

In the Safety Zone™

A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness

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April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

When drivers are not paying attention they don't have a chance to react. The transportation and safety community continue to work very hard to end the deadly epidemic of distracted driving. As a truck driver, here is what you need to know about distracted driving.

Distracted Driving – What Truck Drivers Need to Know

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) have published rules specifically prohibiting interstate truck and bus drivers and drivers who transport placardable quantities of hazardous materials from texting or using hand-held mobile phones while operating their vehicles. The joint rules are the latest actions by the U.S. Department of Transportation to end distracted driving. Violations can result in fines and/or disqualifications and will impact a motor carrier's and/or driver's Safety Management System (SMS) results.

No texting while driving

Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers are prohibited from texting while driving. So what qualifies as texting? Texting means manually entering alphanumeric text into, or reading text from, an electronic device. This includes, but is not limited to, short message service, e-mailing, instant messaging, a command or request to access a Web page, or pressing more than a single button to initiate or terminate a voice communication using a mobile phone.

Do not type or read a text message while driving a CMV!

Use of mobile phones is restricted for CMV drivers

This ruling restricts a CMV driver from **reaching for** or **holding** a mobile phone to conduct a voice communication, as well as dialing by **pressing more than a single button**. CMV drivers who use a mobile phone while driving can only operate a hands-free phone located in

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Thousands die needlessly each year because people continue to use their cell phones while driving, handheld or hands-free. TransForce also encourages you to follow these recommendations from the National Safety Council:

- ◆ Stop using cell phones while driving.
- ◆ Understand the dangers of the cognitive distraction to the brain.
- ◆ Inform people who call you while driving that you'd be happy to continue the conversation once they have reached their destination.
- ◆ Tell others about the dangers of cell phone distracted driving.

No phone call is worth a life.

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close proximity. In short, the rule prohibits unsafely reaching for a device, holding a mobile phone, or pressing multiple buttons.

What happens if a driver is caught using a hand-held phone or texting while driving?

The rules impose sanctions for driver offenses, **including civil penalties up to \$2,750** and disqualification for multiple offenses. Motor carriers are also prohibited from requiring or allowing their drivers to text or use a hand-held mobile phone while driving and may be subject to civil penalties up to \$11,000. Violations will impact SMS results. Texting and calling on a hand-held phone carry the worst possible violation severity weights against a driver's results!



What are the risks?

Besides penalties and possible disqualification, recent research shows that the odds of being involved in a safety-critical event (e.g., crash, near-crash, unintentional lane deviation) are **23.2 times greater** for CMV drivers who text while driving than for those who do not. Texting drivers took their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. **At 55 mph, this equates to a driver traveling the approximate length of a football field — without looking at the roadway!** For CMV drivers who dial a mobile phone while driving, the odds of being involved in a safety-critical event are **six times greater** than for those who do not. Why take chances?

TransForce drivers are expected to comply with the new FMCSA regulations and follow the respective rules of our customers. Call your branch in the event that any conflict arises or further clarification is needed.

How can drivers use a mobile phone and still obey the rules?

- ◆ Locate the mobile phone so it is operable by the driver while restrained by properly adjusted safety belts.
- ◆ Utilize an earpiece or the speaker phone function.
- ◆ Use voice-activated or one-button touch features to initiate, answer, or terminate a call.



No call, no text, no ticket!

Being Healthy is in YOUR Hands



A well-balanced lifestyle can play a major role in truck drivers having a long and successful career. A healthy truck driver is more aware of their surroundings and is able to respond more quickly to any unexpected situation.

In the last issue we offered many ideas that you could incorporate to jumpstart a healthier lifestyle. Maybe you adopted at least one healthier routine such as scheduled an annual check-up, chose a turkey sandwich over a meatball sub, or walked laps around the trailer during rest stops. If you haven't started anything, why not get started now? Your first step is to realize that your health is truly in your own hands. Getting plenty of rest, staying physically fit and, maintaining a healthy diet is a great start.

