

DOT HOURS OF SERVICE

COURSE OUTLINE

- **24 hours a day, seven days a week, trucks are rolling.**
- **The drivers of these rigs are also helping to drive the day-to-day commerce that powers our economy.**
 - Which is why the DOT (Department of Transportation) has established "Hours of Service" regulations for commercial drivers who transport property and passengers.
- **Setting limits on the amount of time drivers can spend behind the wheel helps to prevent fatigue that can lead to accidents, injuries and worse.**
- **When you drive a truck for a living, you know that there's a lot more to the job than just getting a load from Point A to Point B.**
 - Because it's also your responsibility to get it there safely.
- **When a truck driver pushes a little too hard, or logs too many hours behind the wheel trying to go that extra mile, they can begin to suffer from driver fatigue.**
 - Driver fatigue creates serious hazards... for everyone on the road.
 - Just being drowsy can cause you to lose focus, make bad judgements and react more slowly in an emergency.
- **More than 30% of trucking accidents involve drivers who actually fall asleep behind the wheel.**
 - So the U.S. Department of Transportation places limits on how much time a driver can spend "on-duty", and how much of that time they can spend operating a vehicle.
- **Enforced by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, these "Hours of Service" regulations apply to drivers who are engaged in interstate commerce.**
 - Drivers who are not engaged in interstate commerce must usually comply with state regulations that are similar to the federal ones.

- **"On-duty" time includes any time "you are working or are required to be ready to work", such as when you are:**
 - Driving a commercial vehicle for your motor carrier.
 - Loading, unloading or handling paperwork.
 - Inspecting, servicing, or conditioning a truck.
 - Waiting to be dispatched while at a plant, terminal or other location.
 - Performing paid work for another employer.
- **"Off-duty time" is defined as time that you spend when you are "relieved of all duty and responsibility for performing work", when you are "free to pursue activities of your own choosing" such as sleeping or eating.**
- **"Hours of Service" regulations specify how much time a driver must spend off-duty between on-duty periods, and how off-duty time can be accumulated in a truck's sleeper berth as well as in its passenger seat even when the truck is traveling.**
 - These limits are included in three basic calculations.
- **To understand how the limits work together, it can be helpful to think of them as "daily" and "weekly" maximums.**
 - But it's also important to remember that the limits are not tied to a single 24-hour period, or any specific days of the week.
 - They can "float" to accommodate the start times that are required by your schedule.
- **The basic "daily service limit" allows you a maximum of 14 consecutive hours on-duty, of which you can spend 11 hours driving.**
- **At the same time, you need to keep within one of two weekly limits, which allow you to be on-duty 60 total hours over a 7-day period, or 70 total hours over an 8-day period.**
 - This depends on whether your carrier operates their vehicles every day of the week (the 70 hour limit) or fewer than 7 days a week (the 60 hour limit).
- **To ensure that truckers are complying with these rules, the FMCSA requires you to document your hours in a "record of duty status", also known as a "driver's daily log".**

- **Keeping your "duty status" log up to date not only helps you keep track of how long you can continue to legally drive and when.**
 - It also creates a permanent record that shows you have been operating in compliance with the "Hours of Service" regulations.
 - Drivers who do not comply, don't track their hours or otherwise violate these rules can face significant fines (the FMCSA can even take them off the road).
- **As you might expect, there are exceptions to the "Hours of Service" regulations, just as there are with most sets of rules.**
- **The time that you can spend on-duty and driving, and requirements for logging that time, can vary depending on:**
 - Weather conditions.
 - The distance you drive.
 - Other specific job requirements.
- **The Hours of Service regulations established by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) include a set of safe work practices that help truckers maximize their paid time on-duty... and behind the wheel.. while avoiding driver fatigue.**
 - To help do this, the regulations require drivers to track and document their hours.
- **For many years truck drivers have recorded their official "record of duty" status using a handwritten paper log.**
 - However, now-a-days electronic recording devices are also often used.
- **Most truck drivers who are subject to FMCSA "Hours of Service" regulations must complete a 24-hour logbook page for each day that they work.**
 - Drivers who fail to comply with this requirement can be fined or even taken off the road.
- **There are some situations in which drivers can be exempted from log-keeping.**
 - To find out if your work qualifies you for "150 Air-Mile Radius", "Non-CDL Short Haul" or other type of exception, talk to your supervisor.

