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News

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US Department of Transportation Expands National Emergency Declaration for Commercial Vehicles Delivering Relief in Response to the Coronavirus Outbreak

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) today issued an expanded national emergency declaration to provide hours-of-service regulatory relief to commercial vehicle drivers transporting emergency relief in response to the nationwide coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

“The nation’s truck drivers are on the front lines of this effort and are critical to America’s supply chain,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

“Under Secretary Chao’s leadership, FMCSA is providing additional regulatory relief to our nation’s commercial drivers to get critically important medical supplies, food, and household goods to Americans in need. We will continue to support them and use our authority to protect the health and safety of the American people,” said FMCSA Acting Administrator Jim Mullen.

FMCSA’s expanded declaration provides for regulatory relief for commercial motor vehicle operations providing direct assistance supporting emergency relief efforts intended to meet immediate needs for:

- Medical supplies and equipment related to the testing, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19.
- Supplies and equipment necessary for community safety, sanitation, and prevention of community transmission of COVID-19 such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap and disinfectants.
- Food, paper products and other groceries for emergency restocking of distribution centers or stores.
- Immediate precursor raw materials—such as paper, plastic or alcohol—that are required and to be used for the manufacture of essential items.

- Fuel.
- Equipment, supplies and persons necessary to establish and manage temporary housing, quarantine.
- Persons designated by federal, state or local authorities for medical, isolation, or quarantine purposes.
- Persons necessary to provide other medical or emergency services.

The expanded declaration stipulates that direct assistance does not include routine commercial deliveries, including mixed loads with a nominal quantity of qualifying emergency relief added to obtain the benefits of the emergency declaration.

To ensure continue safety on the nation’s roadways, the emergency declaration stipulates that once a driver has completed his or her delivery, the driver must receive a minimum of 10 hours off duty if transporting property, and 8 hours if transporting passengers.

FMCSA’s emergency declaration is the first time the Agency has issued nation-wide relief and follows President Trump issuing of a national emergency declaration in response to the virus.

To read FMCSA’s national emergency declaration, visit:

<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/emergency/expanded-emergency-declaration-under-49-cfr-ss-39023-no-2020-002>

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