The Truck Driver's Guide - Ghana
# INTRODUCTION

Ghana is the Gateway to West Africa and welcomes your business! As a driver, you need to know what the laws say and how the rules are implemented by the uniformed services along the route. This guide presents the most important information about Ghana’s traffic laws and enforcement.

It includes:
- The rules for using Ghana’s roads and highways
- How customs and police officers enforce the law
- What to do in case of an accident
- What documents you must carry
- The new axle load rules
- Telephone numbers to call when you need help

Ghana’s roads and highways carry hundreds of thousands of tonnes of cargo from ports to destinations across the region every day. Uniformed services protect and serve the millions of people using the routes. Facilitating the efficient and low-cost movement of goods and passengers makes Ghana an ideal place to do business and epitomises the ideals of the ECOWAS protocols on the free movement of people, goods and transport.

Ghana’s National Road Transport & Transit Facilitation Committee has prepared this document to improve awareness of the laws and regulations. Violations can lead to accidents – every driver has a responsibility to know and respect the laws.

We hope your travels along Ghana’s roads and highways are stress-free and safe!

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</table>

**Published August 2010**

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For more information about this guide or its contents contact Ghana’s National Road Transport and Transit Facilitation Committee Secretariat at +233 302 621 445.
ROAD RULES

Ghana’s traffic laws protect the public’s safety and facilitate the smooth and efficient movement of people and goods. This section presents some of the important laws, information about how the police enforce the laws and penalties for violating common laws.

Speed Limits

Unless otherwise indicated, the following limits in kilometers per hour (km/h) should be observed.

- **Urban Areas**: 30 km/h
- **Highways**: 50 km/h
- **Motorways**: 80 km/h

### Speed Limits for Commercial Vehicles Carrying Freight

- Loaded trucks – 60 km/h
- Empty trucks – 80 km/h

### Required Safety Equipment

**General**
- Two standard advance warning triangles
- First aid box with basic components
- Fire extinguisher (recharged after every six months)
- Spare tyre in good condition
- Reflectors
- Lamps

**For trucks and trailers**
- All trailers require trailer lights
- Trucks weighing 3.5 t or more must have reflective tape on the side and back of the truck and trailer
- Trailers carrying loads exceeding 2.5 m wide or 4.5 m high require a special permit and drivers should contact the Road Safety Department of the Ghana Highway Authority on 030 266 6592.

### Vehicle Measurements Limits

- **Height**: 4.5 m
- **Width**: 2.5 m

### Maximum Driving Periods

Ghanaian law prohibits driving for more than four hours at a time. When driving long distances, drivers should take frequent stops to stay alert. Within any 24 hour period, drivers are restricted from driving more than eight hours. When stopped, long-distance drivers are encouraged to sleep on comfortable cots within tents to ensure a restful break free from mosquitoes.

### Regulations for Foreign Drivers

Foreign cargo vehicles entering Ghana must obtain a temporary importation permit. Customs issues this document, called a “laissez passer/C59,” at the border. The permit is valid for 30 days. If it expires, drivers must return with the vehicle to the same border entry to renew it. The maximum renewal period that may be granted is 90 days.

Customs will require drivers to produce the following documents in order to process the C59 form:
- An international driver’s licence
- ECOWAS Brown Card
- For problems with processing the C59 or in the case of renewals, please call the CEPS head office on 030 266 6841.
**What the Police do to Ensure Road Safety**

The Ghana Police Service protects and serves the public. The Motor Traffic and Transport Unit (MTTU) specifically enforces the traffic laws. Officers are recognisable by their dark blue uniforms and distinctive caps. All officers wear name badges and are authorised to:

- Stop a motor vehicle to check compliance with safety/documentation requirements
- Arrest without warrant for road traffic offences
- Require a driver to produce his or her driver’s licence immediately or within 24 hours
- Require driver to show evidence of insurance and road use certificates

Drivers have the right to report the misconduct of an officer in uniform to the Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau (PIPS) unit of the Ghana Police Service (see page 14). The report should include the officer’s badge number and rank on his/her uniform.

