

Mark Benja
WernerScrews
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Werner Enterprises has enjoyed profitability since the introduction of the QualComm system, however the system has not benefited the safety of highway motorists or Werner's drivers. Having drove for Werner Enterprises and as a Webmaster for WernerScrews, I am in a position to offer an opinion of Werner Enterprises. During the past two years, I have collected the opinions of over forty Werner drivers. Some messages have expressed a negative opinion of Werner's QualComm system and the remainder are critical of Werner's employment practices. In the past six months, four people have posted positive comments. During Werner's next exemption, the need for further investigation is warranted. WernerScrews doesn't oppose exemption, however under no circumstances should Werner Enterprises be afforded permanent status.

In order for Werner to improve highway safety three guidelines need to be enacted:

1. Unadulterated information sent from the QualComm Corporation directly to the FMCSA or an independent agency created to review Werner's driving records
2. An outlet for drivers to grieve safety concerns?not affiliated with Werner Enterprises or its safety department
3. Rigorous external auditing of Werner's proprietary software

I. Unmodified QualComm Data

The following statements were taken from Docket No. FMCSA-2003-15818 under these sections:

System Operation and Quarterly Reports

[...correction by company management.]

[...internal auditing...]

Reporting of Corrections or Amendments to Records

[...agree to furnish...]

[...identifying who authorized each altered record.]

The above four statements assume that Werner Executive Management or Werner Management will act ethically concerning the data received from the QualComm Corporation. With no redundancy in raw data, Werner Enterprises has the ability to alter a driver's log to corporate/personal advantage; there is a strong possibility for chicanery. A scenario might develop where a manager acted without authorization from Werner Executive Management and changed a driver's log; if caught, this manager would be terminated. However, the original data was erased.

II. Third-party Intervention

The recent docket highlights Werner's responsibility to be in compliance with the MOU, but ignores the key issue of a driver's responsibility for his safety and the safety of highway motorists. Werner's reliance on QualComm system has had a profound impact on the ability of a driver to make decisions. Werner drivers are told to take any safety related issue(s) to the Safety Department. My correspondence with Werner drivers has revealed Werner's Safety Department is aligned with logistics; safety is ignored. If a driver is unwilling to deliver a load because of a safety issue, Werner Management may terminate him because he refused a load. A driver needs to be able to state his limitations without fear of reprisal. As Werner is the only carrier to use paperless logs, a separate agency?not affiliated with Werner?is needed to address safety issues. A driver should be able to call a FMCSA hotline that will resolve a safety situation without a driver losing his job or receiving a negative DAC's report. Currently, a driver will ignore safety issues to keep their position; when a driver acts on his own accord, the incident's root cause becomes obfuscated.

III. External Software Auditing

The safety of highway motorists has been placed on the QualComm hardware and Werner's software. Werner's software, during my brief employment with Werner, was considered infallible, however the proprietary technology was not without defects or glitches. Some Werner drivers quit or were terminated because of erroneous information; some dispatchers trusted false information over a driver's word. Information is power?albeit, misleading or false information. One situation arose when a dispatcher used intimidation and coercion on a driver to accept a load after it was ?discovered? he had more on-duty driving hours.

Docket No. FMCSA-2003-15818:

[FMCSA would continue its policy of not divulging to any third party proprietary information related to Werner's GPS technology or related safety management computer systems.]

If Werner's 2002 safety improved?compared to 1998, this would not be an issue, however Werner's safety management system has degraded since the introduction of the QualComm system and Werner's software.

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Technology is not infallible and Werner's proprietary software needs independent examination and rigorous auditing. Without outside testing, the software continues to perpetuate errors and cause unneeded risks. Given Werner's unique position, their software should be disclosed and tested by an independent agency; independent recommendations would be used to improve Werner's software.

Final issues:

On Feb. 2, 1999, Jeffrey Shober and Louis Ottaviano were burned to death while westbound on the Schuylkill Expressway. Just before the accident, it was determined that the Werner driver was sending a message over the QualComm system.

What action(s) has Werner Enterprises taken to prevent further distractions while driving? Specifically, has the QualComm system been deactivated while the truck is in motion?

Werner Enterprises has discouraged the use of "double logs" in order to eliminate discrepancies. If a driver chooses to keep a separate log book, as detailed in 49 CFR 395.8, and a discrepancy arises whose log is valid?

The FMCSA has given absolute trust to Werner Enterprises. During the past five-years, safety at Werner Enterprises has been decreasing. Rigorous, unbiased third-party intervention is needed to help Werner Enterprises improve highway safety.