



Truckers Hours-of-Service Rule To Be Reviewed

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(Adapted from the FMCSA)

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) says it will re-examine the 2003 hours-of-service (HOS) rule that regulates the amount of time commercial truck drivers can operate their vehicles. The agency says it is responding to a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, which vacated the rule. The court said the government neglected to consider the impact of the rule on truckers' health.

"We are moving aggressively to make sure we have the best regulations in place to ensure truck driver health, save lives, and keep the American economy moving safely on the nation's highways," says FMCSA Administrator Annette M. Sandberg. "Public feedback is critical to this effort. We need to hear from our stakeholders about their experiences regarding the 2003 HOS rule."

"...to ensure truck driver health, save lives, and keep the American economy moving safely..."

Throughout the first few months of the year, FMCSA sought comments from truck drivers, motor carriers, law enforcement officials, safety advocates and others on the HOS regulations. The agency say it is also collecting new data to provide a more complete picture of the 2003 rule's impact on carrier operations and drivers' health. Because of the compressed schedule for completing the rulemaking, the comment period is abbreviated, ending on March 10, 2005.

By the terms of the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2004, the HOS rules issued in April 2003 remain in effect until September 30, 2005. FMCSA says it is conducting a scientific review of HOS and the effects on drivers operating commercial vehicles. Moreover, the agency has dedicated a team of professionals to review the current HOS regulations and determine whether changes should be made to better protect truck drivers and other highway users. In addition to the drivers' health, the team is looking at provisions adopted in the 2003 HOS rule which increased the daily driving limit from 10 to 11 hours, continued drivers' use of sleeper berths, and allowed a 34-hour restart period.

2005 Dates:

January:

Plan Your Safety Training Now!
Call Cambridge For Ideas!
312-381-8208

February:

Child Passenger Safety Week

March:

Poison Prevention Week
Workplace Eye Safety Month
Save Your Vision Month

April:

Sports Eye Safety Month
Intl Building Safety Week
Work Zone Aware. Week
Playground Safety Week

May:

Clean Air Month
Melanoma Awareness Month
Electrical Safety Month
National EMS Week
Poison Prevention Week

June:

National Safety Month

July:

EYE INJURY PREV. MONTH

August:

Prepare Your Winter Safety Training!

September:

Farm Safety/Health Week

October:

Nat. Fire Prevention Week
Drive Safely Work Week
Radon Action Week

November:

Take advantage of the weather and do your classroom training!

December:

"3D Month" - National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Safety For Late Night Convenience Store Clerks in New Mexico

New Mexico recently created a new rule aimed at protecting convenience store clerks from violence during late-night hours. The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board issued the Convenience Store Rule, which includes requirements for all convenience stores and additional requirements covering those operating between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., according to a past labor liaison at OSHA.

The board held public meetings on the rule in the fall and amended it in December, 2004. Under the rule, those convenience stores operating between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. must implement at least one of the following safety measures:

- Have at least two employees on duty between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Employers may substitute the second employee with a security guard on the premises.
- Provide a controlled access area by means of a secured safety enclosure of bullet-resistant material that meets American Society for Testing Materials standard D3935 or Underwriters Laboratory Standard 752.
- Provide a pass-through window of bullet-resistant material that meets one of those standards and restricts access to and encompasses the service-counter area, providing an enclosure that extends not less than five feet above the counter; *or*
- Close the store and prohibit all sales transactions but allow employees to perform duties such as store stocking, maintenance, and cleaning.

The Convenience Store Rule also requires all convenience stores to provide employees with crime prevention and safety training. In addition, the rule has requirements for lighting and video surveillance.



