

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

March 2024

Fire Safety

Know the best practices
and always be prepared!

Fire prevention and response

Ready for some "exceptional"
winter driving?

Top 5 FMCSR penalties of 2023

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



J. J. Keller
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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Ground rules for constructive discussion

It can be very beneficial to allot time for discussion during a training session. These discussions can reinforce what your students have learned, clear up any misunderstanding surrounding the lesson, and motivate students to effectively apply your training.

Though there are many benefits to discussion sessions, the conversation can quickly get thrown off topic and/or become a complaint session if you don't set ground rules from the start.

The following are common discussion ground rules to use in your training session:

- Respect others.
- Don't interrupt.
- Allow only one speaker at a time.
- Practice active listening.
- Make sure that the comments made here stay here.
- Be specific.
- Be truthful.
- Keep the discussion relevant to the subject.
- Keep your cool.
- Don't pass judgment.
- Don't retaliate.
- Don't respond with sarcasm.
- Don't allow phrases such as "yes, but..." and "it will never work."
- Constructively criticize ideas, not people.
- Support all students' contributions.
- Keep communication lines open.
- Make sure all phones are turned off, or if not feasible, ring tones silenced.
- Use the five-minute rule. Any participant can call "five minutes" to end a discussion.



As a side note, if you, the trainer, are asked a question that you cannot provide an answer to during a discussion, don't try to fake it. Tell the student that you do not have an immediate answer but that you will research the question and then get back to the class. Then, of course, make sure you do just that; find the correct answer and get back to your students. ♦



Lucero Truskowski

Lucero Truskowski joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. as an Associate Editor in 2022. Lucero edits, writes, and researches content on a variety of topics, including transportation, human resources, and driver training. She holds a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — FIRE SAFETY

Fire prevention and response

While *preventing* fires is the best way to avoid fire-related injury, death, and property damage, drivers must also be prepared to *handle* fires if they do happen. Common sense, good driving, and keeping up with best practices are some of the best ways to prevent a fire, while good training and reinforcement are the best ways to prepare drivers for any situation.

TIP: Before reviewing common causes of vehicle fires with your drivers, ask them to list the causes they can think of and then fill in the gaps using this training blueprint and your own personal experiences.

What causes vehicle fires?

Vehicle fires are typically caused by mechanical problems that include:

- Damage or excessive wear to the exhaust system.
- Short circuits in an area not protected by a circuit breaker or fuse.
- Tires with low air pressure.
- Fluid leakage.
- Excessive hub heat generated by bad bearings, a leaky hub seal, or a dragging brake.

How to prevent vehicle fires

Fires occur in places where fuel, air, and heat are available. As a result, vehicle fires most commonly occur in the **cab/engine**, **tires/brakes**, and **cargo**.

Cab/Engine: The cab should be clean and trash-free, and the engine compartment should be clean and checked regularly. Drivers must wipe up any spilled fluids or oils, remove all rags from the area, and replace opened fluid caps.

Drivers should also regularly check the wiring, electrical system, fuses, battery, and exhaust system. The engine should be turned off when refueling and the fuel tank should be checked for leakage. Drivers must not smoke or use lighters when refueling.

Tires/Brakes: Drivers should change soft or flat tires as soon as possible to avoid the tire overheating and starting a tire fire.

Drivers should also regularly check the vehicle's brakes to avoid overheating, and fully release all brakes before moving the vehicle. Drivers must also avoid riding the

brakes, which can cause a fire in the brake linings and spread to the tires.

Cargo: Drivers should check the vehicle mirrors to look for smoke coming from the cargo. A driver must know what type of cargo they're hauling and never use smoking materials while hauling hazardous materials or while in the cargo area when freight is being loaded/unloaded.

TIP: Careless use of smoking materials can easily start a vehicle fire. Let your drivers know if your carrier has a smoking ban, or consider implementing a ban with your management team.

How to fight a fire

In the case of a fire, drivers should move the vehicle to a location away from other people, vehicles, or buildings, if possible. If the fire is too large or dangerous, advise drivers to leave it for the professionals.

The following are best practices for fighting fires in the described areas:

Cab/Engine fires

1. Turn off the engine, look for leaks, and, if the fire is electrical, disconnect the battery cables from the terminals (if it can be done safely).
2. Follow the instructions on the extinguisher and face the extinguisher away from the wind, when possible.
3. DO NOT open the hood to let air in, use water on a petroleum-based fire, or assume the fire is completely out (check for smoldering and sparks).

