

THE FEDERAL REGS

Making Friends with the FMCSR

Because the federal government is interested in keeping the trucking industry a safe one, it has issued the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). In addition, some states have regulations of their own. It's important that you know all the rules that apply to your job as a driver.

Hours of Service

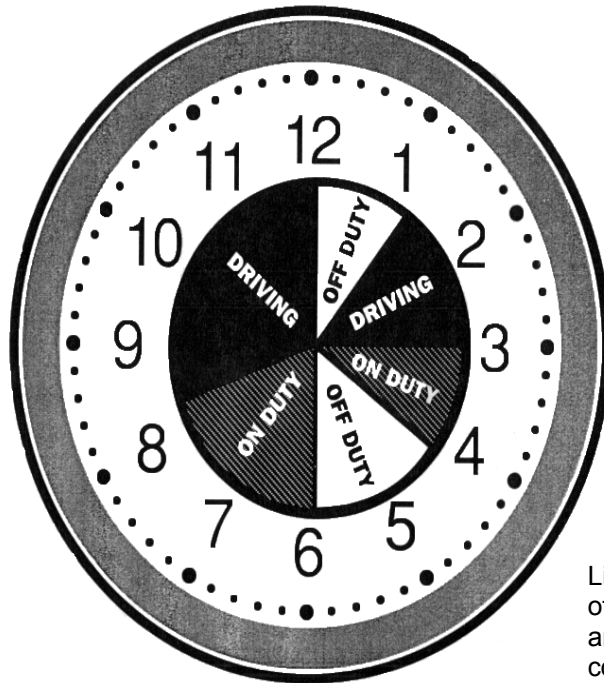
The hours-of-service regulations are among the most important areas covered by the FMCSR. These are rules that hold you to a maximum of 10 hours driving time after you've had eight hours off. They also limit you to 15 hours of continuous on-duty time and 60 to 70 hours of service per week, depending on the type of work week your company follows.

These limits are important. They remove fatigued drivers from behind the wheels of large vehicles. Tired drivers are dangerous drivers. That's why it's vital that you know exactly how much time you can spend on the road.

By becoming familiar with the FMCSR, you'll also learn that there are exceptions to these rules.

Your Log

The regulations require you to keep a daily log recording your time at the wheel, your on-duty time and your breaks. This log is called your Record of Duty Status and must be filled out in duplicate for every 24-hour period. Your company must provide the format but you must keep it accurately and up-to-date. It must be legible and it must be in your own handwriting.



Limit your hours of driving time and hours of continuous on-duty time.

Most companies test prospective drivers on the FMCSR before hiring. The questions usually cover safety regulations and hazardous materials rulings. When you successfully complete the test, which you should carry at all times. The certificate is good for three years and can be transferred from company to company.

The government takes its regulations seriously. If you violate the FMCSR and if you fail to keep an accurate, up-to-date legible log, both you and your firm can be fined. You also could be put out of service for violations.

Ignorance of these rules is never considered a legitimate excuse for breaking them. Learn and obey the regulations. You'll be a better, and a safer, driver.