

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers May 13, 2003

FMCSA Sets New Hours of Service Regulations

An increase in driving hours and a decrease in on-duty hours for drivers of property-carrying vehicles headlines the revised hours-of-service regulations released recently by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The regulation includes the following provisions:

- 11 hours of driving time following 10 consecutive hours off duty.
- No driving after 14 hours of on-duty time (a combination of driving and all other on-duty time) following 10 consecutive hours off duty.

The proposed regulation by the FMCSA would set new on-duty and rest time guidelines for commercial motor vehicle operators for the first time since 1939. The FMCSA rule has cleared a required independent comprehensive cost-benefits analysis. It reflects components of an earlier ATA proposal by increasing the amount of rest time for professional truck drivers and promotes the body's natural 24-hour circadian rhythms, as opposed to the current rule which is based on an 18-hour day.

For more information, visit the FMCSA website at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/hos/hos.htm>.

USDOT Releases Major Survey on Biking and Walking

Nearly 80 percent of adult Americans take at least one walk of five minutes or longer during the summer months, while fewer than 30 percent ride a bike, according to a major new survey released by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). In the survey, conducted jointly by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), only half of all adults are satisfied with their communities' designs for bicycling safety, whereas three out of four adults are satisfied with their communities' designs for pedestrian safety. Those dissatisfied with current facilities wanted new bicycle facilities, such as trails, bicycle lanes and traffic signal, as well as pedestrian facilities that included sidewalks, lighting and crosswalks. **An electronic version of the report with more details is available at www.bicyclinginfo.org or www.walkinginfo.org.**

TSA & USDOT Issue Rules To Secure Transport Of Hazardous Goods

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the USDOT recently moved to secure the transport of dangerous goods, including explosives, by issuing an interim final rule requiring background checks on commercial drivers certified to transport hazardous items. "This is a landmark rule in that it establishes vital safeguards to protect our national transportation network from possible acts of terrorism," said TSA Administrator Adm. James M. Loy. "The rules will further ensure the continued safe transport of a range of products – from chlorine to gasoline – crucial to the economic viability of the United States." This rule was required under the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA PATRIOT Act), which was enacted by Congress on October 25, 2001. The FMCSA companion rule amends the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations to prohibit States from issuing, renewing, transferring or upgrading a commercial driver's license (CDL) with a Hazmat endorsement, unless the TSA has first conducted a background records check of the applicant and determined that the applicant does not pose a security risk warranting denial of the Hazmat endorsement. The FMCSA is also requiring states to establish a Hazmat endorsement renewal period of at least five years to insure that each holder of a Hazmat endorsement routinely and uniformly receives a security screening. The five-year renewal cycle was established in close coordination with TSA, based on its security risk determination

requirements. The rule does not apply to applicants for CDLs without a Hazmat endorsement. **To view the interim final rules, visit <http://dms.dot.gov/>.**

Review of FHWA's Intelligent Vehicle Initiative

TRB's Committee for the Review of the Intelligent Vehicle Initiative (IVI), Phase 2, has released its first letter report to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with recommendations for modifying IVI's focus and activities and creating measures to judge IVI progress. **To view the report, visit <http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/reports/iviltrpt2003.pdf>.**

NHTSA Releases Information on Teen Seat Belt Rates

NHTSA has released a fact sheet that provides information and statistics on injuries, fatalities, and economic costs due to lower seat-belt use rates among teens compared to the general population. **To view the fact sheets, visit <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/buasbteens03/index.htm>.**

USDOT Releases Preliminary Estimates of 2002 Highway Fatalities

Alcohol-related highway fatalities increased again in 2002 while the majority of passenger vehicle occupants killed were not wearing safety belts, according to preliminary estimates from the USDOT's NHTSA. With overall highway fatalities also up slightly from 2001, the grim statistics underscore the need for better state laws that address the causes of the problem and stricter enforcement. In 2002, an estimated 42,850 people died on the nation's highways, up from 42,116 in 2001. The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) remained unchanged at 1.51, according to preliminary estimates. It was the highest number of fatalities since 1990. "If we are ever going to reduce the needless deaths on the nation's highways, we're going to need the American public to bear greater responsibility for their personal safety," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta.

NHTSA Administrator Says the Nation Does Not Put Enough Emphasis on the Personal Responsibility of Motorists and Pedestrians

Dr. Jeffrey Runge, NHTSA Administrator says the nation puts too much emphasis on car and truck safety and not enough on the personal responsibility of motorists and pedestrians. Although Runge is not the first NHTSA Administrator to say that changing human behavior is the way to make the biggest gains in highway safety, his remarks recently were his strongest to date about the possibility that too much emphasis is placed on the need to further regulate cars and trucks, primarily by the mass media. "One would think that if we just make vehicles safer, the problem would be solved," Runge says. "There is a false impression being created." He says he is amazed that there is not more societal outrage about the 42,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of serious injuries each year on the nation's highways, many of them preventable with behavioral changes. "As a nation, we should be outraged over the loss of nearly 43,000 of our friends, neighbors and family members," said Runge. These remarks came in a meeting with automotive writers in Washington. At the same time, NHTSA released its preliminary estimate of U.S. highway deaths in 2002 with fatalities up slightly from 2001.

Rollover Crashes Sited as Major Factor in Increase in US Fatalities Puts Pressure on Auto Industry

In another development that could put more pressure on the auto industry to enhance sport utility vehicles (SUVs) safety, the federal government said Wednesday, U.S. highway fatalities rose again in 2002, with rollover crashes involving SUVs and pickup trucks a major factor. The number of rollover deaths rose 4.9 percent, from 10,130 in 2001 to 10,626 in 2002. NHTSA attributed 53 percent of the

road-wise workforce

increase in fatalities in 2002 to rollover crashes involving SUVs and pickup trucks. **For the full report,**



visit NHTSA's website at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rpts/2003/2002EARRelease.pdf>.

New Regulations for 15-Passenger Vans Would Close 30-Year Loophole

Rep. Mark Udall and Sen. Olympia Snowe are sponsoring legislation that would increase safety testing of 15-passenger vans. H.R. 1641 and S. 717 close a loophole in the 30-year-old law that allows schools, including colleges and universities, to purchase used vans to transport students. In 1974, the sale of new 15-passenger vans for carrying school-age children was banned because they do not have the same safety features as school buses. But a loophole in the federal regulation has allowed schools to purchase used vans. The Passenger Van Safety Act of 2003 would require NHTSA to include 15-passenger vans in its dynamic rollover testing, which is currently being developed as mandated by the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act.

Better Quality Vehicles Allow Owners to Keep Them on the Road Longer

According to R.L. Polk & Co., Americans are keeping older vehicles on the road for longer periods of time. Light trucks experienced an increase in median age of 8 percent, the largest single-year increase since Polk's light truck report started in 1993. The median age for cars increased more than 4 percent, marking the largest increase since 1993. Drivers are keeping their vehicles on the road longer because of advances in vehicle quality and engine technology, according to Eric Papacek, a Polk analytic consultant. **For more information, visit the Polk website at** http://www.polk.com/news/releases/2003_0211.asp.

95% of Americans Believe Congestion Worse in the Last 3 Years

Ninety-five percent of Americans believe congestion has gotten worse or has not improved over the last three years, according to a new survey by AAA and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). In addition, 92 percent believe it is either "very important" or "somewhat important" for their community to have good roads as well as viable alternatives to driving. **For the full report, visit the APTA website at** <http://www.apta.com/media/releases/>.



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