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**\$3.97 USD**

# Friday Safety Brief®

## YOU Have a Voice in the Safety Regulation Process

Most of our readers have commercial vehicles which operate across state lines and are therefore subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. There are many different types of operations which face a myriad of circumstances, some of which can make it difficult to comply with all applicable regulations. Additionally, a variance in operations sometimes makes it even more difficult to "interpret" exactly how the regulations apply to certain circumstances within the operation. Each Administration is charged with the responsibility to promulgate rules (regulations) that are designed to facilitate a given law, passed in congress. In our case, that job is the responsibility of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, for those operations which operate in "interstate commerce" and are therefore under the FMCSA jurisdiction. Regulations are ever-changing, as new laws are passed, or new information becomes available which might point to the need for changes in certain regulations. The Administration might see the need for either a new regulation or a change to an existing regulation and, when this occurs, the Administration develops a "Notice of Proposed Rule Making", or other notice, which invites comments from anyone who might be concerned with the subject. All Administrations are required to publish this information, which comes out daily in the "Federal Register".



With the advent of the Internet, this process is now much quicker and far easier to follow than it was in years past. In addition, with the voluminous information published, it was extremely time consuming and usually expensive. However, now you can access the [Federal Register](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/browse.html) (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/browse.html>) anytime online. Then, you can go directly to the Administration section that affects your operation to find out about any new proposed regulations.

This is the point at which you can make comments. In many cases, some respondents make comments about the nature of their operation that the proposed rule may have failed to consider. When we publish a proposed rule in the *Friday Safety Brief®*, we almost always include the information shown in the Federal Register regarding where and how to submit comments. Therein lies your opportunity to file your comments. You can do that in several different ways, such as online, by mail or, sometimes, in a "hearing" or "meeting". You can also keep up-to-date with the comments by following your particular issue in the Federal Register, as those comments are also published, along with the Administration's considerations. They really do "invite" those comments, as this is the only way they can ensure they are on track with actual operations during the entire process. It actually works pretty well when those affected are very much involved!☼

### 2009 Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities

According to NHTSA, early estimates for 2009 motor vehicle traffic fatalities show an estimated 33,963 deaths, a decline of about 8.9% as compared to the 37,261 fatalities in 2008. Traffic fatalities have steadily declined since 2005, decreasing by about 22% from 2005 to 2009. The 2009 fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is projected to be 1.16, down from 1.25 fatalities per 100 million VMT in 2008.

For more information, go to:

<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811291.PDF>

## Work Zone Accidents

Speeding and inattention are the two biggest reasons for collisions in road work zones, according to studies, and 1/3 of work zone crashes are rear-end collisions. Over 750 people were killed in accidents in highway work zones in 2008 and in 2009, 700 people died in accidents in work zones.

There is a lot that motorists could do to prevent accidents in construction highway work zones:

- ▶ Avoid speeding & tailgating.
- ▶ Don't change lanes randomly in the middle of the work zone.
- ▶ Don't slow down speeds to look at what's going on.
- ▶ Be alert to warning signs & flaggers.

