



MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

C/O: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Room W64-232
Washington, DC 20590

December 2, 2021

Meera Joshi
Deputy Administrator
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Deputy Administrator Joshi:

The Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC) completed work on Task 20-2 at its July 2021 meeting. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) tasked the Committee with discussing the challenges associated with this aging workforce and recommend measures the Agency and the industry may take to recruit younger drivers while maintaining the safety of the existing drivers. In discussing this task, the Agency asked MCSAC to consider data to evaluate what should be done to ensure that the highest level of safety be maintained and to recommend strategies to the industry and others to maximize efforts to recruit and retain talent.

The MCSAC met in public meetings on July 13-14, 2020, and July 19-21, 2021, to discuss the task. The recommendations and a summary of the discussion are attached as the Task 20-2 Report.

On behalf of the MCSAC, I respectfully submit this report to FMCSA for its consideration.

Sincerely,

Lamont Byrd
Chairman

Enclosure

Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC) Discussion Notes
Task 20-2: Aging Drivers and Their Impact on CMV Operations

The Agency directed MCSAC to provide recommendations to FMCSA on the effects the aging commercial motor vehicle (CMV) driver workforce may have on the truck and bus industries and whether this trend will exacerbate driver shortages. The committee discussed the challenges associated with this aging workforce and recommended best practices to address them. The committee considered data to evaluate what should be done to ensure that the highest level of safety be maintained and considered strategies that the industry and others could adopt to maximize recruitment and retention efforts.

Discussion About the Impact of Aging Drivers on CMV Operations

- I. The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute's (VTTI) April 2020 study, "CMV Driver Crash Risk Based on Age and Driving Experience," concluded that driving experience, rather than age, has a greater impact on driving risk.
 - A. The study found no safety-based reason to avoid using younger drivers when structured training, mentoring, and coaching systems are in place.
 - B. VTTI indicated the effectiveness of mentoring drivers from the 21-24 age group.
 - C. Gender was not part of the research but is under consideration for future research.
 - D. VTTI's research may be misleading to motor carriers who seek guidance on hiring younger drivers (aged 18-20). These younger drivers lack experience, which raises safety concerns.
 - E. More research is needed with a larger population to determine the average age of those requesting medical certificates and to identify trends in aging and new drivers.
 - F. The length of tenure has a large impact on safety. More work is needed on retention, especially for those in the middle-aged driver groups.

Recommendations:

1. Focus on experience rather than age for older drivers.
 2. Work to retain drivers so that drivers with experience do not leave.
- II. Driver shortage may not be long-term, but is an issue currently:
 - A. What is important to younger drivers may not be much different than what is important to older drivers.
 - B. Marketing of the driving profession and transparency will attract more drivers
 - C. Outreach at high schools could be an opportunity.
 - D. Help drivers pass their physicals. Note that information available about drivers' medical certifications is on all, not just CDL, drivers.
 - E. Aging drivers moving out of the industry is a complex issue with many contributing factors. More research is needed to understand these factors better.
 - F. 150,000 fewer commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) were issued in 2020 vs. 2019, due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic. Graduated licenses are up 50-60,000 in 2021 vs. 2020.
 - G. AAMVA does not have information about the number of drivers leaving the industry. A CDL may be valid for years after a driver stop driving, so it may be better to look at how many stopped getting a medical card.
 - H. Evaluation/exit interviews can help determine why drivers leave the industry.

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- J. The Secretary of Transportation held a roundtable, which included the Secretary of Labor, to get thoughts on supply chain and driver recruitment and retention in July. Issues considered were:
1. Equipping CMVs with advanced safety technology, specifically Automatic Emergency Brakes
 2. Ensuring driver's vehicles are in good working order
 3. Providing ample truck parking and rest areas in key locations
 4. Improving the content and quality of training
 5. Establishing consistent qualifications for trainers
 6. Establishing anti-harassment protocols for training programs
 7. Utilizing compensation strategies that do not incentivize speed or long hours
 8. Compensation packages with benefits and that consider drivers' very long work weeks
 9. Transparency in hiring practices to ensure candidates are aware of the demands of the job
 10. Compensation for detention time
 11. Coordination between DOL/DOT and Industry
 12. Route selection and trained dispatchers to ensure routes minimize unnecessary down and on the road time
 13. Income predictability
 14. Multilingual outreach, potentially also to foreign drivers to reduce driver compensation costs

Recommendations:

1. Facilitate outreach to high schools.
 2. Help drivers pass the required physicals.
 3. Encourage carriers and researchers to conduct exit interviews to help determine why drivers leave the industry.
 4. Conduct research on the factors that lead drivers, both younger and older, to leave the industry.
- III. Dangers of the job may be deterring drivers, especially older drivers, and contributing to turnover.
- A. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Bureau of Labor Statistics collect data on this.
 - B. No crashworthiness standards for cabs.
 - C. There is data on the number of truck drivers killed in crashes and other occupants of the truck who may have been killed, but this must be worked out geographically.
 - D. Consider infrastructure that will help drivers remain safe, such as fonts on traffic signs, cabs, etc.
 - E. Focus on pay method; with electronic logging devices (ELDs) in place, employers have a record of how long their drivers worked, which can attribute to driver stress. Omnitracs captures information on driver speed, detention time, etc.
 - F. Drivers tend to have lower than average life expectancy because of factors related to their job and lifestyle and may have other chronic health conditions as a result of or exacerbated by their working conditions.

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- G. Loss of independence due to advanced technologies has caused some drivers to leave the industry.
- H. A study about job stress from a few years ago revealed that some drivers are under a high level of stress due to expectations of productivity. As drivers age, it becomes more difficult to meet these expectations. Such expectations may even lead to deaths on the job.
- I. The dispatcher treating the driver with respect—as a person rather than a tool—helps.

Recommendations:

1. Work to reduce CMV driver occupational hazards.
2. Advance crashworthiness standards for cabs.
3. Raise awareness of driver stress and pressures to overwork, and ways to reduce these.

- IV. Many older drivers have their own companies, and regulations have pushed some out of the industry because it is difficult to comply with regulations and make a living. FMCSA could conduct a regulatory review to evaluate the effectiveness of the regulations.

Recommendation:

Consider conducting a regulatory review to evaluate the effectiveness of the regulations that may be pushing older drivers who own their own carriers from being overwhelmed and leaving the industry.