

TRUCK TALK

A Publication of
Continental Western Group®



FEBRUARY 2012

Electronic On-Board Recorders



An Electronic On-Board Recorder (EOBR) is an electronic device that connects directly to a vehicle's engine Electronic Control Module (ECM). It records the amount of time the vehicle is being driven, and collects engine diagnostic and GPS data to help fleets optimize operations and automate regulatory compliance.

The trucking industry, and other industries that use trucks to support their businesses, are facing substantial reforms in the face of recent regulatory activity concerning Hours of Service compliance and EOBR requirements. Current proposals by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration were stayed by the courts recently. The rule was to have those motor carriers with deficient scores install EOBRs now; the remaining motor carriers have until June 2015 to install EOBRs on any vehicle that currently uses a logbook to monitor Hours of Service. It is not clear when a proposal will go into effect.

However, many motor carriers are voluntarily adopting EOBRs as a way to enhance safety, improve productivity, and reduce costs, in addition to achieving improved DOT

compliance results. Although there are no government mandates of any kind, there are hundreds of thousands of EOBRs in use in the trucking industry today.

Two of the benefits of EOBRs are increased safety and DOT compliance. The National Transportation Safety Board cites driver fatigue as a leading cause in large truck accidents. By using EOBRs motor carriers help ensure their drivers are not driving tired, which has the potential to make the roads safer for the commercial driver and other motorists.

During roadside safety inspections, the most frequent violation cited for removing a driver from operation is exceeding allowed hours of service. Use of EOBRs and other technologies to manage the hours of service requirements has significant safety value. Two of the most frequent infractions in the Safety Management System's Fatigued Driving BASIC are "Log Book Not Current" and "Form and Manner" violations. In fact, these two violations generally account for about 45% of the hours of service violations for motor carriers. Having an Electronic On-Board Recorder monitoring hours-of-service basically takes these two types of violations off the table. Most systems require the "Form and Manner" information to be entered before the device can be activated to make the truck operational, and since the system is always on while the truck is operating, the data are always current.

As you are aware, a motor carrier's SMS score is determined in part by how your performance compares to the performance of your peers. If you are using paper logs and are receiving "Form and Manner" and "Log Book Not Current" violations in the Fatigued Driving BASIC, you may have motor carriers in your peer group who take advantage of EOBRs and do not have "Form and Manner" and "Log Book Not Current" violations.

Other advantages of making use of current EOBR technology include:

- Enables management to improve load planning process
- Monitors idle time and other equipment usage inefficiencies
- Monitors delivery and/or pickup times
- Collects driver log and vehicle mileage data
- Identifies driver or vehicle performance issues
- Reduces DOT violations
- Uses real-time data for preventative maintenance
- Provides better customer service as you can enable your shippers to tie into your system so they can track their own shipments

One other advantage, albeit somewhat subtle, is that using EOBRs and other technology sends a message to the transportation and enforcement communities that you, as a motor carrier, are pro-active in your commitment to safety for your driver and the motoring public.

lspain@cwgins.com • jschenker@cwgins.com • ckovachevich@cwgins.com

Continental Western Group, LLC and affiliated companies assume no liability in connection with your use or non-use of the information provided in this document and do not guarantee that the information contained herein includes all possible risks or unusual circumstances that may occur in or to your business or that the advice or recommendations contained herein comply with all federal, state or local laws or regulations. Any advice or recommendations made in this document are intended to assist you in reducing risk of loss, thereby reducing the possibility that our companies will need to make a payment under an insurance policy. These recommendations are not intended to substitute for any obligation that you or anyone else may have to survey, repair, or modify any property, equipment or operations or to conduct safety programs. It is your legal responsibility to maintain safe premises, equipment and operations. This document provides general information only, is not legal advice, and is not a statement of contract. Any statement regarding insurance coverage made herein is subject to all provisions and exclusions of the entire insurance policy.

Copyright © 2011 Continental Western Group, LLC. All rights reserved.