

Transportation Times

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Inside this issue:

Ice and Snow Are in The Forecast	1
FMCSA Launches New Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) Program for Commercial Trucks and Buses	2
State-enforced Distracted Driving Laws on The Rise	2
FMCSA Proposes Ban on Hand-held Cell Phone Use	3
FMCSA Issues Proposed Rule on Hours-of-Service Requirements for Commercial Truck Drivers	4

Ice and Snow Are in The Forecast Take It Slow and Allow Extra Time

If there is ever a time you need to be prepared, it's winter on the road. Although weather can be unpredictable any time of year, the winter months can bring about life-threatening conditions. Data from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) helps put the dangers into perspective and stresses the importance of speed and space management as winter descends.

Let It Snow

More than 70% of the nation's roads are located in snowy regions, which receive more than five inches average snowfall annually, and nearly 70% of the U.S. population lives in these snowy regions. This means that chances are likely that you will face adverse winter weather conditions while driving at one time or another in the coming months. Such hazards demand increased driver concentration and preparation.

Startling Statistics

Snow and ice reduce pavement friction and vehicle maneuverability resulting in slower speeds and increased crash risk. Average arterial speeds decline by 30% to 40% on snowy or slushy pavement, while freeway speeds decline by 3% to 13% in light snow and by 5% to 40% in heavy

snow. Lanes and roads become obstructed by snow accumulation, reducing capacity and increasing travel time delay. It is estimated that 23% of the non-recurrent delay on the nation's highways is due to snow, ice and fog, or roughly 544 million vehicle-hours of delay per year.

Winter Weather and Speed Don't Mix

When it comes to winter weather:

- Don't speed up to try and make up time; it's not worth putting your own life or the lives of others in danger. Trips taken in extreme winter conditions are simply going to take longer and the safe driver is the one who plans ahead. Before starting out, get the weather forecast, and stay alert along the way to ever-changing conditions and alternate routes.
- Compensate for poor traction by slowing down and increasing your following distance. Doing so gives you more time and space to move out of harm's way in an emergency.
- Accelerate smoothly and slowly to avoid skidding, slipping or sliding.

- Brake early and brake slowly to lessen your chance of losing control. Even at low speeds, stopping distance is multiplied several times when you are moving on slippery pavement. When you do need to brake, allow plenty of room for your vehicle's response.
- Plan your turns and avoid abrupt actions while steering. Sudden movements can cause your vehicle to skid.
- Stay aware of what's going on well ahead of you. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that split-second of extra time to react safely.
- Keep alert for changes in a road's surface that may affect traction. Remember that ice and snow are most dangerous when the temperature is at or near the freezing mark.





FMCSA Launches New Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) Program for Commercial Trucks and Buses

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) took a major step toward improving commercial truck and bus safety with the launch of the Compliance Safety Accountability (CSA) program.

The centerpiece of CSA is the Safety Measurement System (SMS), which will analyze all safety-based violations from inspections and crash data to determine a commercial motor carrier's on-road performance. The new safety program will allow FMCSA to reach more carriers earlier and deploy a range of corrective interventions to address a carrier's specific safety problems. "The CSA program will help us more easily identify unsafe commercial truck and bus companies," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "Better data and targeted enforcement will raise the safety bare for commercial carriers and empower them to take action before safety problems occur."

The program also advances the Obama Administration's open government initiative by

providing the public with safety data in a more user-friendly format. This will give consumers a better picture of those carriers that pose a safety risk.

The SMS uses seven safety improvement categories called BASICs to examine a carrier's on-road performance and potential crash risk.

The BASICs are:

- Unsafe Driving,
- Fatigued Driving (Hours of Service)
- Driver Fitness
- Controlled Substances/Alcohol
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Cargo-Related
- Crash indicator

Under FMCSA's old measurement system, carrier performance was assessed in only four broad categories.

By looking at a carrier's safety violations in each SMS category, FMCSA and state law enforcement will be better equipped to identify carriers with patterns of high-risk behaviors and apply interventions that provide carriers the information necessary to change un-

safe practices early on.

Safety interventions include early warning letters, targeted roadside inspections and focused compliance reviews that concentrate enforcement resources on specific issues identified by the SMS.

FMCSA will continue to conduct on-site comprehensive compliance reviews for carriers with safety issues across multiple BASICs. And, where a carrier has not taken the appropriate corrective action, FMCSA will invoke strong civil penalties.

To learn more about the new CSA program, visit <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/>. To see the new SMS, visit <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms>.

PLEASE NOTE: For parties interested in downloading data for more than one carrier, please visit the SMS Download page at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/SMS/Data/Downloads.aspx>.



In 2008, almost 20% of all crashes in the year involved some type of distraction.

