

Federal Communications Commission.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

49 CFR Part 383

[FHWA Docket No. MC-93-12]

RIN 2125-AD05

Training of Entry-Level Drivers of Commercial Motor Vehicles

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of public outreach.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to announce an upcoming public meeting to be held on November 13, 1996, to discuss mandating entry-level training for drivers of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Section 4007(a)(1) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) directed the Secretary of Transportation to report to Congress on the effectiveness of the efforts of the private sector to ensure adequate training of entry-level drivers of CMVs. In response to this statutory mandate, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) hired a contractor to conduct a study and published a notice of availability and request for comments in the Federal Register on April 25, 1996, (61 FR 18355). The notice advised members of the general public that copies of the study entitled "Assessing the Adequacy of Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Training: Final Report" and a cost-benefit analysis of requiring entry-level training for CMV drivers were available from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) and requested public comment on both documents. The FHWA also advised the general public that the Agency was considering holding a public meeting on the issue of

mandating entry-level training. With this notice, the FHWA is also announcing the extension of the closing date for comments on the final report and cost-benefit analysis to November 27, 1996.

DATES: The meeting will be held on November 13, 1996, and the comment period for the notice of availability and request for comments will be extended until November 27, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Department of Transportation Headquarters Building, 400 Seventh Street SW., Room 3200, Washington, D.C. from 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ronald Finn, Office of Motor Carrier Research and Standards, (202) 366-0647, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. In advance of the session, all individuals planning to present information should contact Mr. Stan Hamilton, Office of Motor Carriers, telephone (202) 366-0665. Speakers should pre-register with Mr. Hamilton. Speakers who sign up at the meeting will be permitted to speak as time permits. To allow for maximum participation, oral presentations will be limited to no more than ten minutes.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

In response to the requirement in § 4007(a)(2) of the ISTEA, Pub. L. 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914 (1991), that the Secretary commence a rulemaking proceeding on the need to require training of all entry-level drivers of CMVs, the FHWA published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) on entry-level training on June 21, 1993, (58 FR 33874). There were 104 comments to the ANPRM but no consensus was reached on the issue of mandated entry-level driver training. The American Trucking Associations stated that the Professional Truck Driver Institute of America's curriculum should be the standard to ensure

adequate entry-level driver training. The New Mexico Tax and Revenue Department, on the other hand, stated that the commercial driver's license was the best method to determine if an applicant is qualified.

Adequacy Study

Section 4007(a)(1) of the ISTEA directed the Secretary to report to Congress on the effectiveness of private sector efforts to ensure adequate training of CMV drivers. In response, the FHWA retained a contractor to conduct such a study. In analyzing the adequacy of entry-level training, the contractor examined the training provided to entry-level drivers of heavy trucks, motor coaches, and school buses. This examination disclosed that the percentage of employers who hire entry-level drivers and provide them with adequate training was as follows: heavy truck employers (8 percent), motor coach employers (19 percent), and school bus operators (24 percent).

Consequently, the contractor concluded that neither the heavy truck, motor coach, nor school bus segments of the CMV industry provided adequate entry-level driver training.

Cost-Benefit Study

The FHWA also entered into a separate contract for a cost-benefit study. This study showed that the cost of mandating entry-level training for 360,000 drivers a year in the heavy truck industry would be \$4.5 billion over a 10-year period. The societal benefits of fewer accidents, reduced health care costs, and reduced delays caused by accident-related traffic congestion over the same 10-year period were estimated to range from \$5.8 to \$15.3 billion.

Report to Congress

The Secretary of Transportation submitted the "Assessing the Adequacy of Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Training: Final Report" and the cost-benefit analysis to the U.S. Congress on February 5, 1996.

Notice of Availability and Request for Comments

The FHWA published a notice of availability and request for comments on April 25, 1996, advising the general public that the study entitled "Assessing the Adequacy of Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Training: Final Report" and a cost-benefit analysis of requiring entry-level training for CMV drivers was available. With this notice, the FHWA is announcing that a public meeting will be held on November 13, 1996, to discuss mandatory training for entry-level drivers of CMVs and that the comment period for the notice of availability and request for comments is being extended from October 22, 1996, until November 27, 1996, to allow time for a record of the meeting proceedings to be included in the docket. Copies of the adequacy study and cost-benefit analysis are available from the National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22161. The telephone number for placing an order from NTIS is 703-487-4650. The report number is P.B. 96-141536. The domestic price per copy is \$61.00 while the foreign price is \$122.00 per copy. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "NTIS." American Express, VISA, MasterCard, or NTIS deposit account are also accepted. As of August 6, five additional comments to the docket had been received.

Authority: § 4007 of Pub. L. 102-240; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: September 23, 1996.

Rodney E. Slater,

Federal Highway Administrator.

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