CDL DRIVER SHORTAGE
FOCUS ON EXPANDING THE HOS SHORT HAUL EXEMPTION

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The driver shortage has become a serious problem in recent years. Some of the factors contributing to the shortage are the aging workforce, more job alternatives, regulations, young drivers exiting the market because of lifestyle changes and industry growth which requires more drivers. According to surveys by ATA, the average driver age in the for-hire over-the-road truckload industry is 49. Over the next decade, the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 898,000 new drivers, or an average of nearly 90,000 per year.

However, the often-overlooked factor that contributes to the drive shortage is finding qualified applicants. In some cases, carriers must reject 90 percent of applicants because they fail to meet at least one of the prerequisites to be qualified to drive. There are many barriers to entry for new drivers: age requirements, CDL testing standards, strict drug and alcohol testing regimes and, perhaps most importantly for many fleets, safe and clean driving records.

FMCSA PROPOSAL TO EXPAND AIR MILE RADIUS EXEMPTION

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (Docket No. FMCSA-2018-0248) which included several proposals to reduce compliance cost burdens on the regulated community and could alleviate the driver shortage.

Specifically, PMAA strongly supports FMCSA’s considerations to:

- Increase the number of daily on-duty hours from 12 to 14 for drivers operating under the exemption;
- Extend the current 14 hour on-duty limitation to allow for a three consecutive hour break (to allow for loading and unloading);
- Extend the current 14 hour on-duty limitation by up to two hours when a truck driver encounters adverse driving conditions;
- Eliminate the 30-minute rest break for drivers not qualified for the 100 air-mile short-haul exception but who return to the worksite at the end of each daily shift.

PMAA Also Requests the following changes to the Hours of Service Regulations that designed to increase driver availability and scheduling efficiency:

- Allow drivers to count the time waiting at terminals to load product as off-duty time;
- Extend the 100-mile air radius short-haul driver exception to 150 miles for CDL drivers to reflect the maximum distance most CDL drivers in the petroleum industry travel to load supply.
LEGISLATION

DRIVE-safe Act

The DRIVE-safe Act (S. 569) (H.R. 1374) reintroduced by Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN), as well as Sens. John Tester (D-MT) and Todd Young (R-IN), would allow drivers 18 and older to operate across state lines if they meet rigorous training requirements — at least 400 hours of on-duty time with 240 hours of driving time, with an experienced driver training them. Training would also be restricted to trucks equipped with active braking systems, video monitoring systems and speed limiters set to 65 mph or slower.

Although drivers of petroleum would not be covered under the Drive-safe Act since drivers must be 21 to qualify for a hazardous materials certification, PMAA supports the bill because it would expand the overall driver pool.

“THE ASK” Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure; Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

- Urge lawmakers to sign onto Rep. Crawford’s (R-AR) letter to the FMCSA which would lower compliance costs for petroleum marketers and help alleviate the driver shortage.
- Urge lawmakers to cosponsor the DRIVE-safe Act (S.569) (H.R. 1374)

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