- **In general, the daily logbook page requires two groups of information. The first includes:**
 - The date.
 - The truck or tractor-trailer number.
 - The name and address of the carrier, shipping document numbers and other details.
- **The second records the time the driver spends in different types of duty status, such as:**
 - On-duty.
 - Off-duty.
 - On-duty not driving.
 - Off-duty in the sleeper berth.
- **It's this second group of information that can sometimes be confusing.**
- **In general, you're considered to be "on-duty" anytime "you are working or are required to be ready to work, for any employer".**
 - "Off-duty" means you are "relieved of all duty and responsibility for performing work".
- **In most cases, each page of your log should account for all 24 hours of your day, including any time you spend working for other carriers or at other jobs.**
- **The hours are recorded on the log's daily "graphic grid", with additional information such as the locations where your changes of duty status occur... entered under "Remarks".**
 - FMCSA regulations require you to make all of these entries yourself and that the information that you enter must be true and correct.
- **The log should be updated constantly throughout each day, so that it always reflects your current duty status.**
 - You don't want to wait until the end of the day and try to rely on your memory to fill everything in.

- **Once a page is completed, you should submit the original to your motor carrier for filing.**
 - Drivers who work for multiple motor carriers during the same 24-hour period need to submit copies of the day's log to each of those employers, as well.
 - You are also required to keep a copy for yourself, for the current day as well as the previous seven days of activity.
- **Under FMCSA regulations, you must make all of your driver's log materials available to agency inspectors or law enforcement upon request.**
 - This requirement also applies to any type of information that has been logged electronically, in equipment like Automatic On-Board Recording Devices (AOBRDs) or Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs).
- **These devices can:**
 - Display stored information about the truck, the trip and your hours of service.
 - Transmit information to your motor carrier in real time.
 - Print out or transmit the data to people like DOT enforcement officials when it's needed.
- **If your truck has an On-Board Recording or Electronic Logging Device you must also have...**
 - A manual on how to operate the device.
 - Instructions on how to view and transmit the electronic logs.
 - At least 8 blank paper logs that can be used as "back-ups" if your device malfunctions or fails.
- **To help prevent accidents, injuries and fatalities caused by driver fatigue, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has established the "Hours of Service" regulations that limit the maximum amount of time commercial drivers can spend "on-duty" as well as behind the wheel.**
 - The "14-hour duty window" and the "11-hour driving limit" are the most basic of these rules.
- **To "start the clock" on these maximums, FMCSA regulations require that you spend at least ten consecutive hours off-duty first.**
 - This helps ensure that you're fully rested before you begin driving.
 - The 14-hour window is the maximum amount of time that you can be on-duty in a 24-hour period.

