

**Remarks Prepared for Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
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Introduction

Good morning. It's great to be in Peoria – home of Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood.

Thank you, Don Schaefer for the invitation to be here.

Also, with me from the FMCSA, are Darin Jones, the Field Administrator and Steve Mattioli, the Illinois Division Administrator.

Trucks are an absolutely vital part of how commerce moves in our country. The safe and efficient movement of your trucks underlies the well-being of our economy and impacts every single person in this country.

Did you know that trucks carry approximately 73 percent of the value and 71 percent of the weight of all freight shipped in the U.S.?

The trucking industry is a key employment sector of our economy. You are part of what makes our nation move and thrive.

Approximately one in 20 workers in the US is employed in trucking related activities.

Thank you for what you do – in transporting our goods to where they are needed. Our safety record has never been stronger.

My job is to do more to make our roads safe. I've been on the job as FMCSA Administrator for nearly three months, and in that time, I have challenged the FMCSA workforce to break the traditional “way we've always done it” mindset.

FMCSA is now in its 11th year, and with the new decade ahead, we have an opportunity to examine programs and policies in new ways in order to improve safety for everyone who travels on our highways and roads.

Core Priorities

To make our roads safer, we have many initiatives and programs underway that focus on three key priorities for our agency.

As I see it, our safety mission at FMCSA is driven by these priorities:

1. Raise the bar to enter the industry;
2. Maintain high safety standards to remain in the industry; and
3. Remove high-risk operators from our roads and highways.

These priorities frame all we do. But, we can and must always do more – because one fatality on the road is one too many.

Distracted Driving

If you watch the news with any regularity or tuned into popular talk shows like the Oprah Winfrey Show, it will come as no surprise that distracted driving is a top priority at the Department of Transportation.

Last week, we took a big step forward by announcing that existing federal regulations may be enforced against most interstate truck and bus drivers who text while driving.

Our announcement makes it crystal clear that texting while driving is an unsafe activity that these basic safety regulations are intended to prohibit.

This action only applies to texting and not cell phone use itself.

The rulemaking will also consider disqualification penalties for drivers convicted of texting while driving.

These are important safety steps and we will be taking more to eliminate the threat of distracted driving – which has become an epidemic in this country.

Our research shows that drivers who send and receive text messages take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds while texting.

At 55 miles per hour, this means that the driver is traveling the length of a football field, including the end zones, without looking at the road.

The facts don't lie - drivers who text while behind the wheel are more than 20 times more likely to get in an accident than non-distracted drivers.

Now I know that all of you in this room see the four-wheelers texting on the road too. The Department of Transportation is committed to eliminating this dangerous behavior by all drivers across the board.

Because all of you are responsible for professional drivers, it is especially important that you communicate the importance of setting a good example for the nation.

Next time you are out on the road, remember to be safe and don't text and drive.

There is no question that one of the hardest parts of the texting ban will be effective enforcement.

I recall it wasn't long ago that we heard doubts about how to enforce laws requiring seat belts or enact laws to prohibit drinking and driving.

Raising awareness of the safety risk for each behavior has helped get more people to use seat belts and not drive drunk.

We can and will do the same for distracted driving – with your help.

Hours of Service

Another way we raise the bar for safety is through hours-of-service rules. The hours-of-service rules were put in place to help prevent fatigue-related crashes, injuries and fatalities that involve commercial trucks and ultimately, to improve safety for everyone.

Last month, FMCSA held four listening sessions on the hours-of-service rules in preparation for a rulemaking proposal on this critical safety issue.

Too much time can be spent in Washington, D.C. To make sure we are not operating in a vacuum, we need to understand how the current hours-of-service rule is working. This understanding will allow us a better perspective when looking at the research and developing a proposal for a new HOS rule.

Each listening session was well attended and we got a number of great questions. Participants shared their thoughts and ideas by attending in person, dialing in by phone or submitting comments and questions via the internet.

I'm pleased that more than 400 participated in the audience in Arlington, Virginia; Dallas; Los Angeles; and Davenport, Iowa.

Hundreds more participated by phone and the Internet.