**Common Offences and Penalties for Violations**

Please note this list is not exhaustive. For full details of all road offences and penalties, please refer to the Road Traffic Act, 2004 (Act 683), the Road Traffic Regulations, 1974, and their amendments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFENCE</th>
<th>MAXIMUM PENALTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous driving</td>
<td>600 GH¢ and/or 7 years’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careless driving</td>
<td>2,400 GH¢ and/or up to 3.3 years’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs</td>
<td>2,400 GH¢ and/or up to 3.3 years’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding on, getting into, or alighting from a vehicle in motion</td>
<td>120 GH¢ and/or up to 4 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contravening prohibitory road signs</td>
<td>120 GH¢ and/or up to 4 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to stop at the signal of a police or other authorized personnel</td>
<td>300 GH¢ and/or up to 8 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrongful parking (e.g. parking within 50 feet of a no parking sign, within 30 feet of a junction, or on a pedestrian or rail crossing)</td>
<td>300 GH¢ and/or up to 8 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving vehicles or trailers in dangerous positions</td>
<td>300 GH¢ and/or up to 8 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving with defective brakes, tyres and steering gear</td>
<td>300 GH¢ or up to 1.5 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving without possession of a valid Ghanaian or international driver’s licence for the class of vehicle being driven</td>
<td>300 GH¢ and/or 8 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an unregistered vehicle or trailer</td>
<td>300 GH¢ and/or 8 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not fixing a registration number on vehicle or trailer, or obscured registration numbers</td>
<td>120 GH¢ and/or 4 months’ imprisonment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Act 683, Act 761, LI 952, LI 953
INCIDENTS ON THE ROAD

Even when drivers obey the laws and drive vehicles in good condition, accidents happen. There are other troubles on the road. This section presents information on how to handle these troubles.

Procedures to Follow Immediately After an Accident

If you have an accident it is important to remain calm. Ghana Police Service and Ghana Fire Service are on hand to immediately respond to accidents. Here is what to do in case of an accident:

- Report the accident at the nearest police station as soon as possible. (Call 191 or 3906 - Other numbers on page 16.)
- Attend to injured persons. Where necessary arrange removal to a hospital or call the National Ambulance Service by dialing 193.
- Place reflective triangles at least 45 m in front of and behind the vehicle to warn approaching drivers.
- Foreign drivers should report the accident immediately to the ECOWAS Brown Card secretariat in Ghana (contact details of the ECOWAS Brown Card office are found on the back page of the ECOWAS Brown card booklet) and provide the following details:
  - Date of Incident
  - Name of Insured
  - Name of Insurer
  - Country
- If visiting the ECOWAS Brown Card secretariat office in person, provide a copy of the Brown Card. (The ECOWAS Brown Card secretariat will contact the National Bureau in the driver’s country to seek confirmation of the Brown Card cover. Once there is confirmation, the secretariat will provide a letter to the police requesting the release of the vehicle documents to the driver or owner to enable him go about his normal business.)

In Case of Breakdowns

In case of breakdowns, drivers should move the vehicle to a location where it will not obstruct the free flow of traffic, as soon as possible.

- When a breakdown occurs, reflective triangles should be placed 45 m in front of and behind the vehicle to warn approaching drivers.
- If the broken down vehicle is expected to obstruct traffic for more than 1 hour in an urban area, or more than 2 hours in a rural area, the driver must leave his name, number and address at the nearest police station.
- If the driver fails to remove his vehicle within this period, the vehicle will be towed away by the authorities, and the driver will have to pay for the towing cost.
Towing
If your truck has broken down and you are in need of a towing service, determine the zone you are located in and contact one of these services:

Dial +233 for Ghana

ZONE 1
Accra – Kumasi –Sunyani
• Ruitchen Trucks
  • 024 448 7242

ZONE 2
Accra – Tema - Ho, Hohoe, Jasikan, Aflao corridor and adjoining links
• Sarkozy Ltd.
  • 024 444 4824

ZONE 3
Accra – Winneba – Cape Coast - Takoradi – Elubo
• TMS&S Ltd.
  • 024 302 3470

NATIONWIDE
The National Road Safety Commision (NRSC) (toll free)
  • MTN – 18008
  • KASAPA – 10800
  • VODAFONE – 0800 – 10800

MTTU Head office
• 030 277 3695

ZONE 4
Kumasi – Techiman - Kintampo - Tamale – Bolgatanga, Wenchi – Wa
• A&SK Co. Ltd.
  • 024 459 5428

