



MOTOR FREIGHT CARRIERS ASSOCIATION

**Comments Submitted for Docket FMCSA-97-2176
Minimum Training Requirements for Longer Combination
Vehicle (LCV) Operators and LCV Driver-Instructor
Requirements**

October 13, 2003

Docket Management Facility
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room PL-401
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

The Motor Freight Carriers Association (MFCFA) is pleased to submit these comments to Docket FMCSA-97-2176, the proposed rulemaking, **Minimum Training Requirements for Longer Combination Vehicle (LCV) Operators and LCV Driver-Instructor Requirements**, that was issued in response to Section 4007 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.

The Motor Freight Carriers Association is the national trade association representing the unionized less-than-truckload industry. The member companies – ABF Freight System, New Penn Motor Express, Roadway Express, USF Holland, and Yellow Transportation – are among the largest and most experienced operators of triple trailers. These companies have historically demonstrated safe performance of these vehicles through proper driver selection, training, and monitoring. The FMCSA should be commended for closely following the training guidelines used by the unionized LTL motor carriers. If the guidelines are followed, other motor carriers using triple trailers should be able to closely emulate the safe driving record of MFCFA carriers.

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Regardless of the vehicle type, the key to developing well-trained and safe truck drivers is the proper selection and training of instructors. MFCA is unaware of any driver training school that trains triple tractor driver instructors, or, for that matter, triple drivers. Until now, individual motor carriers have filled that role, with state regulators providing oversight. In the case of triples operations that system has worked exceptionally well, perhaps better than any other type of freight operation. For example, between 1991 and 2001, on average, each year there were less than two fatal crashes involving triple tractors during 80 million annual miles of driving by the largest LCV operators.

MFCA supports the proposed rulemaking because it codifies the training requirements, levels the playing field, and ensures the continued safe operation of LCVs. Nevertheless, there are a few statements in the proposed rule requiring clarification. For example, Sec. 380.111, which addresses substitutes for driver training under a grandfather clause states that an individual must certify that during the past two years he/she had, "No accident in which he/she was found to be at fault, while operating a CMV." Since nothing in the proposed rule defines at fault, does that simply mean a citation of any kind relating to a CMV accident? Perhaps it would be better to just follow the criteria in Section 383.51 Disqualification of drivers. Also, Section 380.205 (a) (2), which addresses employer responsibilities for driver instructors, states, "Evidence of driving experience shall be an employer's statement that the driver has for at least 6 months immediately preceding application operated the applicable vehicle (s)." Will a verbal statement from the employer suffice as evidence when requested by an authorized FMCSA, State or local official in the course of a compliance review?

Sincerely,

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