

Trucking Risk Advisor

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The FMCSA's Revised HOS Rules Now in Effect

On June 1, 2020, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published its hours-of-service (HOS) final rule, revising regulations related to driving limits for commercial motor vehicle drivers. The revised HOS regulations, which went into effect Sept. 29, 2020, include four key changes designed to offer drivers greater flexibility while maintaining high safety standards:

1. **The short-haul exception**—The revisions expand the short-haul exception to 150 air miles and allow a 14-hour work shift to take place as part of the exception.
2. **The adverse driving conditions exception**—The revisions extend the maximum window during which driving is allowed in unexpected weather or traffic conditions by two hours.
3. **The 30-minute break rule**—Changes to this rule require a 30-minute break after eight hours of driving time (instead of on-duty time).

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The revisions also allow an on-duty/not driving period to qualify as the required break.

4. **The sleeper berth provision**—Under the changes, the sleeper berth provision allows drivers to split their 10-hour off-duty period in different ways (e.g., 7/3, 8/2 or 7.5/2.5). However, one off-duty period—whether in or out of the sleeper berth—must be at least two hours long. Additionally, the other off-duty period must involve at least seven consecutive hours spent in the sleeper berth. The periods must add up to 10 hours and, when used together, will not count against the maximum 14-hour driving window.

These changes apply to the majority of commercial motor vehicle drivers. Specifically, per the FMCSA, the rules apply to vehicles that are used as part of a business or involved in interstate commerce. Commercial motor vehicles are also those that fit any of these descriptions:

- The vehicle weighs 10,001 pounds or more.
- The vehicle has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross combination weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more.
- The vehicle is designed or used to transport nine or more passengers for compensation.
- The vehicle is designed or used to transport 16 or more passengers (not for compensation).
- The vehicle is transporting hazardous materials in a quantity that requires placards.

To read a fact sheet from the FMCSA on the changes, click [here](#).