Take a look at the last issue to get simple ideas towards a healthier lifestyle. Previous issues can also be found on our website: <http://www.transforce.com/news/in-the-safety-zone-newsletter>.

Sleep Apnea – Why All the Buzz?

Driver fatigue is a significant factor in a high number of fatal truck-related crashes. A study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and sponsored by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the American Transportation Research Institute of the American Trucking Associations found that almost one-third (28%) of commercial truck drivers have mild to severe sleep apnea.¹



What is Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea is a condition where someone involuntarily stops breathing during sleep, sometimes hundreds of times and often for a minute or longer. In most cases the sleeper is unaware when breathing stops because they don't fully awaken. Sleep apnea leads to poor sleep quality and excessive daytime sleepiness. It is important as drivers to be aware of sleep apnea symptoms, since excessive sleepiness can impact a driver's ability to safely operate the commercial vehicle.

Risks Factors for Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea occurs in all age groups and both sexes, but there are certain factors that put you at higher risk:

- ◆ A family history of sleep apnea
- ◆ Being age 40 or older
- ◆ Smoking and alcohol use
- ◆ Being overweight
- ◆ Having a small upper airway
- ◆ Ethnicity
- ◆ A large neck size (17 inches or greater for men, 16 inches or greater for women)
- ◆ Having a recessed chin, small jaw or a large overbite

Symptoms of Sleep Apnea

- ◆ Loud snoring
- ◆ Excessive daytime sleepiness
- ◆ Concentration and memory problems
- ◆ Morning headaches and nausea
- ◆ Irritability and/or feelings of depression
- ◆ Frequent nighttime urination
- ◆ Gasping or choking while sleeping
- ◆ Disturbed sleep
- ◆ Loss of sex drive/impotence

Diagnosing Sleep Apnea

A diagnosis of sleep apnea can be made only with a sleep study conducted during a visit to a sleep lab, usually overnight, or a home study performed with special equipment to monitor your sleep.

Can You Still Drive if You Have Sleep Apnea?

While FMCSA regulations do not specifically address sleep apnea, they do prescribe that a person with a medical history or clinical diagnosis of any condition likely to interfere with their ability to drive safely cannot be medically qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in interstate commerce. *However, once successfully treated, a driver may regain their "medically-qualified-to-drive" status. It is important to note that most cases of sleep apnea can be treated successfully.* Because each state sets its own medical standards for driving a CMV in intrastate commerce, check with your local Department of Motor Vehicles for regulations in your state.

Obligations of a Motor Carrier Regarding Employees with Sleep Apnea

A motor carrier may not require or permit a driver to operate a CMV if the driver has a condition – including sleep apnea – that would affect his or her ability to safely operate the vehicle. It is critical that persons with sleep apnea fully use the treatment provided by their doctor. When effectively treated, a commercial driver with sleep apnea should be able to perform his or her job and be fully alert.

If you suspect that you have sleep apnea, don't wait until it is time for recertification. Schedule a check-up now and discuss your suspicions with a doctor. Doing so will minimize the chances of having an undetected medical condition go untreated.

Reference

1. Pack A.I., Dinges D.F., & Maislin G. (2002). A study of prevalence of sleep apnea among commercial truck drivers (Report No. DOT-RT-02-030). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, FMCSA.



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REMINDER: Report All Accidents and Injuries Immediately!

As a TransForce driver you are required to:

- ◆ Verbally report all vehicle accidents and injuries (no matter how minor) to your TransForce branch no later than the end of your shift.
- ◆ You must have an immediate medical examination if injured – *this is not optional*. Your branch contact will direct you to a medical facility or emergency room.
- ◆ Complete a written notice of accident or injury form within 24 hours of the event as you are medically able.



Do you have any safety ideas or news items to share with us? Please send to our email at safetynews@transforce.com.