

COVID-19 and Commercial Drivers

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on the transportation industry. On April 6th, 2020, This reality was underscored recently, when The American Trucking Association (ATA) announced the cancellation of the National Truck Driving Championships (often dubbed The Super Bowl of Safety), originally scheduled to be held in Indianapolis in August this year. According to ATA's Chris Spear, "The Super Bowl of Safety has not been cancelled since World War II, which is a testament to just how unprecedented this challenge is."

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone, both in the United States, and worldwide. Individuals who operate a motor vehicle as a part of their regular job duties play a critical role in ensuring the continued delivery of essential goods and services. The health and safety of commercial drivers is of paramount importance to both the individuals affected and the communities they serve.

Isolation while on the road is not unique for a professional driver. However, being away from family and loved ones can place additional demands and stress on an individual. It's recommended that drivers regularly check in with loved ones, friends and colleagues, and keep communications open, regular and honest. With the additional demands, stress and tension many people may be experiencing, it's important to stay vigilant in traffic to avoid potential road rage situations. Try to stay rested, keep calm and be conscious of reactions toward other motorists on the road.

Essential Workers

The Expanded Emergency Declaration under 390.23 of March 18th, 2020 exempts motor carriers and drivers who are providing direct assistance in support of relief efforts from FMCSR 390 – 399. This applies to essential services such as medical care or essential supplies related to COVID-19 outbreaks. The exemption does not include routine commercial deliveries, including mixed loads with nominal quantity of qualifying emergency relief added with the intent of obtaining the benefits of this emergency declaration. If you are uncertain, check with your company's management team before proceeding.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Guidelines (FMCSA)

The FMCSA realizes that long haul drivers may be on the road for days or weeks at a time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance that when drivers return to their domicile location they should follow the recommendations of the state or local officials in the areas in which they live. The CDC recommends that all individuals take precautions to keep themselves and others safe, including:

- Washing hands regularly
- Staying home when sick
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Maintaining distance from others
- Wearing a mask

Generally older adults, as well as individuals of any age, who have heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes with complications (such as, but not limited to, kidney disease, heart disease and neuropathy) may be at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Commercial Driver License Waiver

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers are unable to renew their driver's license and are unable to provide medical certificates to their State Driver Licensing Agencies. The FMCSA has

granted a three-month waiver from certain regulations applicable to commercial learner's permit (CLP) holders operating commercial motor vehicles (CMV as defined in 383.5). The waiver is effective March 28th, 2020 and expires on June 30th, 2020. Check with your State Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) for further details.



Medical Examiner's Certificates

Many medical providers nationwide have canceled regularly scheduled appointments to dedicate resources to the COVID-19 response or for related reasons. As a result, drivers are unable to obtain appointments for physical examinations with medical examiners to comply with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). With the ongoing national emergency, there is a public need for immediate transportation of essential supplies, equipment and persons, which requires an adequate and sustained supply of CMV drivers including Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) holders, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) holders and non-CDL commercial drivers. Ensuring that drivers are available to operate CMVs during the national emergency declaration is crucial to continued transportation and energy supply networks operation as well as the safety and economic stability of our nation. This Notice of Enforcement Policy is effective from March 24th, 2020 to June 30th, 2020.

Tips for Commercial Drivers

- Sanitize the interior of your truck frequently
- Wear gloves when pumping fuel
- Keep contact with others to a minimum. Communicate electronically as much as possible
- Stay safe and don't push your limits. Get proper rest, diet and exercise
- Excessive driving may lead to fatigue and drowsy driving, but it remains important to refrain from touching your face and rubbing your eyes



- Pack lunch and dinner, and avoid eating at truck stops when possible to maintain a healthy diet. As of April 3rd, 2020, food trucks are now allowed in rest areas to serve commercial drivers
- Add personal protective equipment (PPE) to your pre-trip inspection checklist. Carry hand protection, sanitizer, gloves, face mask and disinfectant wipes
- Be vigilant and follow all state, local and CDC guidelines for slip-seat and team driving operations. This applies to vehicles coming out of the maintenance garage as well
- Follow CDC guidelines and be aware of any changes in company policies regarding roadside inspections, enforcement and accident scene procedures
- Embrace trip planning. Understand the route, the load and customer requirements that may otherwise be different under the existing quarantine. Prepare to be asked to take a different load for another driver who is ill, or to deliver new cargo types under emergency conditions. Anticipate potentially different delivery procedures for new and existing customers. Check with dispatch, and share what you learn with and from other employees and drivers

COVID-19 Transportation Related Sources

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/COVID-19>

Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) <https://www.cvsa.org/inspections/inspections/covid-19/>

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) <https://www.tsa.gov/coronavirus>

Commercial Carrier Journal (CCJ)

https://www.overdriveonline.com/coronavirus/?oly_enc_id=4791H5339867I0Y

American Trucking Association (ATA) <https://www.trucking.org/COVID19>

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