

Takin' a Load Off Your Mind

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Clarification of D.O.T. laws . . .

For some reason, the recent past has shown that there are still many misconceptions with the Department of Transportation laws for trucking. We'll try to clarify some of them for you as we are still seeing many citations.

The first point we want to clarify is the definition of a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV). The definition of a CMV is: any vehicle operated on a public roadway where the G.V.W.R. (Gross Vehicle Weight **Rating**) is more than 10,000 pounds. See that the word "Rating" is in bold. This definition fits single vehicles and/or combination vehicles. This is the rating determined by the manufacturer. It is not the weight of the vehicle; nor is it the weight stated on the Registration. If the vehicle is "Rated" at 25,500 pounds and the registration states 27,000 pounds – it is "not" a CDL vehicle.

If the power unit is 10,001 pounds or more, that's simple ...It's a CMV. If the trailer and power unit combined have a G.V.W.R. or more than 10,000 pounds – it "is" a CMV. If the combination is 26,001 or more – with the trailer being rated 10,000 or more – It's a CDL vehicle.

If you need to transport more product than the G.V.W.R. allows, you can register the vehicle for more weight – without being cited an overweight ticket; however, keep in mind that this will void any warrantee that you may have on the vehicle and its components ...suspension, brakes, chassis, etc.

We explained the G.V.W.R. for several reasons.

Unified Carrier Registration (UCR): Any motor carrier who operates vehicles with a G.V.W.R. of more than 10,000 pounds must apply for the UCR (Unified Carrier Registration). This applies regardless of what kind of cargo you are transporting whether transporting your own equipment or freight for someone else. It applies even if you are transporting no cargo at all. This registration is required for motor carriers who cross over state lines - - - Interstate requirement. You can apply on-line (at www.ucr.in.gov) or send an application

through snail mail. Rates are posted on the internet as well

D.O.T. Road Tests: These tests are required of all persons who operate Commercial Motor Vehicles (CMVs) ...vehicles "rated" over 10,000 pounds. The only exception to this law is if the driver/employee operates a CDL vehicle. If the driver holds a CDL license – the Road Test is not required unless If that person operates either "tank" or double/triple vehicles for you, a CDL license "**and**" a D.O.T. Road Test will be needed. (Note: If the driver holds an N or T Endorsement on their license – the D.O.T. Road Test is not required if they do not operate that type vehicle for you.

When administering these tests ...use an experienced and reliable person who holds an equivalent license to give the test. The mileage of the test should be sufficient to honestly judge the person taking the test. Include many aspects such as driving behavior, traffic laws, equipment handling, vehicle inspection, D.O.T. laws, emergency criteria, off-road maneuvers, and/or attitude, etc. Then, document the test and keep it on file permanently.

F.C.G. suggests that "all" drivers be given a D.O.T. Road Test ...even when it's not required. Remember, just because someone obtains a CDL license, it does not mean they are a safe or good driver. It means they passed the minimum requirements to obtain the license. Your equipment is expensive; your cargo is important; and, the motoring public needs safe drivers on the road. If you have questions about D.O.T. Road Tests or administering them – give us a call.

Did You Know . . .

Honey is the only food that will not spoil or rot.

Honey should never be boiled or put into a microwave as that will kill the enzymes.

For Colds ...1 Tablespoon of lukewarm honey with $\frac{1}{4}$ spoon cinnamon powder for 3 days can cure most chronic coughs, colds and clear sinuses.

Bladder Infections ...take 2 tablespoons cinnamon powder and 1 teaspoon honey in a glass of lukewarm water – it could destroy the germs in the bladder.

Don't know if these really work - but they may be worth a try huh?

Oopsy!!! We made a mistake!

In our last issue, we published a statement that informed you that drivers notified of a Random Drug/Alcohol Test must arrive at the collection site within 2 hours. We must have lost our minds that day ...that is the wrong answer. When you notify a driver of a Random Test – s/he must go "immediately" and "directly" to the collection site. We apologize for any inconvenience. And, we thank those who informed us of our error.

Looking for a source in the Grand Rapids area for a Michigan

CDL, Automobile or Motorcycle Skill Tests?

Give us a call – 616-532-0704

CDL Rentals Available

Appointments typically available within 1-4 days

Beginning - December 16, 2009 - **ENTRANT SAFETY ASSURANCE** **PROCESS - AMENDMENT**

To date, these audits have allowed for certain violations and used the audit more as an educational process for newer motor carriers. The standard of compliance for passing the new entrant safety audit is being amended.

There are 16 regulations that are essential of basic safety management controls. Failure to comply with any "one" of the 16 regulations will cause an automatic failure of the safety audit. Note: Some of these are:

- Knowingly using a driver who is disqualified
- Using a driver who has refused an alcohol/drug test
- Using a vehicle without a periodic inspection

For more information regarding the 16 regulations included - please contact our office as in most cases, a single occurrence can make the determination for an automatic failure of the safety audit.

In addition, certain violations during roadside inspections can subject the new entrant motor carrier to expedited actions to correct these deficiencies.

The audit will also include the Americans with Disabilities Act and household goods-related requirements, if they apply. These two will not affect the "safety audit"; however, the "agents" will take appropriate actions to ensure improved compliance with these issues.

The FMCSA is attempting to identify the at-risk carriers to ensure deficiencies are corrected before "permanent registration" is granted.

Interested in a ...

COMPLIANCE or
LOGBOOK
WORKSHOP

Call our office for a schedule.