



White Paper

ELD Official Mandate — Here's What You Need to Know

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In a world that continues to place increasing demands on ready mix drivers to transport more and more product with tight delivery windows, it is the role of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to ensure drivers are not overworked and placing themselves and others at risk. In an effort to improve safety on the road for all drivers, the FMCSA mandated that by December 16, 2017, all ready-mix operators had to convert to electronic logs instead of paper logs.

The two-year window given by the FMCSA is now closed and it’s time for drivers and carriers to embrace compliance with the new Electronic Logging Device (ELD) mandate. Even though the official date is around the corner, there’s still a lot of confusion around what it means to be ELD compliant and who exactly falls under the mandate.

Understanding the New Mandate

First, it’s important to know that the ELD mandate includes a number of provisions intended to help reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses. The mandate aims to hold motor carriers and drivers to the foremost safety standards while removing the highest risk drivers, vehicles and carriers from the road.

The FMCSA’s ELD mandate establishes the following:

- Minimum performance and design standards for recording hours-of-service through ELDs.
- A rule for the mandatory use of ELDs by drivers that requires preparing hours of service (HOS) as a part of Records Of Duty Status (RODS).
- Requirements concerning HOS supporting documents.
- Measures to address concerns about harassment resulting from the mandatory use of ELDs.

ELDs sync with a truck’s engine to capture additional data points such as power status, motion status, miles driven and engine hours to adhere to compliance. Under the new mandate, all of this information should be available to authorized safety officials during roadside inspections and as part of on-site or other reviews.

Are There Benefits to Drivers?

For many years, ready mix concrete drivers have been using paper logbooks to record their compliance with hours of service requirements. However, this process is incredibly time consuming. ELDs improve the process by automatically recording hours of service on an in-cab device, which is connected directly to the truck’s engine. Also, some systems actually afford more drive time by tracking HOS by the minute rather than in 15-minute increments, as is standard with manual tracking.

In addition to streamlining recordkeeping, making the switch ELDs means roadside inspections will be much faster, as drivers will simply need to provide a screen display of their e-logs or take part in a roadside data transfer. Drivers will also have the tools and data necessary to avoid stiff financial penalties under Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA Regulations), and companies may see their insurance premiums decrease over time, due to a reduction in accidents.

| ELD Driver Benefits | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve work-life balance • Monitor vehicle health and performance • Improve safety and efficiency • Earn driver more money | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep dispatchers up-to-date on a driver's status • Accurately track detention time • Provide real-time access to information from the back office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save driver's time by reducing paperwork • Reduce and eliminate HOS violations • Store vehicle inspection reports and other important data |

Who Exactly Falls Under the ELD Mandate?

The ELD mandate applies to all drivers who are currently required to keep a RODS log. Carriers and drivers using paper logs today will be required to install or use a compliant ELD two years after the effective date.

According to the FMCSA, the mandate is estimated to affect approximately 3.1 million trucks and 3.4 million drivers. Short haul drivers operating within a 100-mile radius or drivers without a Commercial Driver's License operating within a 150-mile radius will fall under an hours of service exemption. The one exception to this is if a driver sometimes drives outside of the 150-mile radius. These longer routes would require a log and if a driver makes these trips in eight or more days within a rolling 30-day window, he or she would need to comply with the mandate going forward.

Those who have implemented automatic on-board recording devices (AOBRDs) installed and operational by December 16, 2017 will have until December 2019 to comply, at which time they will need to adopt ELDs. To address start-up cost concerns associated with devices used to track hours of service compliance, the FMCSA has provided that tablets, rugged handhelds and smartphones can be used as long as the system complies with the ELD specifications.

What ELD Solution Makes the Most Sense?

Since the final ruling on the ELD mandate was published in December 2015, many new vendors have appeared in the marketplace claiming to offer an ELD solution. With the sheer number of choices and type of solutions available, it is important to assess your options carefully and select a technology partner that can not only help you gain compliance with the mandate but also address your fleet's needs.

The FMCSA will be working with technology providers to ensure they are indeed ELD compliant. The ELD certification process requires a rigorous application and verification process to ensure that products adhere to ELD measures.

