

OPINION NO. 70-037**Syllabus:**

Signal lights or a mechanical signal device shall be used on a rental trailer being towed by a passenger vehicle, if such combination of vehicles exceeds fourteen feet from the center of the top of the steering post to the rear limit of the trailer, and such signal light or mechanical signal device is to be so located on the rental trailer as to be clearly visible to a following vehicle.

To: John W. Weaner, Defiance County Pros. Atty., Defiance, Ohio
By: Paul W. Brown, Attorney General, March 25, 1970

I have before me your request for my opinion interpreting Section 4511.39, Revised Code, which discusses, inter alia, mechanical turn signals. Your question asks whether this statute in referring to mechanical turn signals "would apply to rental trailers being towed by passenger vehicles."

The definition of "vehicle" as seen in Section 4501.01, Revised Code, would include a rental trailer. A vehicle under this statute, supra, means "everything on wheels or runners * * *."

The pertinent part of Section 4511.39, supra, states that:

"The required signal shall be given by, signal lights or a mechanical signal device when the distance from the center of the top of the steering post to the left outside limit of the body, cab, or load of such motor vehicle exceeds twenty-four inches, or when the distance from the center of the top of

the steering post to the rear limit of the body or load thereof exceeds fourteen feet, whether a single vehicle or a combination of vehicles."

The rental trailer being towed by a passenger vehicle would fall into the category established in the latter part of this paragraph which refers to a "combination of vehicles." The paragraph creates a fourteen foot requirement, and if the passenger vehicle and rental trailer combination exceeds fourteen feet from the "center of the top of the steering post [of the motor vehicle] to the rear limit of the body or load [of the rental trailer]" the necessary signal, as discussed earlier in this statute, shall be given by "signal lights or a mechanical signal device."

It must now be determined where this signal device when required is to be installed on the rental trailer. The first paragraph of Section 4511.39, *supra*, establishes this statute for the safety of those using the highways. In reading the statute further, it would be reasonable to state that the mechanical signals, when applicable, are to be installed on the rear of the rental trailer or load. The statute provides, in part, as follows:

"A signal of intention to turn right or left shall be given in sufficient time in advance of the movement indicated to give ample warning to other users of the highway who would be affected by such movement.

"No person shall stop or suddenly decrease the speed of a vehicle or trackless trolley without first giving an appropriate signal to the traffic immediately to the rear." (Emphasis added)

It is, therefore, my opinion and you are hereby advised that signal lights or a mechanical signal device shall be used on a rental trailer being towed by a passenger vehicle, if such combination of vehicles exceeds fourteen feet from the center of the top of the steering post to the rear limit of the trailer, and such signal light or mechanical signal device is to be so located on the rental trailer as to be clearly visible to a following vehicle.