Tire fires

1. Remove a hot or burning tire if it can be done safely.
2. Use water to cool the tire and extinguish the flames.

Cargo fires

1. Do not open the cargo doors if smoke is detected until the trailer is located in a safe place with help on site. Drivers must let firefighters know what materials are inside.
2. Disconnect the tractor from the trailer (if it can be done safely) and move the tractor to a safe place. ♦

TIP: Allow your drivers to practice using a real fire extinguisher for the type of hands-on training you can't get from a training video.



TRAINING HANDOUT — FIRE SAFETY

Know your fire classes

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) classifies different types of fires based on the involved combustible materials and the type of extinguisher needed to put out the fire.

Class A (This is the most common type of fire)

The combustible materials include:	Extinguisher needs
Wood, cloth, paper, rubber, plastics	- Water - Dry chemicals

Class B

The combustible materials include:	Extinguisher needs
Flammable liquids, gases, greases	- Foam - Carbon dioxide - Dry chemical

Class C

The combustible materials include:	Extinguisher needs
Electrical fires	- Carbon dioxide - Dry chemical
NEVER USE: Foam or water-type extinguishers	

Class D

The combustible materials include:	Extinguisher needs
Combustible metals (magnesium, titanium, zirconium, sodium)	Special techniques needed to extinguish
NEVER USE: Any type of common extinguishers ♦	





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — FIRE SAFETY

1. Class A fires include which of these combustible materials?
 - A. Electrical wiring
 - B. Cloth
 - C. Rubber
 - D. Both B and C

2. You should always try to put a fire out yourself, no matter how serious.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. Which of these elements does not contribute to a growing fire?
 - A. Fuel
 - B. Humidity
 - C. Air
 - D. Heat

4. You may use any type of extinguisher to handle a Class D fire.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. The most common places for fire to occur in a vehicle are the:
 - A. Tires/brakes
 - B. Cargo/trailer
 - C. Cab/engine
 - D. All of the above

NAME: _____ DATE: _____



Ready for some “exceptional” winter driving?

With winter driving conditions upon us, remember that there is an hours-of-service (HOS) exception available under some circumstances. Take some time now to remind your drivers and dispatchers about when and how the adverse driving conditions HOS exception applies.

What qualifies as adverse conditions?

To qualify for the adverse driving conditions exception, drivers must be confronted with dangerous weather conditions or unusual traffic conditions that were not known, or could not reasonably be known, to dispatchers and drivers immediately prior to beginning a run or continuing a run after a qualifying rest break.

Adverse driving conditions do NOT include rush-hour traffic, anticipated bad weather, or loading or unloading delays.

What does the exception allow?

Drivers of property-carrying commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) who encounter adverse driving conditions and cannot safely complete the run within the 11-hour driving limit or 14-hour duty window may increase their driving time and duty window by up to 2 hours to make up the time that was lost.

When using the exception, drivers of **property-carrying** vehicles may not drive:

- For more than 13 hours following 10 consecutive hours off duty; or
- At the end of the 16th consecutive hour since coming on duty following 10 consecutive hours off duty.

Drivers of passenger-carrying CMVs who encounter adverse driving conditions and cannot safely complete the run within the maximum 10-hour driving limit or 15 hours of on-duty time may increase their driving and on-duty time by 2 hours.

When using the exception, drivers of **passenger-carrying** vehicles may not drive:

- For more than 12 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty; or
- After 17 hours of on-duty time following 8 consecutive hours off duty.

In Alaska, drivers of property-carrying or passenger-carrying CMVs who encounter adverse driving conditions may drive for the length of time needed to complete the run. After the run is completed, drivers of **property-carrying** CMVs must be off duty for at least 10 consecutive hours. Drivers of **passenger-carrying** CMVs must be off duty for at least 8 consecutive hours.

Drivers who use the exception should add notes to their logs to indicate when and why the exception was used. ♦

Top 5 FMCSR penalties of 2023

Motor carriers and other businesses regulated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) paid some hefty fines this year for failing to comply with the agency's safety regulations.

To date, the FMCSA has collected nearly \$25 million in fines over the course of 2023, with an average penalty of over \$7,000.

