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Fra hours of service compliance manual

Manually tracking hours of service for your employees can be time-intensive, tedious, and, worst of all, incomplete and inaccurate. Get a fuller picture of total time for each employee, including hours of duty time, consecutive day service, limbo time, and more. WebHOS is the only system on the market that electronically records and reports everything you need to know about employee time to ensure FRA compliance and accurate payroll. Know about problems before they arise instead of after you've been hit with a heavy fine. WebHOS alerts you about potential risks and violations so you can take proactive measures. WebHOS accurately records and reports all service, not just covered service, giving you the most complete picture available of how your railway is running. Our HOS software features built-in alerts that immediately notify you of any potential violations. Stop penalties before they start by tracking all time more accurately. Centrally manage and store your company policy and procedure manuals and track changes. WebHOS is fully compliant with all electronic requirements of 49 CFR Part 228. RailSoft Systems' Hours of Service tracking software integrates well with the applications you are already using to manage your day-to-day rail operations. Download your WebHOS database directly to your payroll system for faster, more accurate payday accounting. Easy to integrate. WebHOS is fully compatible with other programs you already have in place, including RSS Bulletin and Message system and Logitrac CBT "Rule of the Day" training. Works on most devices including tablets and smartphones. With powerful, fast reporting features, you'll never spend hours assembling your daily or monthly records again. Electronically captures, records, and reports hours of duty time, which cuts down on your administrative burden while making your records. Railroad operators can print all required documentation, including daily service reports, directly from the software system, eliminating guesswork and increasing compliance. Available monthly reports include total time on duty, limbo time, and consecutive day service for train service employees. Quickly and easily see a snapshot of employee service time each month. Official websites use .govA .gov website belongs to an official government organization in the United States. Secure .gov websites use HTTPS A lock (A locked padlock) or https:// means you've safely connected to the .gov website. Share sensitive information only on official, secure websites. United States Department of Transportation Covered employee: A person who performs hours of service functions at a rate sufficient to be placed into the railroad's random testing program. Categories of personnel who normally perform these functions are locomotive engineers, trainmen, conductors, switchmen, locomotive hostlers/helpers, utility employees, signalmen, operators, and train dispatchers.Types of tests for drugs: Pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, reasonable cause, post-accident, return-to-duty, and follow-up. Types of tests for alcohol: Pre-employment (optional), random, reasonable suspicion, reasonable cause, post-accident, return-to-duty, and follow-up.Definition of accident requiring testing: FRA's post-accident testing rule requires urine and blood specimen collection from surviving employees and also tissue from deceased employees (these collection procedures go well beyond the normal Part 40 procedures). For surviving employees, these specimens are collected at an independent medical facility. FRA regulation, 49 CFR Part 219 Subpart C, stipulates the level of events requiring testing and who has to be tested. The collected specimens are analyzed only at FRA's contract laboratory. Post-accident testing provides FRA with accident investigation and usage data.Reasonable-suspicion determination: One trained supervisor can make the decision for alcohol testing based upon specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the employee. A decision to conduct a drug test requires two supervisors (only the on-site supervisor must be trained).Reasonable-cause determination: Employers are authorized to use federal authority to test covered employees after specific operating rule violations or accidents/incidents which meet the criteria in 49 CFR Part 219 Subpart D.Pre-duty alcohol use prohibitions: Four (4) hours prior to performance of duty or after receiving notice to report for covered service, whichever is the shorter period. Actions for BACs 0.02 – 0.039: The employee cannot be returned to duty until the start of the employee's next regularly scheduled duty period, but not less than 8 hours following the test. Railroads are prohibited from taking further disciplinary action under their own authority.Employee training: Employer must provide education materials that explain the requirements of the FRA rules as well as railroad policies and procedures with respect to meeting these requirements. Supervisor training: A total of three hours of training is required: one-hour on the specific, contemporaneous physical, behavioral, and performance indicators of probable drug use; one- hour of similar training on probable indicators of alcohol use; and one-hour of training on how to determine if an accident qualifies for post-accident testing.Reportable employee drug and alcohol violations: No requirements to report violations to FRA. Engineers, who are the only certificate holders in the rail industry, will have their