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FMCSA Hours of Service Rules Changes Coming Soon

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) revised hours of service regulations are set to go into effect on September 29, 2020 at 12:01 am EST. The anticipated effect of the changes is expected to bring greater flexibility to drivers and increase carrier profitability while having no adverse effect upon safety.

The revisions are:

- Expansion of the short-haul exception to 150 air-miles and allowance for a 14-hour work shift.
- Expansion of the driving window during adverse driving conditions by up to an additional two hours.
- The 30-minute break after eight hours of driving time instead of on-duty time and allowance of on-duty but not driving period to qualify as the required break.
- Modification of the sleeper berth exception to allow a driver to meet the 10-hour minimum off-duty requirement by spending at least seven hours of the period in the berth and a minimum off-duty period of at least two hours spent inside or outside of the berth. The result of the split must result in a total of 10 hours. Additionally, neither of the qualifying split periods counts against the 14-hour driving window.

For the adverse driving condition revision, the FMCSA has amended the definition so that the adverse driving conditions exception may be applied based on the dispatcher's and the driver's knowledge of the conditions after being dispatched, and extends the driving window during which the current exception for the extended driving time may be used by up to 2 hours for truck and bus operations. The 30-minute break is now based upon actual driving time instead of on-duty time, and the qualifying break criteria now includes on-duty but not driving, off-duty or sleeper berth time.

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