Kumasi – Techiman, Kumasi - Sunyani, Kumasi – Obuasi corridor and adjoining links
• Day and Night Towing Services
  • 024 350 1668

Tamale – Bolgatanga - Navrongo, Bolgatanga – Bawku, Wenchi – Bole - Bambou – Wa
• Umarib Ghana Ltd.
  • 024 372 6853

CENTRAL REGION
Police Headquarters
033 213 2305

TEMA REGION
Police Headquarters
030 320 2259

GREATER ACCRA REGION
Police Headquarters
030 266 2441

WESTERN REGION
Police Headquarters
031 204 6482

ASHANTI REGION
Police Headquarters
032 202 3484

EASTERN REGION
Police Headquarters
034 202 2252

NORTHERN REGION
Police Headquarters
037 202 2844

BRONG ANAFO REGION
Police Headquarters
035 202 7356

VOLTA REGION
Police Headquarters
036 202 8320

CENTRAL REGION
Police Headquarters
033 213 2305

TEMA REGION
Police Headquarters
030 320 2259
Ghana Police Service, Immigration and CEPS operate checkpoints - fixed and mobile - to guard against road crime and enforce customs and immigration laws.

**Police Checkpoints**
At authorised checkpoints the police may check any of the following documents:
- International Driving Licence
- International Driving Permit
- National ID Card/Passport
- International Green Card
- ECOWAS Brown Card
- Roadworthiness Certificate

**Customs Checkpoints**
On duty customs officers patrol transit corridors checking for prohibited or restricted goods and verify if transit cargo has relevant customs certification and documentation such as:
- Inter-State Road Transit Logbook (ECOWAS ISRT Logbook)
- Inter-State Waybill
- Customs Declaration
- Letter of Guarantee (for imported vehicles)
In case these documents are not available Customs have the right to impound the vehicle until proper documentation is provided.

**Immigration Checkpoints**
At inland and international border posts immigration officials may check any of the following valid travel documents:
- Passport
- International Driving Licence

**Other Services at Checkpoints**
Other government agencies also check trucks and their cargo at checkpoints:
- **Forestry:**
  - Log Measurement Conveyance Certificate (LMCC)
  - Form C (Property Mark)
  - Waybill from the seller
  - VAT Receipt
- **Ghana Health Services:**
  - International Yellow Card
- **Ghana Sanitary Phytosanitary & Zoosanitary Services:**
  - Quality Certificate (for exports)

**Axle Load Restrictions**
Overloaded trucks are dangerous and destroy roads. In June 2009, Ghana began implementing regional axle load restrictions. Currently in Ghana, two tiers of axle load tolerances exist above ECOWAS’/UEMOA’s original regulation. The first tier (seen in brown below) is allowable maximum gross weights above UEMOA’s regulations but allow the driver to continue driving. The second tier (seen in red below) is maximum gross weights that attract fines and allow trucks to continue. Trucks weighing above the red limits will be required to shed any excess weight and pay a fine before continuing.

By July 2010, all UEMOA countries and Ghana will begin implementing axle load restrictions.

Fuel tankers will be obligated to fully comply with axle load regulations from January 1st 2012. Until then tankers will be weighed for monitoring purposes.

**Allowable Maximum Gross Weight of Vehicles**

**Axle Load Tolerances with fines – Expire December 2010**
Trucks with gross weights above Ghana’s tolerance and within UEMOA’s tolerance will be allowed to continue driving but will be fined. Any trucks with gross weights above the UEMOA tolerance will be required to shed any excess weight and be fined in order to continue driving.

