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# Friday Safety Brief®



## **United States and Mexico Announce Safe, Secure Cross-Border Trucking Program**



U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes Dionisio Arturo Pérez-Jacome Friscione joined Wednesday in Mexico City to sign agreements resolving the dispute over long-haul, cross-border trucking services between the United States and Mexico.

The new program puts safety first and paves the way for Mexico to lift tariffs it imposed more than two years ago. Pursuant to an agreement signed by the United States Trade Representative and the Secretaría de Economía of the United Mexican States, Mexico will soon lift retaliatory tariffs on more than \$2 billion in U.S. manufactured goods and agricultural products, providing opportunities to increase U.S. exports to Mexico and expanding job creation in the U.S. The agreement also provides that Mexico will suspend 50 percent of the retaliatory tariffs within ten days. Mexico will suspend the remainder of the tariffs within five days of the first Mexican trucking company receiving its U.S. operating authority. As a result, Mexican tariffs that now range from five to 25 percent on an array of U.S. agricultural and industrial products such as apples, certain pork products, and personal care products would be immediately cut in half and will disappear entirely within a few months.

After the previous cross-border trucking program was terminated in March 2009, Secretary LaHood and other Obama Administration officials met with lawmakers, safety advocates, industry representatives and others to address a broad range of concerns, which the Department took into account as it worked with Mexico to develop a new program. The final program addresses the recommendations of over 2,000 commenters to the proposal issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration in April.

As a result of these meetings, and in consultation with Mexico, trucks will be required to comply with all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and must have electronic monitoring systems to track hours-of-service compliance. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation will review the complete driving record of each driver and require all drug testing samples to be analyzed in Department of Health and Human Services-certified laboratories located in the U.S. The Department will also require drivers to undergo an assessment of their ability to understand the English language and U.S. traffic signs. The new agreement also ensures that Mexico will provide reciprocal authority for U.S. carriers to engage in cross-border long-haul operations into that country. ❁

## **From the Federal Register...**

### **The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's 2011-2016 Strategic Plan: Raising the Safety Bar**

**AGENCY:** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of draft strategic plan and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The FMCSA requests public comment on its draft strategic plan, *Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration 2011-2016 Strategic Plan: Raising the Safety Bar*. This is FMCSA's second strategic plan since the Agency was established as a standalone administration within the Department of Transportation (DOT) in 2000. In keeping with DOT's and FMCSA's top priority safety, the draft strategic plan is shaped by three core principles: (1) Raise the bar to enter the motor carrier industry; (2) Maintain high safety standards to remain in the industry; and (3) Remove high-risk carriers, drivers and service providers from operation. The Agency's new 5-year Strategic Plan provides continuing direction for FMCSA to further reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities related to commercial motor vehicles (CMVs), which include passenger carrier vehicles (e.g., buses). We welcome and invite comments and feedback on FMCSA's future direction. Comments will be considered and incorporated as appropriate.

*Comment Date:* Comments are due **July 29, 2011**.

**ADDRESSES:** Your comments must be addressed to FDMS Docket ID No. FMCSA-2011-0098, and sent by any of the following methods:

*Federal eRulemaking Portal:* the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) address: <http://www.regulations.gov>.

For More information, click here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-06-29/html/2011-16274.htm>