

KEEPING YOUR LOG

Suggestions for Doing It Right

One of the most important pieces of paperwork you have to complete is your daily log, officially known as The Record of Duty Status. It is a record of the number of hours you spend in various activities and it's meant to be a safety measure.

There is no specific form on which your time must be recorded but it must be recorded accurately and it must be kept up to date.

It's the Law

The number of hours you can drive is set by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). You should become familiar with these regulations and should know the laws of states which have hours-of-service requirements within their boundaries.

These regulations are meant to keep you from becoming fatigued. There's no question that a tired driver is a hazardous driver.

How Long Can You Drive?

The federal law says you must get at least eight hours of off-duty rest after you've driver 10 hours. You also can't drive after you've been on duty for 15 hours. Then you have to get another eight hours of off-duty rest.

On-duty time is not limited to your hours behind the wheel. It also includes vehicle inspections, loading and unloading, deliveries and any



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other non driving functions required by your company.

Another time-related rule limits the number of hours you can accumulate in a week. The maximum hours of service will vary with the type of scheduling that's done by your carrier. You should become familiar with your company's rules as soon as you go to work there.

Keeping Track

Your log is the way you keep track of these hours. There are various ways of keeping such records, but all logs must include a grid for recording the details of your work duty.

This form must be filled out in duplicate and can include any other information you wish to add. You're also required to carry duplicate copies of your log for the previous seven days

whenever you're on duty.

These records of duty must be submitted to your company within 13 days of the period for which they apply.

Since special circumstances justify certain exceptions to these rules, you should become familiar with them.

Consequences

If your log isn't properly kept, both you and your company can be fined. You also can be placed out of service for logging violations, so it's in your best interests to keep your records in good shape. Your company decides what format you'll use. But from there on, it's your responsibility.