**Axle Load Tolerances without fines – Expire December 2010**
Trucks with gross weights above UEMOA’s limits and within these tolerances will be allowed to continue driving in Ghana.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Allowable Maximum Gross Weight of Vehicles</th>
<th>Axle Load Tolerances without fines – Expire December 2010</th>
<th>Axle Load Tolerances with fines – Expire December 2010</th>
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<td>23 T</td>
<td>21 T 18 T</td>
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<td>34 T</td>
<td>31 T 26 T</td>
<td>57 T 52 T 43 T 38 T 31 T 26 T 21 T 18 T 15 T 12 T 6 T</td>
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<td>40 T</td>
<td>36 T 30 T</td>
<td>51 T 46 T 41 T 36 T 30 T 25 T 20 T 15 T 12 T 6 T</td>
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<td>37 T 31 T</td>
<td>55 T 46 T 41 T 37 T 31 T 26 T 21 T 18 T 15 T 12 T 6 T</td>
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<td>36 T 30 T</td>
<td>51 T 46 T 41 T 36 T 30 T 25 T 20 T 15 T 12 T 6 T</td>
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<td>40 T</td>
<td>36 T 30 T</td>
<td>51 T 46 T 41 T 36 T 30 T 25 T 20 T 15 T 12 T 6 T</td>
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**UEMOA Axle Load Limits**
These limits were set by ECOWAS/UEMOA and will be fully implemented in all UEMOA countries in January 2011.
**What Happens at Weighbridges?**

Weighbridges are operated by private companies under the supervision of Ghana Highway Authority (GHA) officials with police officers to enforce the laws. Trucks must stop at all weighbridge stations. Drivers who refuse to stop face a 300 GHS fine and/or 8 months’ imprisonment.

Upon entering a weighbridge, a police officer signals a truck to stop. A GHA official will weigh the truck and provide a printout showing the recorded weight. If a truck is overweight (see weight chart, page 13) the official will collect the original logbook and waybill, copy them and return them to the driver. Overloaded trucks can be detained until fines are paid and, in some instances, the truck driver will be required at his own expense to shed any excess weight to meet axle load restrictions before continuing.

No money is to be collected at the weighbridge for trucks within permissible weight limits.

The truck operator/driver should always know the tare weight of his empty truck and check it periodically – especially after the truck undergoes maintenance – in order to know the allowable weight of cargo to load. Empty trucks can be weighed at no charge at any of the GHA weighbridges.

In Ghana, trucks are weighed at weighbridges found at locations shown in the map on page 15.

**Current Weighbridge Locations**

Weighing points for trucks travelling between:

- **Tema to Paga**
  *Tema Motorway, Nsawam and Offinso.*

- **Paga to Tema**
  *Bolgatanga, Yapei and Boankra*

- **Aflao to Elubo**
  *Akatsi, Tema Motorway, Elmina and Agona Junction.*

- **Kumasi to Gonokrom**
  *Asuoyeboah*

- **Takoradi to Kumasi**
  *Agona Junction, Bogoso*

Mobile weigh vans may also be located along the corridor for monitoring purposes.

*Only trucks respecting weight limits will be allowed to enter the Tema motorway.*
GETTING HELP

Accidents of unforeseen problems happen to even the most experienced and safest drivers. If a problem does arise, drivers can use the following lists of organisations and their contact information to assist them.

Police Regional Headquarters Dial +233 for Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Region Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra Region</td>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>030 266 2441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>030 266 2290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema Region</td>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>030 320 2359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>030 320 2933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Region</td>
<td>Koforidua</td>
<td>034 202 2252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>034 202 2453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Region</td>
<td>Takoradi</td>
<td>031 204 6482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>031 204 6559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Region</td>
<td>Cape Coast</td>
<td>033 213 2305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>033 213 2345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta Region</td>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>036 202 8320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>036 202 8322</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashanti Region</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>032 202 5787</td>
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<td>Tamale</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bolgatanga</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper West Region</td>
<td>Wa</td>
<td>039 202 2301</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>039 202 2303</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo Region</td>
<td>Sunyani</td>
<td>035 202 7356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd in Command</td>
<td>035 202 7332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Police Service (MTTU)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Headquarters</td>
<td>030 277 3695</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Accra Region</td>
<td>030 266 4206</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper West Region</td>
<td>039 202 2307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complaining about harassment helps police, customs and other services address the problem of corruption among their ranks and make driving safer and more professional for everyone.

