

Transportation Safety Newsletter

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Short Haul Exemption: Rules & Requirements

Under the short-haul exemption, drivers are allowed to remain on duty for up to 14 hours, with a maximum of 11 hours of driving time. Unlike most truck drivers, they are not required to take a mandatory 30-minute break after 8 hours of driving.

Additionally, drivers who qualify for the short haul exemption are not required to keep records of duty status (RODS) or use electronic logging devices (ELDs). Instead, they can use a time card or time sheet, which is usually kept at their normal work reporting location.

However, it's important to note that the short haul exemption has specific requirements that must be met. Drivers and carriers must ensure compliance with these requirements to take advantage of the exception.

Who Qualifies for the Short Haul Exemption?

To qualify for the hours of service (HOS) short-haul exemption, a commercial driver must meet the following criteria:

- The driver must operate within a 150 air-mile radius of their work reporting location and return to that location at the end of each duty day.
- The driver must not exceed a 14-hour workday, with a maximum of 11 hours of driving time.
- The driver must be off duty for at least 10 hours before starting a new duty day.
- The driver must keep accurate records of duty status (RODS) to document compliance with the short-haul exemption.

How Does the Short Haul Exemption Work?

The short haul exemption is intended to provide greater flexibility to drivers who operate within a limited geographic area and can return to their home terminal each day. Drivers who operate within a 150 air-mile radius of their work reporting location and return before the end of each 14-hour driving window can use the exception.



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Using the exception is simple. Drivers need to record when they report to their normal work reporting location at the beginning of their duty period. Once they finish their duty day, they record the time they returned on the same time card.

Logging the Short Haul Exemption:

To use the short haul exemption, drivers must keep a time card or other document for each day they plan to use the 150 air-mile exemption. These records must include the time the driver reports for duty, the time the driver goes off duty, the total number of hours the driver is on duty each day, and the driver's total driving time for the last seven days. These time cards should be kept for at least six months and be available for inspection with a two-business-day notice.

Understanding the 150 Air-Mile Radius:

The 150 air-mile radius is equivalent to 172.6 statute or over-the-road miles. It is measured "as the crow flies" from the driver's normal work reporting location. To determine the air miles, you can use tools like Google Maps and select the "Walking" option, which provides a good approximation.

Limitations of the Short Haul Exemption:

It's important to note that the short haul exemption has restrictions and limitations. For example, it does not apply to drivers transporting certain types of hazardous materials, and state regulations may also affect the rules. Additionally, the exemption is not available to drivers who regularly operate commercial motor vehicles outside the 150-air-mile radius. If a driver goes outside the radius during any duty day, they must complete a paper log/RODS for that day only.

Exceeding the Short Haul Exemption Limits:

If a driver using the short haul exemption exceeds the limits of the exemption (150 air-mile radius or 14-hour duty window), they must log their hours using a paper log for that duty day. If this happens more than eight times in any 30-day period, an electronic logging device must be used.

Conclusion:

The short haul exemption can be a valuable tool in managing hours of service for drivers operating within 150 air miles of their terminal location. However, it's important to follow the applicable HOS rules and keep accurate time cards for each driver operating under the exemption. If a driver goes outside the radius or does not return to the same location within the 14-hour duty period, they must prepare a paper log for that duty day.