

BDP Blog

# New year. New trucking regs. (Maybe)



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## Change may be coming. So what's new?

More than 3.5 million truck drivers and the 700,000 carriers registered with the Department of Transportation may see imminent changes to our nation's trucking regulations.

Regulation change is difficult to absorb for any industry, and the trucking industry is no exception. This is mainly the result of a complex subset of diverse industries, including trucked, less-than-truckload and small parcel, to name a few. And as they generate a combined \$700 billion in revenues, any regulation change that impacts operations is certain to generate friction among a few, if not many, drivers and logistics companies.

**But to avoid disruptions, non-compliance is not an option. And with that in mind, as we close out 2019 and head into 2020, below is a roundup of some of the major regulations changes that will be taking place (or at least are under consideration).**

Hours of Service

After more than two years of regulatory tweaks, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is looking to change drivers' hours of service (HOS) rules, which would apply to nearly every truck driver in the United States.

The changes are being proposed in several areas:

- Flexibility in the 30-minute rest break after eight hours of driving
- Exceptions for split-sleeper berths
- Allowing a 30-minute off duty break during a 14-hour shift
- Bad weather flexibility
- Exceptions for short haulers

**This poses a substantial impact to the entire industry, whose drivers are paid by the mile, not hour. And for whom any reductions in driving time threatens their income.**

#### Licensing

The FMCSA is also proposing changes to the licensing process for those looking to enter the trucking industry, allowing states more flexibility to conduct testing for those seeking a commercial driver's license. According to the FMCSA, the change would reduce the barriers to entry for prospective drivers without compromising safety.



#### Speed Limit

A proposed regulation change on the federal level would reduce speed limits to 65-68 mph for heavy trucks. Introduced by Senators Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Chris Coons (D-DE), the Cullum Owings Large Truck Safe Operating Speed Act of 2019 (S. 2033) would establish a federal speed limit for heavy trucks. The bill is supported by the Alliance for Driver Safety & Security (Trucking Alliance) with safety as its focus. "I've spent my entire career in the trucking industry ... there's simply no legitimate reason for an 80-foot tractor-trailer to be driven within a few feet of other motorists at speeds of 70 mph or 75 mph or 80 mph. The safety benefits of the bill are obvious," said Steve Williams, chairman and CEO of Maverick USA to Logistics Management.

Still others are expressing concern if highway traffic mandated separate speed limits based on vehicle types, which they maintain would increase accidents of the faster traveling automobiles rear-ending trucks. "In a world of distracted drivers, I believe we will continue to see a rise in trucks being rear-ended," said Derek Leathers, president and CEO of Werner Enterprises to Logistics Management.

**Stay tuned for these developing regulations.**



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