

Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC)
Task Statement
Task #10-03

I. TASK TITLE

Fatigue Management for Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Operators

II. BACKGROUND

Driver fatigue is a serious issue with respect to safety of all drivers and passengers on the roads of North America. Historically, commercial carriers, regulators, and commercial vehicle drivers have responded to this issue by working/driving within prescribed hours of service (HOS) rules. A relatively recent body of research in fatigue management indicates that other factors are involved in driver fatigue and that there is no one simple solution available to mitigate commercial driver fatigue and safety performance.

A significant amount of research and numerous pilot projects have been conducted under the sponsorship of various governments, universities, and other agencies, including a Canada/U.S. collaboration to test the feasibility and efficacy of a comprehensive approach to fatigue management in a motor-carrier operating environment.

The key purpose of the Fatigue Management Plan (FMP) is to provide tools to motor carriers and their partners (i.e. consignor, shipper, receiver, manufacturer, etc.) to raise awareness of fatigue issues and ways of preventing and countering them. The comprehensive FMP will combine a variety of company-wide approaches, including screening and treatment for relevant medical issues, monitoring compliance, and raising awareness and creating guidelines for better management practices including driver dispatch. The FMP will rely on a scientific understanding of fatigue and its effects to educate professional drivers, shippers, receivers, and dispatchers, as well as families, about fatigue and ways to prevent and counter its effects.

The FMCSA published a study entitled, “Effects of a Fatigue Management Program (FMP) on Fatigue in the Commercial Motor Carrier Industry” in September 2009. Overall, the study demonstrated the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive FMP program. Drivers benefit from sleep disorder screening and treatment and receive education on sleep and fatigue that is highly relevant to their work. The study showed the positive impact than an FMP program had on drivers’ sleep-wake behavior and performance. In addition, it demonstrated a beneficial effect on corporate health and safety measures of absenteeism and crash rate.

In a previous task assigned in May 2007 (Task 07-02: Commercial Motor Vehicle Non-Regulatory Safety Practices), the MCSAC identified and made recommendations to the FMCSA Administrator on non-regulatory recommendations for carrier best practices. The report included a recommendation for carriers to implement fatigue management plans. Based on the study results published in September 2009 and what the Committee will hear this week in the expert presentations, the FMCSA would like for the MCSAC to provide details on what carriers should include in such carrier fatigue management plans.

III. TASK

FMCSA requests that MCSAC follow-up on its previous recommendation that fleets adopt fatigue management programs (included in MCSAC’s best safety practices

recommendation) by providing information, concepts, and ideas on ways fleets can develop a practical fatigue management program. To support this effort, fatigue management experts and government officials from Australia, Canada, Mexico, and the United States will provide briefings on efforts currently underway to manage fatigue among CMVs operators. The MCSAC will present a report on its findings and recommendations to Administrator at its December 2010 meeting.

IV. ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE TASK

The Committee should submit a final report at its December 2010 meeting.

V. FMCSA TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVES

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