Blue Cross Offers Stress Busting Tips:

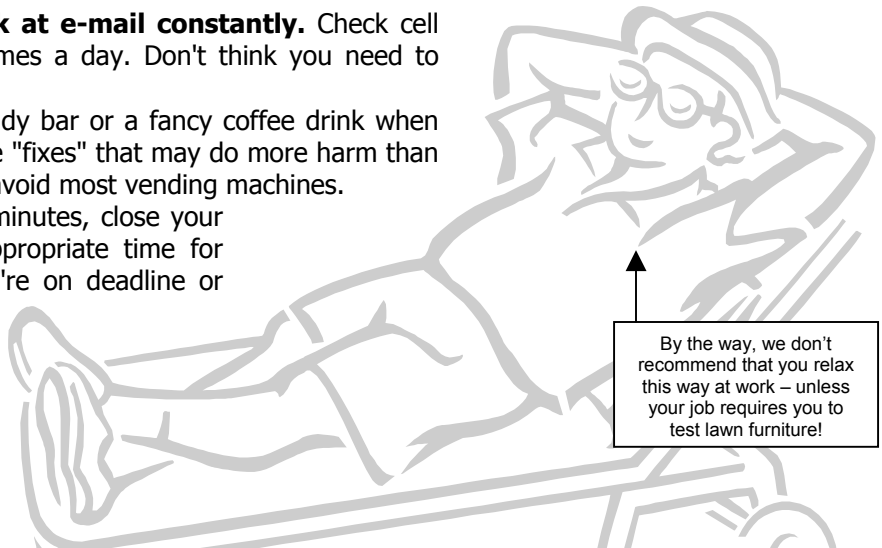
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Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) of Minnesota believes employers can play an important role in reducing stress for their workers. To that end, the insurer has published a series of tips to help lower workplace stress. In a press release, BCBS cites studies showing a significant connection between unmanaged stress and rising healthcare costs, not only in Minnesota, but nationwide. In one study of 46,000 employees, workers with unmanaged stress racked up 46 percent higher medical costs than those whose stress was addressed.

"We're connected to work as never before by cell phones, pagers, PDAs, and laptops. So it is essential to learn techniques to keep us focused on our work, to keep us productive, and to create enjoyment in each workday," says the insurer.

Stress-management tips you may wish to share with employees include:

- **Exercise.** Thirty minutes a day of running, walking, or yoga can make a positive difference.
- **Manage your time.** Prioritize tasks, write them down, and enjoy crossing them off the list when they're done. Talk to your boss when the workload gets tough.
- **Turn off the cell phone and don't look at e-mail constantly.** Check cell phone messages and e-mail only a few times a day. Don't think you need to respond immediately once contacted.
- **Watch what you eat.** Reaching for a candy bar or a fancy coffee drink when you're stressed is the wrong idea. These are "fixes" that may do more harm than good. Bring snacks like fresh fruit to work; avoid most vending machines.
- **Enjoy a micro break.** Take a few quiet minutes, close your eyes, and breathe deeply. Choose the appropriate time for such a break (for example, not while you're on deadline or expected at a meeting).
- **Talk about it.** Talking to the right person about stress can help. If your company has an Employee Assistance Program, start there. If not, seek out a sympathetic co-worker or supervisor who can help you work out solutions.



By the way, we don't recommend that you relax this way at work – unless your job requires you to test lawn furniture!

Do you find it easy to relax? If so, tell others to help them relax as well!

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Safety Resource Center

It's Good To Know:

Fire Extinguisher Inspections

...a "quick check" to give reasonable assurance that a fire extinguisher is available, fully charged and operable.

The value of an inspection lies in the frequency, regularity, and thoroughness with which it is conducted. The frequency will vary from hourly to monthly, based on the needs of the situation. Inspections should always be conducted when extinguishers are initially placed in service and thereafter at 30-day intervals.

Coming Next Month:

Child & Youth Labor

The Department of Labor (DOL) guidelines for employing younger workers were recently reviewed and revised. So, if you employ anyone under the age of 18, at any time or for any reason, you'll want to read next month's *Safety Newsletter*.

- Swimming Pools?
- Park Districts?
- Summer Help?
- Painters?
- Mowing?
- Driving?

Home Safety Tip:

Slips, Trips & Falls

Just like work, there are dangers in the home. Slips, trips and falls are some of the leading causes of home injuries and deaths. And, like work, the remedies are the same. Watch out for:

- Cords across walk paths,
- Water on the floor,
- Oil on the garage floor,
- Worn or slippery steps,
- Snow and ice under-foot,
- Storage in walk paths,
- Sinks and pipes that leak,
- Refrigerator condensation,
- or -
- Children putting furniture polish on the floor for fun!

WATCH OUT!