- **On-duty time includes all of the time that you spend working for a motor carrier, such as when you are:**
 - Driving a vehicle.
 - Waiting at a terminal, company facility or other location to be dispatched.
 - Inspecting, fueling, washing or servicing a truck.
 - Performing or supervising the loading and unloading of freight.
 - Taking care of paperwork.
- **This limit also includes any work that you perform for other employers in the same 24-hour period.**
 - Even if your other job does not involve driving a truck, the time you spend working there also counts as part of your on-duty time.
- **When it comes to driving time, another limit comes into play.**
 - For every 14 hours on-duty, FMCSA allows you to spend a maximum of 11 hours behind the wheel.
- **You can divide up your 11 hours of driving time as needed in the 14-hour duty window.**
 - Usually you will have to include at least one 30 minute rest break for every 8 hours you spend in the driver's seat.
 - Getting this break helps you stay sharp... and drive safely... up to your full 11-hour daily maximum.
- **You're allowed to use either off-duty or on-duty not driving time for the break.**
 - You could spend this time unloading and inspecting your truck, eating a meal, riding in the passenger seat or resting in the sleeper berth while a partner drives.
 - But however you choose to spend the break, that time does not extend your 14-hour duty window.
- **Once you have spent 14 hours on-duty in one 24-hour period, Hours of Service rules say that you cannot drive again until you spend at least 10 consecutive hours off-duty.**
- **You are considered to be off-duty when you are relieved of all duty and responsibilities for performing work.**
 - This 10-hour dose of downtime "restarts the clock" on both of your daily limits.

- **To keep track of how you spend your time, it's essential to keep your driver's daily log book up-to-date.**
- **Here's how you would log a typical work day.**
 - Say you arrive at the terminal at 6:00 a.m. This is where your 14-hour on-duty window starts.
 - You wait an hour to be dispatched, then hit the road on a round-trip delivery at 7:00 a.m. This is when your driving time starts.
- **At noon when you arrive at your destination you have been:**
 - On-duty for 6 hours of the 14 hours that are permitted.
 - Driving for 5 hours of the allowable 11 hours.
- **Now you take a half hour lunch break while you are still on-duty.**
 - This counts as the rest break you need to take for each 8 hours you spend behind the wheel.
- **You could also spend it sitting in the terminal's "ready room", updating your paperwork and driver's log.**
 - But either way by 12:30 you have 6 more hours of driving time available.
 - However, this break time does not extend the 14-hour duty window.
 - So when it's over at half-past twelve, you have 7 and a half hours of on-duty time left.
 - That's good, because the loading dock is busy, and it's 2:00 p.m. before you can head out to drive back to your home terminal.
- **The return trip also takes 5 hours of driving time, and when you get back at 7:00 p.m. you spend another half-hour updating your logbook and completing other paperwork.**
- **So when you call it a day at 7:30 p.m.:**
 - You've been on-duty for 13 and a half hours.
 - And you've been able to spend 10 hours driving, because you took your required half-hour rest break during lunch.
 - If necessary, you could have extended your on-duty time by a half an hour by taking your 30 minute break during off-duty instead of 'on-duty' time.

- **The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration enforces its 14-hour "on-duty" and 11-hour driving Hours of Service limitations to help prevent the accidents, injuries and fatalities that can result when commercial truckers suffer from "driver fatigue".**
 - But even with these daily limits in place drivers can still become fatigued after being on-duty and driving multiple shifts over a number of days.
- **So in addition to the daily limits, "Hours of Service" regulations require you to comply with one of two "weekly" limits.**
- **These are known as:**
 - The "70-hour/8-day limit", for drivers whose motor carrier operates every day of the week.
 - The "60-hour/7-day limit", for drivers whose motor carrier does not operate every day.
- **These rules specify how much time you should spend on-duty and off-duty during these seven or eight day stretches.**
 - You are on-duty any time you are working or are required to be ready to work for either of your motor carrier or any other employer if you have multiple jobs.
 - You are off-duty whenever you are relieved of all duty and responsibility for performing work.
- **To understand the 60 and 70-hour weekly limits, it's important to remember that they are not tied to any specific days of the week, such as Sunday through Saturday or Wednesday through Wednesday.**
 - Instead, these 7 or 8-hour periods "float" from one day to the next.
- **As each new work day starts, the oldest 24-hour period drops out of the on-duty time calculations.**
- **Under the "60-hour/7-day limit", you are not allowed to continue driving a truck after being "on-duty" for a total of 60 hours over any 7 consecutive days.**
- **Once you reach the 60-hour limit, you may perform other duty tasks... such as loading, unloading or doing paperwork... but you will not be able to drive again until you drop below 60 total driving hours for a 7-day period.**

