

Canada publishes hours of service proposal

Transport Canada has issued its long awaited hours of service proposal for Canadian truck and bus drivers. The proposed regulations were published in the February 15, 2003, *Canada Gazette*. The proposal would increase off-duty time by 25% and reduce daily maximum driving time by almost 19%.

Limits

The proposed regulations include the following changes:

- Daily maximum driving time would be reduced from 16 hours to 13 hours.
- Daily maximum on-duty time would be reduced from 16 hours to 14 hours. Under the proposal, no more than 13 of the 14 hours on duty could be driving time.
- The daily minimum off-duty period would increase from 8 hours to 10 hours.
- At least 8 hours of off-duty time would have to be taken consecutively, with an additional 2 hours taken in increments of at least 30 minutes.
- The minimum rest period for co-drivers using a sleeper berth would increase from 2 consecutive hours to 4 consecutive hours

Work/Rest Cycles

The number of work/rest cycles would be reduced from three to two:

- 70 hours in 7 days; and
- 120 hours in 14 days.

Under the proposal, to switch or reset cycles, a driver would be required to have at least:

- 36 consecutive hours off duty before resetting the clock to zero for the 70-hour cycle;
- 72 consecutive hours off duty before resetting the clock to zero for the 120-hour cycle.

The proposal would also require a minimum 24-hour off-duty period at least once every 14 days for all drivers.

About the Proposal

The proposed regulations are patterned after a National Safety Code Standard (NSC). The NSC includes minimum performance standards designed to ensure safe operation of commercial motor vehicles. NSC No. 9 covers hours of service rules. In September 2002, a council of federal and provincial transport ministers approved changes to NSC No. 9 as the basis for amendments to federal and provincial regulations. The intent of the proposed regulations is to:

- reduce fatigue-related truck and bus accidents;
- make compliance with the hours-of-service rules easier for drivers; and
- make enforcement of the hours-of-service rules easier for law enforcement.