

Motorcoach Drivers instruct drivers on the basic operational skills, such as vehicle inspection, vehicle backing, hazard perception, proper communications procedures, and speed and space management, which are necessary to operate CMVs on the public road, plus the specialized knowledge and skill a driver needs to obtain the passenger, double/triple, tank vehicle, and hazardous materials endorsements. These curricula also contain instruction in vehicle inspection procedures, off-road skill test maneuvers, and operating CMVs in vehicular traffic. The CDL tests examine CMV drivers on the knowledge and skill the drivers learn in these curricula.

The agency is not requiring entry-level drivers to receive training in areas that are covered in the CDL test. Such training would be redundant. Instead, the required training would address: (1) driver qualifications—medical, and drug and alcohol testing, (2) driver hours of service limitations, (3) driver wellness, and (4) whistle blower protection. These are training areas that are not covered in the current CDL test. The agency is only requiring drivers to be trained in the areas appropriate to their driving occupation as entry-level drivers. Each of these areas focuses on the commercial motor vehicle driver, who the agency believes is key to promoting motor carrier safety on our nation's highways. The agency believes that training in these four areas would serve to set a minimum floor of safety for entry-level CMV drivers, and at the same time not be overly burdensome for drivers or motor carriers to implement. Although the proposal does not specify a required number of hours for the training, the agency estimates that it would require approximately 10.5 hours for heavy truck and motorcoach drivers, and 4.5 hours for school bus drivers. The Texas Department of Public Safety stated in comments to the ANPRM that the State of Texas currently requires a school bus driver to receive twenty hours of initial training and 8 hours of refresher training every three years. The Michigan Department of Education requires a school bus driver to pass an initial training course and a road test. The State also requires the school bus driver to receive 6 hours of refresher training every two years. The NHTSA has developed the "School Bus Driver Instructional Program" as a voluntary training standard. However, the NHTSA training standard does not cover either driver wellness or whistle blower protection. In addition, the agency's review of school bus driver training data indicates that school districts do not

include instruction in driver wellness and whistle blower protection. The agency estimates that driver wellness and whistle blower training would mean an additional 4.5 hours of training for school bus drivers.

The agency requests comments on whether entry-level training in other areas, such as fire extinguisher training, should be required.

#### Driver Qualification

Examples of topics that could be covered are minimum vision and hearing standards, the recommended hypertension standard, the recommended monitoring practices for mild hypertension, and standards for other health-related problems. Emphasis could be placed on medical disqualification caused by illegal drug use, alcoholism, or epilepsy.

#### Hours of Service

There is evidence that many crashes occur as a result of CMV driver error, and that driver error is often the result of inattention. Inattention can often be the result of fatigue, which may be related to sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation can often be related to working conditions.

Examples of possible topics for hours of service would include awareness of the causes of fatigue, its effect on driving safety, sleep disorders, fatigue-prevention strategies (including good sleep hygiene), the procedures used to complete a driver's daily log including the use of quarter-hour increments to indicate time, the different types of duty statuses, the hours of service rules, and the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate logs.

#### Driver Wellness

According to Roberts and York, "Design, Development and Evaluation of Truck and Bus Driver Wellness Programs," FMCSA, No. DOT-MC-00-200, June 2000, obesity, high blood pressure, alcohol and drug abuse, and stress are major health issues, among truck and bus drivers. The Roberts and York report cited a study by Stoohs, Guillemineault, and Dement, "Sleep Apnea and Hypertension in Commercial Truck Drivers," *Sleep*, Vol. 16 No. 8 (1993) that 71 percent of the 125 drivers in the Stoohs, Guillemineault, and Dement study were obese because they had a body mass/fat index greater than 28. In addition, the Roberts and York report cited data from "Heart and Stroke Facts, 1996 Statistical Supplement," American Heart Association, that nationally 26.3 percent of men and 25.0 percent of woman have blood pressures greater than 140 over 90 millimeters of

mercury (mm Hg). Hypertension is defined as blood pressure greater than or equal to 140 over 90 mm Hg. Additionally, the Roberts and York report cited data from "Accident Facts:" 1996 edition that indicates that alcohol is a factor in 41 percent of all traffic fatalities. Finally, the Roberts and York report cited data from Orris, *et. al.*, "Stress Among Package Truck Drivers," *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Vol. 31, (1997), that indicates that the drivers in that study had higher stress levels than 91 percent of the U.S. population.

In light of these data, examples of topics that could be covered in driver wellness training include information on how to maintain healthy blood cholesterol, blood pressure, and weight, as well as the importance of periodic health monitoring and testing, diet, and exercise.

#### Whistleblower

Topics that the agency anticipates would be covered include: the right of a driver to refuse to drive if there is an unsafe vehicle condition, the requirement for an employer to provide the driver a safe place to work, the prohibition against the motor carrier to pressure the driver to violate the hours-of-service requirements, and the complaint process of the U.S. Department of Labor if a driver feels that he or she has been discriminated against for filing a safety-related complaint.

Under the proposal, employers would have to ensure that new entry-level drivers receive the required training before driving. The agency solicits comments on whether a 90-day period or some other time period would be more appropriate for new entry-level drivers. Commenters are requested to provide supporting rationale.

Drivers with up to one year of driving experience would have 90 days to complete the training. Drivers having between one to two years of experience who do not qualify for grandfathering would also have 90 days to complete the required training. The agency solicits comments on whether the 90-day time period is appropriate for these two groups of drivers, and specifically whether a lesser period of time should be required. Commenters are requested to provide supporting rationale.

The motor carrier, a training school, or a class conducted by a consortium or association of motor carriers could provide the training. Examples include a classroom setting and a professional instructor, a one-on-one office meeting between the entry-level driver and a representative of his or her employer working from a prepared outline, or