- **The 70-hour/8-day schedule works the same way.**
 - You are not allowed to drive a commercial motor vehicle after being on-duty for a total of 70 hours over 8 consecutive days.
 - You can perform other types of work, but you can't drive again until you get some downtime.
- **The FMCSA hours of service regulations also provide you with a way to reset your weekly clock to make a full 60 or 70 hours of on-duty time available to you again.**
 - You do this by taking at least thirty-four consecutive hours off-duty... called the "34-hour restart".
- **If the truck you're driving is equipped with a sleeper berth, it's not just a convenience.**
 - It's a practical advantage when managing your hours of service.
 - A sleeper berth allows you to get quality downtime just about wherever as well as whenever you need it.
- **The "Hours of Service" regulations established by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) include a "sleeper berth provision" to help truckers make the most of their on-duty and off-duty time.**
 - The provision can be especially helpful in keeping a truck rolling when you are driving as part of a team, taking turns at the wheel.
- **In these situations, you are considered to be on-duty when you are working or are required to be ready to work.**
 - You are off-duty whenever you are relieved of all duty and responsibility for performing work.
- **You can use time in the sleeper berth to get some or all of the 10 consecutive hours of off-duty time that you need to restart both your 14-hour on-duty and 11-hour driving limits.**
- **You can also combine your time in the berth with other off-duty time... such as the time that you spend as a passenger of the truck immediately before or after your berth time... to accumulate the 10 consecutive hours required to restart the clock on your on-duty and driving times.**

- **The sleeper berth provision also provides you with a second, more flexible option to accumulating that off-duty time as well.**
 - It allows you to combine one period of at least 7 or 8 consecutive hours in the sleeper berth with another period of 2 or 3 consecutive hours off-duty... in or out of the berth... to meet the 10-hour requirement.
 - The two periods do not count against your 14-hour duty total.
- **Here's how it works. Let's say you come on-duty at 7:00 a.m. and drive from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**
 - You then spend 7 hours in the sleeper berth while your partner drives, and get up again at 10:00 p.m.
 - A total of 15 hours have passed since 7:00 a.m., and you have used up 8 hours of on-duty time as well as 5 hours of driving time.
- **Now you get behind the wheel and drive from 10:00 p.m. through to 4:00 a.m. the next morning, when you reach your destination.**
 - At this point you have used up all 14 hours of on-duty time as well as the 11 hours of driving time that you started with yesterday.
 - While the truck is being unloaded, you go "off-duty" for 3 hours.
- **When you return to duty at 7:00 a.m., you have accumulated 10 hours of off-duty time, because the sleeper berth provision allows you to combine this morning's 3-hour rest period with the 7-hour break you took the previous day.**
- **To figure your on-duty and driving hours limits, you can now use a new calculation point that falls at the end of your first rest period, which was 10:00 p.m. the night before.**
- **So by using the sleeper berth provision, you have gained 8 hours of on-duty time, out of which you can spend another 5 hours behind the wheel.**

*** * * SUMMARY * * ***

- **As we've seen, truckers can avoid the hazards of driver fatigue and maximize their paid time "on-duty" by following "Hours of Service" regulations established by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).**
- **"Hours of Service" regulations help to prevent driver fatigue by limiting how long truckers can spend "on-duty" and driving, and requiring them to get appropriate downtime between these periods.**
- **These rules take the form of "daily" and "weekly" maximums for "on-duty" and driving time.**
- **FMCSA also requires drivers to track and document their hours of service in a hardcopy or electronic "record of duty status", also known as a "driver's daily log".**
- **This information must be made available to law enforcement and FMCSA inspectors upon request.**
- **Now that you understand what the DOT "Hours of Service" regulations address and how to follow them, you can ensure that you, your coworkers and everyone who shares the road with you reaches their destinations safely... every day!**