

**Prepared Remarks by Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
CVSA Workshop
General Session
Rosemont, IL
April 12, 2011**

Introduction

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much, Captain Dowling. I'm honored to be here today with so many of our state and local law enforcement partners.

I truly value our partnership and the important service you provide to advancing safety – our number one mission at DOT. I am grateful for your service to the front-lines of roadway safety and I'm delighted to give you an overview of a very busy rulemaking schedule which reflects our safety-first priorities for FMCSA.

Rulemakings

In the past several months, we published several high-profile rulemakings. Periods for the public to comment on hours of service and cell phone use are closed; a few other rules remain open for comments.

Hours of Service

The first is a proposed regulation for hours-of-service. CVSA took part in submitting comments. We received many good comments from numerous stakeholders. I am glad we had a robust comment process.

This proposal would revise current hours-of-service requirements by calling for drivers to complete all driving within a 14-hour workday and to complete all on-duty work-related activities within 13 hours.

EOBRs

Following on the heels of last year's remedial rule, FMCSA issued a proposed rule to apply to all many more trucks that use record of duty logbooks. This would enable drivers to better monitor their duty hours and manage fatigue.

It also clarifies the supporting documents a carrier can use to document record-of-duty status and specifies the type and number of supporting documents carriers are required to maintain.

This proposal is an important step in our efforts to raise the safety bar for carriers and drivers. We believe the broader use of EOBRs would give carriers and drivers an effective tool to strengthen their hours-of-service compliance, and ultimately, improve safety. We recently extended the comment period until May 23, 2011.

CVSA , the industry, with FMCSA have been working hard to be sure that officers have the right training, tools to enforce the rule, industry support and the right information to comply.

Cell Phone Use

Another proposed rulemaking published late last year would ban hand-held cell phone use for drivers. This proposed rule would build on our existing ban on texting behind the wheel issued last year. If the current proposed rule becomes final, banning hand-held cell phone use will target the leading cause of distracted driving which is a deadly epidemic. Together, these rules go a long way toward keeping a driver's full attention focused on the road.

The comment period closed last month and we expect to issue a final rule on cell phone use later this year.

We hope with rules like these in place we can build a safety culture that extends across all 50 states. Losing nearly 6,000 people a year to crashes involving driver distraction is unacceptable.

I am happy to report that we have more allies against distracted driving. I had the opportunity to represent FMCSA at a press conference last week with the Orthopedic Surgeons trade group. These are the doctors who put bones and limbs back together after traumatic injuries.

They launched a wonderful multimedia campaign and web site so that doctors can talk to their patients about the dangers of distracted driving.

Urging drivers to “decide to drive” each time they get behind the wheel is a powerful message coming from the doctors who would rather help keep your bones strong than put them back together. Hopefully, behaviors will change as we keep speaking out.

Together, we can create a new level of national awareness and a new consciousness about the dangers of distracted driving with a simple message – no texting, no phone – put it down – and just drive.

We recognize that the texting and cell phone bans may be difficult to enforce but we are working together to develop strategies to make the ban an effective law. To do that, we need your support to determine the best way to detect unsafe practices.

CDL Rule

A few weeks ago, FMCSA issued a final rule to require a commercial learner’s permit before anyone can apply for a Commercial Driver’s License. The rule also requires testing across the states to be the same and includes measures to reduce fraud in the state CDL process.

Safety Fitness Rule

The proposed safety fitness determination rule for CSA is currently scheduled to be published in September. The rule would elevate the importance of a robust, uniform and consistent roadside inspection program because safety ratings would be based on safety data without necessarily going on-site to a carrier's place of business.

During this calendar year, we will continue to work on more rulemakings that address driver physical qualifications. This includes standardized training and testing registration for all medical professionals who conduct physical examinations for interstate commercial motor vehicle drivers.

All of these initiatives focus back on our core principles: to raise the bar to enter the motor carrier industry; maintain high safety standards to remain in the industry and remove high risk behaviors and operators from operating.

In short, drivers need to be physically alert, have their eyes on the road and both hands on the wheel.

5-Year Rule Plan

To give greater transparency to our regulatory agenda, we are developing a five-year rulemaking plan. This plan will open up the process and give us another channel for feedback from all of our stakeholders, including CVSA members, on changes that will affect you.

The plan will serve as a living document and will be updated when necessary. It would cover calendar years 2011 through 2015. Once the plan is published in the Federal Register we will welcome your comments.

Cross Border Trucking Program

Keeping watch on the safety of trucks coming into the U.S. requires a platoon of inspectors, investigators, auditors and state and local law enforcement. This will require us to build upon our partnership with you as our new cross border trucking program with Mexico begins.

As many of you have heard, earlier this year, Secretary LaHood announced an initial concept document for a long-haul cross border Mexican Trucking program.

This program makes safety THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. Indeed, that is FMCSA's singular focus and responsibility in fulfilling this international treaty obligation.

The focus is on safety and security and fulfillment of NAFTA.

Yesterday, as Captain Dowling reported, we had a very productive day with our commercial motor vehicle leadership team across the country. We are grateful and excited for the output.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your hard work on behalf of roadway safety. The American people are counting on all of us to make their roads and the buses and trucks that use them even safer.

Any progress we make – every inspection – every compliance review – every strike force – is progress you made possible.

At FMCSA, I can assure you that we aren't resting – not by a long shot.

Every trip matters. Every driver matters. For commercial motor vehicles, we must get that message through.

Thank you all and have a great meeting this week.