

Tensions are High as Looming ELD Deadline Approaches

by Danielle Leonard - Friday, August 25, 2017

The impending [Electronic Logging Device \(ELD\) mandate](#)— which requires motor carriers to install devices to automatically record driving time—is steadily approaching and has been receiving mixed reviews throughout the country. On one hand, the implementation of this rule is said to be necessary for safety and accuracy. On the other, some drivers and trucking companies are concerned about the cost, training, and government scrutiny that will come along with ELDs. Here is what both sides have to say in regards to the advantages and disadvantages.

Pros

Increased Safety: The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s (FMCSA) main goal for the ELD mandate is to create a safer environment for drivers. The administration [estimates](#) that ELDs “will prevent 562 injuries and save 26 lives annually,” by keeping exhausted drivers off the road. To accomplish this goal, it is crucial to have the ability to record accurate driving time and hours of service. That’s where ELDs come in— these devices are linked to the truck’s engine, which enables them to record how much time a trucker spends at the wheel. When demanded by an authorized safety official, the ELDs data can be [transferred electronically](#) via wireless web services, email, USB2.0, or Bluetooth®. This will assist in enforcing the [law](#) that limits drivers to 11 hours of driving daily and therefore reduce the amount of exhausted drivers.

Improved Reporting Accuracy: ELDs will not only create a safer environment for drivers, they will also be able to record exact hours-of-service. According to the FMCSA, an ELD [automatically records](#) the following

- Date
- Time
- Location information
- Engine hours
- Vehicle miles

- Identification information for the driver, authenticated user, vehicle, and motor carrier.

Having this data leaves no room for inaccurate time logs, since the ELD will record the engine hours and vehicle miles. Accurate time logs are one of the FMCSA's biggest hurdles with paper logs and obtaining concrete data will help to ensure drivers are compliant.

Cons

Cost: The mandate will impact more than three million U.S. truck drivers, according to the [American Trucking Associations](#) (ATA). For small trucking companies, purchasing and installing these devices can be an exorbitant expense. The FMCSA [estimates](#) that ELDs can range from \$165 to \$832 per truck. This may not be expensive for large carriers, but some small-to-medium-sized carriers may not be able to afford it.

Training: Purchasing ELDs is only half the battle. Drivers and dispatchers need to be trained on how to use this new technology as well. Carriers are urged not to procrastinate on finding the correct ELD that fits their needs, as there are about [87 different types](#) on the market. Delaying purchase and installation will only shorten the time that drivers have to learn how to use them.

Increased Government Scrutiny: The fear of being micromanaged also has truckers concerned about the rule. Some have even [threatened](#) to quit long-haul trucking or say that they will switch to routes that [won't require ELDs](#), such as routes that require drivers to keep paper records of duty status (RODS) no more than eight days within a 30-day time period. The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) [states](#) that ELDs violate drivers' Fourth Amendment rights, which protect against unreasonable search and seizure. Some truckers hope to see the ELD deadline repealed or extended.

Possible Extension

In July, U.S. Representative Brian Babin, introduced the [ELD Extension Act of 2017](#); if passed, the Act will postpone the mandate until 2019. The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association has provided a place for its members—including over 158,000 owner-operators who control more than 240,000 heavy-duty trucks and small truck fleets—to [petition](#) their local lawmakers to support the delay.

Although the ELD mandate has advantages, tensions and hopes for deferment are on the rise as the deadline approaches. For a look at how ELDs will impact supply chains, [download our white paper](#).



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