The following are the top five settlements of the year, based on violations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (with Illinois playing an outsized role):

1. **\$135,390** paid by an Illinois-based interstate freight hauler, with 350 power units, for failing to perform enough random drug tests and allowing drivers to drive without a valid commercial driver's license (CDL).

2. **\$126,960** paid by a driveaway company from Kansas, with over 2,000 power units, for allowing disqualified and medically uncertified drivers to operate commercial vehicles.

3. **\$111,410** paid by an interstate freight hauler from Illinois, with 36 power units, for false logs and operating unsafe vehicles.

4. **\$97,990** paid by another interstate freight hauler from Illinois, with 350 power units (but now declared out of service), for allowing drivers to drive without a valid CDL and after failing a drug test, failing to comply with state laws, and exceeding the 11-hour driving limit.

5. **\$96,520** paid by an owner-operator from Illinois (since declared out of service) for driving without a valid CDL, exceeding the 11-hour driving limit, operating an unsafe vehicle, and driving without adequate insurance.

Two additional companies grabbed the top spots of the year through violations of the Hazardous Materials Regulations. A West Coast hazmat carrier paid a settlement of over **\$426,000** for hazmat violations, while a Florida-based cargo tank facility paid a penalty of **\$160,000**.

Variables at play

How much would you have to pay for violating the safety regulations? It depends. When determining the amount of a civil penalty, the FMCSA takes several variables into consideration:

- The maximum amount allowed by law, as listed in the appendices to **49 CFR Part 386**;
- The nature of the violation;
- The extent to which the violation put public safety at risk;
- How culpable the violator was for the violation;
- The violator's history of prior offenses;
- The effect the fine would have on the company's ability to continue to do business; and
- "Such other matters as justice and public safety may require."

Note, however, that a motor carrier's "good faith efforts" to comply will also be taken into consideration. So even if you discover that you've violated a rule, it's never too late to do all you can to get back into compliance and prevent any future violations. ♦



Key to remember: Violations of the FMCSA safety regulations can be costly, as shown by the top penalties levied in 2023. Potential penalties should be an incentive to comply at all times.



Next Month's Topic: Roadside Inspections

Professional drivers should be prepared for a roadside inspection at any time of year. The CVSA's Roadcheck 2024 is great motivation to ensure your drivers are ready. ♦



Expert Help: Question of the Month

Question: What are the training requirements for fire extinguishers in non-DOT and DOT pickup trucks?

Answer: For vehicles that are DOT-regulated as "commercial motor vehicles," a fire extinguisher is required under **49 CFR 393.95**. Under those federal (interstate) standards, this includes any truck that weighs or is rated at 10,001 pounds or more, which could include a pickup truck (and especially a pickup pulling a trailer). If the unit by itself OR in combination with a trailer is 10,001 pounds or more in the rating or actual weight, then it's a regulated CMV. Each regulated power unit must be equipped with:

- **One** fire extinguisher with a UL rating of **5 B:C** or more;
- **Two** fire extinguishers, each with a UL rating of **4 B:C** or more; or
- **One** fire extinguisher with a UL rating of **10 B:C** or more when hauling hazmat

Note that the **rating** is the key factor, not the weight or size.

Non-DOT-regulated vehicles fall outside the jurisdiction of the DOT, so if anything, OSHA rules could apply. OSHA does not specifically address fire extinguishers in company vehicles. It would be up to you to decide what to install based on whether there was an anticipation the driver would need it (like if they were going to be working with chemicals or a similarly flammable substance).

There's no requirement from OSHA saying that just because someone has a vehicle they have to have a fire extinguisher. ♦



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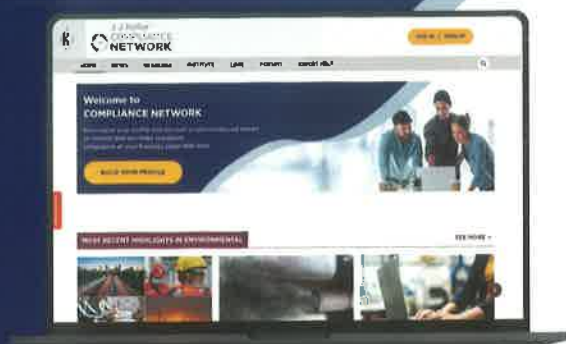
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