (iii) meet or exceed the standards established by the Department of Public Safety under Section 41-6a-1601; or
- (d) install both auxiliary lighting and reflectors that meet the requirements of Subsections (3)(b) and (c).

65 (4)(a) A violation of this section is an infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$100
66 for a first offense.

67 (b) A second or subsequent violation within three years is punishable by a fine not to
68 exceed \$200.

69 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

70 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.