

HOURS OF SERVICES

The Federal “Hours of Service” regulations issued and enforced by the office of Motor Carriers are the most complex and most often violated of Federal DOT Safety Regulations. Intentional violations account for a small proportion of all citations, a lack of knowledge and understanding of the regulations and their applicability result in many citations and their resulting fines.

Compliance is a necessity, but the real objective is highway safety for all. The primary emphasis is on the three basic limitations: the 10-hour driving time rule, the 15-hour on-duty time rule, and the 60 or 70-hours of service rule.

STATES

Today many states have hours of service regulations either for intrastate operations, having adopted the federal rules or by establishing rules of their own which are similar to the federal. However, it is important to recognize that there are differences between the federal regulations and those of some of the states.

Effective January 1, 1995, private motor carriers of passengers become subject to the regulations.

WHO MUST KNOW THE RULES

DOT places responsibility for compliance with the regulations on both the driver and the carrier.

Every employer shall be knowledgeable of and comply with all regulations contained in this subchapter, which are applicable to that motor carriers operation.

Every driver and employee shall be instructed regarding and shall comply with, all applicable regulations.

No motor carrier shall permit or require any driver used by it to drive nor shall any such driver drive.

THE RULES

10-hour driving rule – a driver can not drive for more than 10 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty. All time spent at the driving controls of a commercial motor vehicle is considered driving time.

15-hour on duty rule – A driver can not drive after having been on duty for a total of 15 hours (no more than 10 of which can be driving). After 15 hours on duty, a driver can not drive again until he/she has 8 consecutive hours of rest.

70-hour/8 day limit – A driver can not drive after having been on duty for 70 hours in any 8 consecutive days. 60 hours/7 day limit.

HOURS OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT

All work schedules shall be determined and assigned by reviewing mileage of the intended run and allowable mile per hour average for the states along the route. All 8-hour breaks shall be added to the time.

OPINION

The motor coach industry typically does not experience hours of service concerns.

1. Charters – the motor coach company will develop a manifest for the customer and driver. The manifest outlines specific route of travel – all stops (bathroom, meals, tour stops and overnights). The coach company plans the charter to meet customers' needs and comply with Federal Hours of Service Rules.
2. Tour groups at theme parks. Most coach companies lease apartments or hotel rooms near parks. Driver drops passengers and goes off duty at company apartment. Some drivers go off duty and tour with groups.
3. Most charters provide a tour director. The director rides the bus and will supervise passengers to maintain time schedules.

Coach companies generate transportation fees based on miles traveled. The companies are very conscious of miles and will not deviate from manifest or selected routes and stops.

Typically, coach company charges tour for driver's room involving overnight trips.

Hours of service concerns represent a small exposure in the motor coach industry. Typically, the tour group will police the drivers.

If groups want to travel straight through coach companies will develop relays at planned stops (driver exchange). Some companies purchase a coach with a sleeper berth (allows two drivers on the bus).