

THE FACTS ABOUT HOURS OF SERVICE REGULATION



A commercial vehicle driver that operates a vehicle that weighs 10,001 pounds or more is required to comply with the hours of service regulation designed by the FMCSA to avoid fatigue. The last change in the rules became effective on July 1, 2013, and the most important changes were:

- Limit the maximum average work week for truck drivers to 70 hours, a decrease from the previous maximum of 82 hours;
- Allow truck drivers who reach the maximum 70 hours of driving within a week to resume if they rest for 34 consecutive hours, including at least two nights when their body clock demands sleep the most - from 1-5 a.m., and;
- Require truck drivers to take a 30-minute break during the first eight hours of a shift.

Some drivers may think these changes aren't necessary but the fact is driver fatigue is a leading factor in large truck crashes. The revised rules reduce fatigue since they ensure drivers get the rests they need in order to be alert, safe and awake while operating their vehicle.

One of the changes in the rules is the 34 hour reset provision. Scientists have proven by measuring sleep patterns, reaction time, and sleepiness and driving performance, that drivers who began their work week just one nighttime period of rest instead of the two nights rest exhibited more lapses of attention, felt sleepy and tired.

The 8 hour brake is meant to avoid fatigue and increase alertness. Working long daily and weekly hours according to the FMCSA is associated with fatigue, a high risk of crashes and chronic health conditions in drivers. Taking a few breaks throughout the day will help you stay focused and have better reaction times.