Due to reliability and ease of use, a fleet management system is the most common type of solution available today. These are often installed in the cab of a truck, and include a display and onboard computer that provide critical hours of service information to the driver, including number of hours driven, on-duty hours recorded and remaining available hours.

Typically, rugged stationary hardware, a fleet management system is not reliant on a driver's mobile device for communication. However, data will often be transmitted wirelessly to the back office, allowing fleet managers, safety managers and dispatchers to review HOS information in near-real time. Per the ELD mandate, the device must also be fixed, mounted and within arm's reach of the driver while the vehicle is in operation. When the vehicle is not in operation, mobile solutions also give drivers flexibility and allow for extended productivity. Drivers using a smartphone or tablet outside of the cab can perform walk-around vehicle inspections, complete proof of delivery forms, or stay connected with family and friends.

When it comes to selecting the right ELD, there is no "one size fits all" solution. Each fleet requires a unique solution to achieve the largest return on investment. For example, there is a growing demand for company-owned, personally enabled (COPE) devices. This approach gives drivers mobility, while also allowing corporate control of devices in the key areas of security, safety, cost and support measures. Another strategy a fleet manager might consider is "bring your own device", using computer-assisted logs or low-cost telematics. For other fleets that use company assets and drivers, an industrial-grade mobile platform using company-owned devices might offer the most return, as it eliminates certain risks associated with having drivers provide their own devices.

Making the Transition

Transitioning your company from manual to electronic logging systems means more than simply changing the hardware and software—the change will affect most aspects of the company, including the culture. For this reason, leadership must establish a clear vision and transparent implementation plan. Whether the plan unfolds all at once or is implemented in stages, it is essential that all involved parties are continually updated and informed on the process. Your implementation team may consist of the following representatives, who are accountable for the project's success and for reporting progress at scheduled intervals throughout the implementation:

MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE – This person is responsible for the overall success of the ELD program. By confirming management's commitment to the project, the representative fosters support throughout the organization. This executive sponsor and cheerleader understands the company's vision and is typically the vice president of strategic planning, operations, or whoever heads up safety/compliance.

FINANCE REPRESENTATIVE – Fleets implementing a more sophisticated solution to help them achieve greater performance rely on this person to manage and issue analyses of key performance indicators such as scorecards, dashboards and other measurement tools, and comparative progress reports. Determine five or six measurements of success for your operation, and rely on your provider to identify the source of the data to support these measurements and deliver accurate scorecards.

TECHNOLOGY REPRESENTATIVE – This person is responsible for network connectivity and all third-party applications that support the end-to-end system. Operations rely on this person to ensure the technology performs at a high-level day in and day out. For fleets leveraging their solution to gain efficiencies across their operation, it is important to maintain the perspective that operational improvement is driving the use of technology, rather than technology driving operational processes.

MAINTENANCE REPRESENTATIVE – This person is responsible for management of device inventory, installation and service. Be sure to give this person access to performance data from the engine control module. In turn, this data provides management valuable information to make better fleet management decisions, achieve a favourable return on investment and ensure compliance.

OPERATIONS REPRESENTATIVE – This person is responsible for planning, dispatch and driver activities; in other words, ensuring day-to-day use of the technology. It is critical that this person buys into the vision since his or her personnel must live with the results that the implementation ultimately generates. Users must understand that ELDs are not optional; they are required.

DRIVER MANAGER REPRESENTATIVE – This person is responsible for driver adoption and use by managing training, peer communication and other initiatives that create successful use of the technology from day one. Driver support is key to compliance.

ELD TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER – This person is the mortar that holds together the various representative bricks to ensure that a solid foundation is being built. You should feel confident that the provider you select will not only meet your expectations, but will deliver results fueled with a return on your investment as a true partner.

Change is difficult for any organization. Often, it takes mandates from industry regulators to make companies implement change that should have positive effects on both driver safety and the bottom-line. Fleets that have implemented automatic on-board recording devices have experienced reduced overhead, insurance premiums, fuel and other operational costs while improving customer service and driver efficiency—all adding up to a better business.

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