certificates reviewed for suspension or revocation by the employer when a FRA violation occurs. Note that a FRA alcohol violation occurs at 0.04 percent or greater. When a locomotive engineer is in a voluntary referral program, the counseling professional must report the engineer's refusal to cooperate in the recommended course of counseling or treatment.Other:Anyone with direct or immediate supervisory authority over an employee may not collect that person's urine, saliva, or breath.Refusal to test results in a mandatory minimum nine-month removal from covered service. During this nine-month period, there is no prohibition against the employee working a non- covered service position if agreeable to the employer. Locomotive engineers (or other employees certified as a locomotive engineer at the time of the alcohol or drug violation) required both alcohol and drug return-to-duty tests; and both alcohol and drug follow-up tests. Locomotive engineers who have a DUI are required by Part 240 to be evaluated to determine whether they have an active substance abuse disorder. A DUI is not considered to be a violation of FRA regulations if it occurred during the employee's off-duty time; therefore, any testing would be conducted under employer authority.Employers must provide a voluntary referral program which allows an employee to self-refer for treatment, and a co-worker report program which allows one employee to refer another for treatment before the employer identifies a problem. Both of these employee assistance programs guarantee that employees will retain their jobs if they cooperate and complete the required rehabilitation program. For an engineer who is in a voluntary referral program, the counseling professional must report the engineer's refusal to cooperate in the recommended course of counseling or treatment to the employer. Written by Evan Mitchell, Railroad Software Photo courtesy Railroad Software. Work exhaustion and lack of effectiveness to properly carry out job functions to the highest standards put people at risk on a railroad. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) makes it a strong priority to know when employees are on the clock working on the movement or function of a train and when they are not. These regulations and time tracking fall into the Hours of Service (HOS) law. They must be met within FRA standards; railroads face fines and penalties if they aren't met. The history of HOS regulations is interesting and surprising as we take a look back on how we got to where we are today. The rules have been reconfigured over time as the industry has become more aware of best practices for employees. The Secretary of Transportation is the chief administrator of HOS laws, which are actually enforced by the FRA. The laws have been changed over time. In 1907, the federal government first set in writing limitations on working significant continuous hours—16 at the time—on a railroad to promote better safety. But imagine working 16 hours straight on a train or assets involved in the overall movement of a train. It took nearly 60 years to reduce the number of hours. The first amendment to the HOS law was enacted in 1969. It decreased the maximum number of hours of work from 16 to 14. In 1976, the law was amended further to reduce the maximum number of continuous hours to 12. Yet, despite these improvements, FRA data shows that fatigue-related accidents still occur. Recently, several studies have been conducted to show the effects of working too long without proper rest. As such, keeping proper track of tours of duty is crucial to our industry as we promote safety first and foremost. Research conducted by Hursh, Raslear, Kaye and Falzone in 2006 provided case studies on work exhaustion. The data summarized that between the hours of midnight and 3 a.m., human-factor-caused accidents increased by 20%. Furthermore, they discovered the relationship between job effectiveness and human-factor-caused accidents. As the percentage of effectiveness decreased, the percentage of accidents increased dramatically. An effectiveness score of 50 or below led to a 65% increase in accidents, which contributed to multi-million-dollar costs/losses. With this data in mind, FRA is constantly checking employee time-tracking data. When an accident occurs, FRA will go straight to the compliance information to see if the accident was caused by human error related to HOS violations. Taking this small sample of information from the recent past and comparing it with the law established in 1907, we can see how far we have come with HOS. Now, with railroads keeping track of their employees, we better-understand the need for educational information not found in research studies and lengthy government data. The industry is changing, with new ideas, a new generation of employees, and new technologies. Understanding our industry's foundations will propel us to improve on the past and grow together. What You May Not Know about Signal Maintainer HOS Rules Signal maintainers are responsible for the installation, maintenance and inspection of signals (including grade crossing warning devices) along a railroad. Signal maintainer HOS law requirements also date back to 1907, but their requirements are different from those of T&E (Train and Engine Service) employees, just as dispatchers have their own set of guidelines. Signal maintainer requirements are similar to those of T&E, but are simpler, with different consecutive-hour, rest time and consecutive days on duty limitations. Signal maintainers can work a maximum of 12 hours covered or