Complaints About Police Officers

Report personally to PIPS office at the National Police Headquarters or call:

- General Office 030 267 6435
- ASP/PIPS 030 278 7236
- 2nd in Command PIPS 030 277 6435
- Director/PIPS 030 276 1263
- E-Mail: pips@ghanapolice.info

Complaints About Customs Officials

Report to the Internal Affairs Unit of CEPS

Report personally to headquarters or customer complaint desks by phone or by mail:

- Phone: 030 267 2596/7, Ext 104, 110, 119, 124, 222
- Hotline: 028 953 3990

Complaints About Activities at Weighbridges

- GHA Axle Load Manager 020 811 2597
- GHA Chief Executive Officers 030 266 3922

Assistance for Bonds Issued by SIC

Stop at any SIC office along the transit corridor

ISRT Office Tema

- Phone: 030 320 3680
- Fax: 030 320 3682
- E-Mail: isrt@sic-gh.com

Ghana Shipper’s Authority website: www.isrtguarantors.org/www.cautionstrie.org

Entrepots Malien au Ghana (EMAGHA)

Phone: 030 321 1822

Niger Shippers Council in Ghana (CNU)

Phone: 030 320 1987

Ghana Shippers’ Authority

Phone: 030 266 6915-7
WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

The information within this guide was compiled from existing Ghanaian laws. If you are interested in the sources of information for this guide, refer to the following documents and websites:

- The Customs Excise and Preventive Services (Management) Act, 1993, PNDC L330
- Road Traffic Act 2004 (Act 683)
- Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2008 (Act 761)
- Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations (1995), LI 952, LI953
- The Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350)
- The Ghana Highway Authority
- The Ministry of Roads and Highways http://www.mrt.gov.gh/
- The Police service http://www.ghanapolice.info/news_2.htm
- Diseases of Animals Act, Act 83. 1961
- The Animals (Control of Importation) Ordinance 1952
- Seed and Pesticides Inspection and Certification Decree NRCD 100 OF 1972
- Pesticides Control and Management Act, Act 528 of 1996
- Plants and Fertilizer Act, 2010

This guide was developed with the cooperation of USAID’s West Africa Trade Hub and the following partners:

The National Road Safety Commission (NRSC)

The NRSC of Ghana was established by an Act of Parliament - NRSC Act, 1999 (Act 567). The Act mandates the NRSC to play the lead role in championing, promoting and coordinating road safety activities in Ghana. NRSC’s functions include setting standards for road safety equipment and ensuring compliance.

The Ghana Police Service (GPS)

One of the primary functions of the police service is to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders and to maintain public order and safety of persons and properties. The Police also perform motor traffic duties to ensure safety on the roads.

The Ghana Highway Authority (GHA)

Ghana Highway Authority (GHA) was established in 1974 as the organisation responsible for the development, maintenance and administration of the whole road network of Ghana and related facilities. The principal objective of GHA is “to clear the large backlog of maintenance work on the trunk road network and to execute road maintenance on a sustainable long-term basis”.

Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS)

CEPS was established in 1986 as a public service institution under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The service is the state organisation responsible for the collection of import duties and other taxes. The mission of CEPS is to design and implement effective strategies and programmes to collect, account for and protect customs, excise and other assigned tax revenues at a minimum cost, while facilitating trade, investment and the movement of goods and people across the borders of Ghana.

Ghana Immigration Service (GIS)

The Ghana Immigration Service is the agency which advises on and ensures the effective implementation of all laws and regulations pertaining to immigration and related issues.

Established under PNDC Law 226 in 1989, the Ghana Immigration Service remains the sole institution with the statutory mandate to regulate and monitor the entry, residence, employment and the exit of foreigners in the country. The passage of Immigration Act 2000, Act 573 expanded the functions and roles of the service. Prominent among these are the Indefinite Residence and Right of Abode facilities.

SIC Insurance Company Ltd. (SIC)

SIC was appointed by the government as the National Guarantor for Ghana under the ISRT scheme to provide the needed cover against diversion of transit goods. A gazette was issued in February 2006 to that effect.

Veterinary Services Directorate (VSD)

The Veterinary Services Department of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture was established in 1958 and is responsible for the certification of animal and animal product imports and exports through the entry points by air, sea land.

Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate (PPRSD)

The Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate is responsible for the import and export certification as well as inspection of plants, plant products, seeds, pesticides and fertilizers.

ECOWAS Brown Card Insurance Scheme

Established in 1982 to aid trade, transport and trans-human settlements, the ECOWAS Brown Card Insurance Scheme serves as a common insurance coverage against Third Party liabilities that may be incurred by motorists driving across the national boundaries of ECOWAS member states.