State-Enforced Distracted Driving Laws on The Rise

Source: Automotive Fleet, Nov. 2010

Enforcing stricter distracted driving laws has become a top priority for states across the nation, as many are beginning to re-evaluate state crash data statistics and perform distracted driving studies. Every day, between 4,000 and 8,000 crashes related to distracted driving occur in the United States. Though cell phones are among the top distractions

for drivers, the federal government includes:

- eating,
- drinking,
- talking to passengers,
- interaction with in-car technologies, and
- use of portable electronic devices

under secondary task involve-

ment. State-proposed laws that target distracted driving are materializing quickly, with 11 laws taking effect in 2010 alone. State governments are quickly drafting new legislation to help deter the rising number of distracted driving-related crashes. To see the full article, go to: www.automotive-fleet.com.

FMCSA Proposes Ban on Hand-Held Cell Phone Use

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has announced a proposed rule that would prohibit interstate commercial truck and bus drivers from using hand-held cell phones while operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV).

Under the proposal, commercial drivers would be prohibited from reaching for, holding, or dialing a cell phone while operating a CMV. Drivers who violate these restrictions would face federal civil penalties of up to \$2,750 for each offense and disqualification of their commercial driver's license (CDL) for multiple offenses. Additionally, states would suspend a driver's CDL after two or more violations of any state law on hand-held cell phone use.

"Every time a commercial truck or bus driver takes his or her eyes off the road to use a cell phone, even for a few seconds, the driver places everyone around them at risk," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "This proposed rule will go a

long way toward keeping a driver's full attention focused on the road."

The rule, announced on December 17th, is part of a campaign to put an end to the practice of distracted driving. The FMCSA announced a



texting ban in January 2010 and issued a final rule banning texting effective October 27, 2010.

Under the newly proposed rule, motor carriers that allow their driver to use hand-held cell phones while driving would face a maximum penalty of \$11,000. Approximately four million interstate commercial drivers would be affected by this proposal, the FMCSA says.

"We are committed to using every resource at our disposal to ensure commercial drivers

and vehicles are operating safely at all times," said FMCSA Administrator Anne S. Ferro. "Implementation of this proposal would help make our roads safety and target a leading cause of distracted driving."

According to the FMCSA, research shows that using a hand-held cell phone while driving requires a commercial driver to take several risky steps. In particular, commercial drivers reaching for an object, such as a cell phone, while driving are three times more likely to be involved in a crash or other safety-critical event. Drivers dialing a hand-held cell phone while driving increase their risk by six times. Many of the country's largest carriers already have company policies in place banning their drivers from using hand-held phones, the FMCSA says.

The FMCSA is providing 60 days for the public to comment on the rulemaking. The comment period will begin once the proposed rule is published in the Federal Register.



Using a cell phone while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol level of .08 percent.

FMCSA Issues Proposed Rule on Hours of Service Requirements for Commercial Truck Drivers

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued a regulatory proposal that would revise hours-of-service (HOS) requirements for commercial truck drivers.

"A fatigued driver has no place behind the wheel of a large commercial truck," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "We are committed to an hours-of-service rule that will help create an environment where commercial truck drivers are rested, alert and focused on safety while on the job."

This new HOS proposal would retain the "34-hour restart" provision allowing drivers to restart the clock on their weekly 60 or 70 hours by taking at least 34 consecutive hours off-duty. However, the restart period would have to include two consecutive off-duty periods from midnight to 6:00a.m. Drivers would be allowed to use this restart only once during a seven-day period.

Additionally the proposal would require commercial truck driver to complete all driving within a 14-hour work-

day, and to complete all on-duty work-related activities within 13 hours to allow for at least a one hour break. It also leaves open for comment whether drivers should be limited to 10 or 11 hours of



daily driving time, although FMCSA currently favors a 10-hour limit.

"In January, we began this rulemaking process by hosting five public listening sessions with stakeholders across the country," said FMCSA Administrator Anne S. Ferro. "This proposed rule provides another opportunity for the public to weight in on a safety issue that impacts everyone on our roadways."

Driving hours are regulated by federal HOS rules, which are designed to prevent commercial vehicle-related crashes and fatalities by prescribing on-duty and rest periods for driv-

ers.

Commercial truck drivers who violate this proposed rule would face civil penalties of up to \$2,750 for each offense. Trucking companies that allow their drivers to violate the

proposal's driving limits would face penalties of up to \$11,000 for each offense.

Other key provisions include the option of extending a driver's daily shift to 16 hours twice a week to accommodate for issues such as loading and unloading at terminals or ports, and allowing drivers to count some

time spent parked in their trucks toward off-duty hours.

A copy of the rulemaking proposal is available on FMCSA's website at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/HOS>.

The rulemaking will be published in the Federal Register on December 29 and the public will then have 60 days to comment. Information on how to submit comments and evidentiary material is available at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/HOS>.



Drivers who violate would face civil penalties of up to \$2,750 for each offense and trucking companies that allow drivers to violate would face penalties of up to \$11,000 for each offense