

SEP 04 2018

DRIVING YOUR HOURS OF SERVICE

BY ADMIN , LOS ANGELES

ADMIN



Our world is connected unlike ever before. The internet has enabled the rise of E-commerce and, with it, increased shipping and transport rates.

In other words, we like to buy things online — and the things we buy need to get to us on time.

Trucks are used to move goods from point A to point B. Over 15,000 tons of shipments were moved over land in commercial trucks in 2015, and the rate is growing every year — the Bureau of Transportation Statistics estimates that by 2045, [that number will reach over 25,000 tons](#). At the same time, America's trucker shortage is growing; [an ATA report](#) in October of 2017 warned that the trucking industry was going to be short 50,000 drivers by the end of 2017, and with E-commerce and shipping economies thriving, there's no indication that things have changed.

Not enough truckers and a lot of shipments might equal long hours for a lot of drivers — but safety always has to come first. Because of this situation a number of regulations have been introduced with the intention of keeping drivers and their shipments out of harm — regulations like the Hours of Service rules finalized in 2011 by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

The Hours

[Hours of Service regulations](#) were developed to combat the dangers of driving while tired after long days on the road. They concern only drivers that are operating a commercial vehicle; private vehicle use doesn't fall under the scope of the regulations. Commercial passenger buses, however, do have their own set of Hours of Service regulations that are different from the cargo-capable truck Hours of Service regulations.

Generally, intrastate trucking doesn't fall under the Hours of Service regulations. However, each state has similar laws to the Hours of Service regulations, so it's a good idea to stick to the regulations no matter what.

The federal commercial trucking regulations are as follows:

- An 11 hour driving limit that is refreshed after 10 consecutive hours off duty;
- A 14 hour shift limit, wherein drivers cannot drive past the 14th consecutive hour of their shift, even if they haven't driven 11 hours in one 14 hour period;
- A rest break mandate that says drivers may only drive if it's been less than 8 hours since their last off-duty or sleeper berth period of 30 minutes, a regulation that does not apply to those using the short-haul exceptions;
- A 60/70 hour limit wherein a driver may not drive more than 60 hours in 7 consecutive days or 70 hours in 8 consecutive days, both of which can be refreshed at any point by taking 34 consecutive off duty and/or sleeper berth hours; and
- A sleeper berth provision allowing for off duty rest in the sleeper berth.

The regulations also include a requirement for two off duty periods between 1:00 AM and 5:00AM and a once-a-week limit on use of the 34 hour restart, but enforcement of those two specific regulations is non-existent.

The Enforcement

As [more truck drivers are expected to retire in the coming years](#), the demand for drivers is going to grow. Companies may be tempted to skirt regulations to make deliveries without the extra cost of hiring more drivers. They should beware — ignoring the Hours of Service regulations can have costly consequences. [With electronic logging devices — ELDs — replacing paper logs through the regulations](#), tracking violations isn't hard, and refusing to use ELDs can result in drivers being removed from the road.

A driver being pulled from the road isn't the only risk of ignoring Hours of Service regulations. Hefty fines, [possibly even as high as over \\$30,000 for some violations](#), apply. Even the smaller fines, around \$1000 to 1500, add up, and the ELDs will record violations.

The Answer

How do you operate around Hours of Service regulations? Simple: by following them.

Ultimately, the Hours of Service regulations were introduced for a reason. Drowsiness on the road is impairing; [up to 6000 crashes a year](#) can be attributed to driving while tired. When what you're driving isn't a lighter passenger vehicle but, in fact, a 40-ton 18 wheeler, you need to take driving while tired seriously.

Partnering with a responsible company is your number one way to ensure you avoid Hours of Service violation penalties. Safe drivers will get your cargo there without extra fines, while unsafe drivers run the risk of lost profit and worse — devastating crashes.

[If you're looking to partner with a company that values safety, why not get in touch?](#)