



TruxFax

A Safety and Operations Bulletin for Motor Transportation Companies

December 5, 2011

Number 2011-49

REVISED HOURS OF SERVICE RULING IS EXPECTED AT YEAR'S END

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has announced that the revised Hours of Service (HOS) rules would most likely be made public within the next 30 days. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is reviewing the ruling but will not make its decision until January or February of 2012. FMCSA will probably then grant the transportation industry and the related enforcement agencies several months to prepare for implementation of whatever the changes may be. However, the controversy and bickering continues in the Congress. A meeting held by the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs was held on Wednesday, November 30, and some of the country's top transportation industry stakeholders, including FMCSA chief Anne Ferro, were called in as witnesses. A brief summary of proponents' and opponents' who argued their cases is available by going to: www.c-span.org/Events/C-SPAN-Event/10737425899.

DOT ISSUES BAN ON HANDHELD CELL PHONES FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS

A final joint rule made by the Department of Transportation (DOT), Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and FMCSA specifically prohibits interstate truck and bus drivers from using handheld cell phones while operating their vehicles. Drivers who violate the ban will face federal civil penalties of up to \$2,750 for each offense and will be disqualified from operating a commercial vehicle if multiple offenses are accumulated. States will be empowered to suspend a driver's commercial license after 2 or more related traffic violations. Motor vehicle carriers that allow drivers to use handheld cell phones while driving will face a maximum penalty of \$11,000. Approximately 4 million commercial drivers would be affected by this final rule.

ATRI RELEASES RESULTS OF SURVEY ON CSA PROGRAM PERSPECTIVES

Last summer, the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) published an online survey asking members of the trucking industry to weigh in on the impact that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) safety initiative, Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA), is having on their operations. The survey results were published this week based on data collected from 695 motor carriers. Overall, most carriers felt that CSA represents an improvement over the SafeStat program, that the safety initiative would help remove unsafe carriers and drivers from operating and that it would improve safety. ATRI plans to conduct 2 CSA surveys per year: the first covering commercial drivers' perspectives on how the program is impacting them, and the second will be on how it is affecting operations. ATRI Chief Operating Officer Rebecca Brewster says that "both surveys will become key annual indicators of how CSA impacts and progresses over time." The full survey is available at: www.atri-online.org.