We are hearing from every corner of the trucking community – drivers, owner – operators, carriers, safety enforcement, safety advocates and labor.

If you couldn't get to a listening session, don't worry. You can continue to send in comments by mail, email or fax. Instructions are on the FMCSA web site. Go to www.fmcsa.dot.gov for more information.

We are also considering a fifth listening session in late March. Again, continue to visit the FMCSA website for updates on this important issue.

CSA2010

Another program designed to improve safety by helping us reach larger numbers of carriers is the Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 Program – known as CSA 2010.

CSA2010 will raise the safety performance bar for commercial carriers by looking at seven key factors:

1. Unsafe driving
2. Fatigued Driving
3. Driver Fitness
4. Crash History
5. Vehicle Maintenance
6. Improper Loading and Cargo
7. Controlled Substance – Drugs and Alcohol

Over time, we have learned that compliance reviews should not be one size fits all. CSA 2010 will make us more effective by implementing a new safety measurement system with seven evaluation factors rather than the current system that includes only four evaluation factors.

CSA2010 will give us the information we need to determine the most appropriate level of intervention to use to bring about improvements in a carrier's safety management practices and provide a streamlined, data-driven approach for issuing safety ratings.

In the past, we analyzed certain safety data that did not capture the full safety performance picture of a carrier and we did not factor in the driving violations of the truck driver.

One point of confusion I want to clear up is CSA 2010's effect on drivers.

While we are using driver violation data as part of the CSA 2010 efforts, these scores are to assist the agency in targeting its interventions with the carriers that use unsafe drivers.

We are not at this time proposing to issue "safety ratings" for drivers or to disqualify a driver based on our CSA 2010 scoring system. We may consider that at some point after the program has matured but it is **not** part of what we are doing at this point.

So, if you hear rumors that CSA 2010 will put drivers out of work, those rumors are just not true.

Using the CSA 2010 safety measurement system, we will now identify carrier safety problems and intervene at the **earliest point possible** with interventions ranging from warning letters to comprehensive on-site investigation.

Starting in 2008, we have had four states [*Georgia, Colorado, New Jersey and Missouri*] take part in a test of CSA2010 and have had added another five states [*Minnesota, Montana, Kansas, Maryland and Delaware*] last year.

We are in the process of drafting a proposed rulemaking to make CSA2010 part of the way we do business. We anticipate publishing this rule and receiving public comments later this year.

Implementing CSA2010 will ultimately expand our reach and make our roads safer.

Right now, we and our state partners undertake approximately 17,000 on-site, comprehensive compliance reviews each year.

Without a compliance review, it is not possible to generate a safety rating or update a previously issued safety rating.

Under the CSA2010 model, we will touch more carriers and achieve the ability to rate the safety performance of 175,000 to 2000,000 ratings on a **continual basis** using roadside inspection data, crash data and investigation data.

It is important to identify safety performance problems more effectively than our current process and provide carriers with information they need to correct performance problems **before** they result in a poor safety rating – CSA 2010 is the tool to help us achieve that.

Electronic On-Board Recorders

Another way we may potentially address the problem of fatigue is through electronic on-board recorders.

A final rule is pending in the Secretary of Transportation's office which would require the use of these devices.

In addition, all potential impacts and requirements were up for discussion earlier this week at a presentation made before the Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee. This presentation detailed key issues in considering a mandate for electronic on-board recorders.

You can find the presentation online at mcsac.fmcsa.dot.gov.

Encourage your manufacturers to take a look too and become part of the dialogue.

More announcements will come from FMCSA as the rule progresses. So, stay tuned.

Conclusion

FMCSA has entered a new decade and with your help we can improve safety for everyone.

As we enter Super Bowl weekend, I am reminded of a quote from Chuck Noll, the former coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers, a five-time Super Bowl winning team.

Coach Noll once said, “The key to a winning season is focusing on one opponent at a time. Winning one week at a time. Never look back and never look ahead.”

We at FMCSA have our eyes on the ball and we have a determined focus to reduce the number and severity of crashes and fatalities each and every day - because our game day is **every single day**.

If we have time, I am happy to take your questions.