commingled within a 24-hour period. Covered time includes hands-on work on the installation, repair or maintenance of a signal. For example, when a maintainer works on a crossing, changing out the gate arm and replacing the flasher battery, it is covered by HOS. Commingled service is not separated from covered service by the required time off per FRA regulations. An example of commingled service would be a signal maintainer starting the day with administrative duties in the home office but later in the day being called in to repair a particular signal in the field. Due to the covered service time, the non-covered time from the morning is counted toward the overall count of hours toward the 12-hour maximum. For signal maintainers the required rest time prior to a new shift for covered service is 10 hours. During those 10 hours, a signal maintainer cannot be in contact with the railroad in a conversation relating to the safety of the signal as it relates to train movements, if the railroad initiated the conversation. As well, there are varying job functions where distinguishing between covered and non-covered service gets a bit tricky. Keeping track of differences in covered vs. non-covered service can make a signal maintainer's day more complicated if hours need to be manually tracked—for example, on a notepad—throughout the day, before being officially reported. Many employees complete their work and then at the end of the day base their reports on estimates of when they were in covered or non-covered service. One of the benefits of modern technology advancements in the industry means that time spent with guesswork can be cut down immensely. There are applications that easily allow users to select their times in visual templates with defined work. This allows the user not only the ability to lose the paper wasted on timekeeping but also allows administrators in the office the ability to review time entries in real time and make better decisions when looking for employees to cover work when hours are high or low for certain individuals. A Locomotive Engineer's Day T&E employees—locomotive engineers, conductors, hostlers, switchmen, trainmen, and switch tenders—have their own HOS regulations. At many places across the country, one individual can hold one or more of these positions. This makes keeping track of their covered and non-covered service very important. From previous FRA-backed research into work exhaustion, we know the effect of long hours on the human body and mind. Safely moving trains and ensuring the safety of passengers or freight and crew calls for accountability, efficiency and general awareness. As supervisors and administrators may not have unlimited access into these employees' workdays, it is entrusted to the employees to keep general notes on their day. Similar to signal maintainers, T&E employees cannot exceed the 12-hour limit. An employee who works the full 12 hours must have 10 consecutive hours off duty. In addition, employees that work 12 hours consecutively, with some hours on an active train movement and some hours on administrative tasks, require 8 hours of duty within a 24-hour period before returning to work. As railroads look to have better access to their employees' workdays to improve safety and efficiency, many third-party contractors are developing time tracking software that enables supervisors to easily monitor and schedule employee HOS. In developing our own software, we've seen the types of problems short lines, switching and terminal and Class I's encounter. Whether it may be falling asleep on the job, general slacking off, or not carrying an efficient pace throughout the shift to get the work done, with the help of modern innovations, companies have that visibility to greatly enhance their operations through efficiency. Why take 6 hours to do a job that can be done in 3? The railroad industry is changing. Incoming workers in all disciplines are younger, and with that change in age, there is now a new movement toward more technology being integrated into rail operations. Instead of using many sheets of paper and bulky files, companies are looking toward innovative, user-friendly applications that make for more efficient workdays. This is important for HOS laws and for those in covered service, especially T&E crews. Covered and non-covered service, limbo time, interim releases and off-duty hours can be all tracked more easily through these new tools, which are readily available to the industry. Investigate opportunities to improve your business now, not later when it becomes a pain point to switch. Evan Mitchell is a Marketing and Sales Associate at Railroad Software. He is experienced in coordinating and implementing technology solutions within the rail industry. Evan's experiences as a corporate trainer and customer service representative in leadership positions across different industries have granted him a balanced understanding of different core functions to businesses needs and operations. Evan worked as a writer for a regional magazine, which is where he first found success in publishing articles. Based out of Cumming, Ga., Railroad Software has grown rapidly since beginning operations in 2013. Founded out of the desire to make software user friendly and affordable to the rail industry, Railroad Software currently manages several hundred thousand railcars through its RTMS product in addition to managing FRA compliance through its TrackAsset and TrackHOS products. For more information on Railroad Software and its Compliance Software for Hours of Service, TrackHOS, visit: .