



Inspection Bulletin

North American Standard Inspection Program

2026-04 – The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s Hours-of-Service Pilot Programs

Created: April 23, 2026

Summary

Eighteen drivers are participating in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s (FMCSA) three-month pretesting phase ahead of the launch of two new hours-of-service (HOS) pilot programs. This pretest is designed to fine-tune study plans, training materials and data collection tools, ensuring they are clear and practical for the official rollout.

This inspection bulletin provides program details and highlights enhancements to Query Central, which will allow roadside enforcement personnel to verify a motor carrier’s and driver’s participation in the pretest.

Background

Split Duty Period Pilot Program

In September 2025, FMCSA published a [Federal Register Notice](#) (FRN) titled, “Hours of Service of Drivers; Pilot Program to Allow Commercial Drivers to Pause Their 14-Hour Driving Window.” The FRN proposed a split duty period (SDP) pilot program to allow temporary regulatory relief from FMCSA’s HOS requirement that all drivers of property-carrying commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) complete their driving within 14 hours after coming on duty.

This pilot program gives participating CMV drivers the option to extend their 14-hour “driving window” by taking **one break period, ranging from 30 minutes up to three hours**, which can be classified as **on-duty/not driving** (if taken at a pick-up or delivery location), **off-duty** or **sleeper berth**. The goal is to collect data and assess whether added flexibility can maintain or improve safety outcomes.

Flexible Sleeper Berth Pilot Program

In September 2025, FMCSA also published an [FRN](#) titled, “Hours of Service of Drivers; Pilot Program to Allow Commercial Drivers to Split Sleeper Berth Time.” During this flexible sleeper berth (FSB) pilot, FMCSA will test the safety implications of allowing drivers to split their mandatory 10-hour off-duty requirement into 6/4 and 5/5 periods. This pilot program will study how these alternatives affect driver fatigue and overall safety performance to determine if a wider range of rest options could benefit drivers and the motoring public.

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General Terms of the HOS Pilot Programs (see waiver letters for detailed terms)

Terms of the Split Duty Period Pilot Program

- (a) A participating driver may extend the 14-hour period prescribed by § 395.3(a)(2) by taking a “qualifying split duty period break,” subject to the following provisions:
 - (1) The driver is eligible for a single extension following 10 consecutive hours off duty or in the sleeper berth.
 - (2) A “qualifying split duty period break” is a period with a duration of at least 30 consecutive minutes and up to three consecutive hours of:
 - i. Time off duty, time in the sleeper berth or any consecutive combination of these duty statuses, in any location.
 - ii. Time spent on duty/not driving while the driver is at the location where they last or will next deliver or pick up property for transport in interstate commerce.
 - iii. Any consecutive combination of (i) and (ii) above.
 - (3) The duration of the extension resulting from the qualifying split duty period break is the lesser of the duration of the “qualifying split duty period break” or three hours.
 - (4) A driver may use the terms of only one of either (a) above or § 395.1(g)(1)(ii) after each 10 consecutive hours off duty or in the sleeper berth, or the equivalent.

Terms of the Flexible Sleeper Berth Pilot Program

- (a) A participating driver is eligible for additional options for splitting sleeper berth time (e.g., “5/5” and “6/4” splits) according to the modified version of § 395.1(g)(1)(ii) provided below. **NOTE:** Only subparagraph (B) of paragraph § 395.1(g)(1)(ii) is affected by the pilot program waiver, but the entire paragraph has been provided for context.
 - (ii) **Sleeper berth.** A driver may accumulate the equivalent of at least 10 consecutive hours off duty by taking not more than two periods of either sleeper berth time or a combination of off-duty time and sleeper berth time if:
 - (A) Neither rest period is shorter than two consecutive hours;
 - (B) One rest period is at least five consecutive hours in the sleeper berth;**
 - (C) The total of the two periods is at least 10 hours; and
 - (D) Driving time in the period immediately before and after each rest period, when added together:
 - (1) Does not exceed 11 hours under § 395.3(a)(3); and
 - (2) Does not violate the 14-hour duty-period limit under § 395.3(a)(2).

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Enforcement Personnel

Enforcement personnel may begin encountering pretest HOS pilot program participants in spring/summer of 2026. Each participating driver has been issued an electronic and/or physical copy of a waiver letter that lists their name and commercial driver’s license (CDL) number on the “To” line of the letter. Section 1 of the letter lists all motor carriers that have been approved for the pilot program pretest in which the driver is participating. Participating drivers are required to carry a copy of their waiver letter (electronic or hard copy, original or otherwise). During this pretesting phase, inspecting officials are instructed to follow these steps if they encounter a driver who indicates they are a participant in either pilot program:

1. Perform initial verification by requesting, obtaining and reviewing the driver’s waiver letter and CDL.
2. If available, access the FSB/SDP Lists PDF file on FMCSA’s Query Central website and confirm the validity dates and current status of the driver and employing motor carrier. This information may vary from what is shown on the driver’s copy of the waiver letter, as the PDF on Query Central will be updated when driver or motor carrier participation statuses change.
3. Manually review the driver’s record of duty status (RODS) to check for potential violations.

How do I obtain and review the driver’s waiver letter?

Each participating driver for an approved motor carrier will be provided a waiver letter from FMCSA. Drivers are required to carry an electronic or physical copy of the waiver letter while participating. The waiver letter will indicate the pilot program in which the driver is enrolled and the date range during which the driver is eligible to participate. Each driver may participate in only one of the two pilot programs. If a driver indicates they are participating in one of FMCSA’s HOS pilot programs, request their CDL and a copy of their waiver letter.

Review and check the following:

1. Compare the information on the driver’s CDL (name and CDL state/number) to the information on the “To” line of the waiver letter and confirm that they match.
2. Verify that the driver is operating for a motor carrier (“grantee”) listed in Section 1 of the waiver letter, utilizing additional information/documentation, if necessary.
3. Compare the current date to the valid from/thru dates shown on the letter and note whether the current date is outside that range.

If a driver is unable to produce a copy of the waiver letter, but you are able to verify their participation is currently valid by checking the FSB/SDP Lists on Query Central as described in the next section, do not cite a violation. The information in the FSB/SDP Lists PDF file is sufficient verification.

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Query Central

Border Viewer Driver
Vehicle Carrier SDA
List FSB/SDP Lists

Help Home

Navigation **QC**

User
[Preferences](#)
[Feedback](#)

Reference
[About QC](#)
[Help](#)

Links
[Intermodal Equipment Inquiry](#)

QUICK SEARCH

Carrier Search: _____

USDOT#:

Vehicle Search (VIN -or- Plate/State): _____

VIN#:

Plate: State: << Select >>

Driver Search (Status): _____

How do I confirm the validity and current status of the motor carrier and driver's waiver?

Roadside personnel can verify a motor carrier's or driver's participation in one of the HOS pilot program pretests by visiting Query Central and clicking the link for the FSB/SDP pilot program waiver lists as shown in the following graphic (red arrow/outline).

Note that the "SDAP List" link is for an unrelated pilot program. In addition, Query Central's appearance and links may vary slightly from that shown in the graphic.

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The FSB/SDP Lists link points to a PDF file of current motor carriers and drivers granted waivers for each pilot program pretest. The PDF will be updated as drivers and motor carriers complete their participation in the pretest. Ensure you access the current list at the time of the inspection, not a previously saved file on your device.

Drivers and motor carriers on the list are active and valid, unless otherwise noted. Drivers participating in the program are required to provide four weeks of data during their participation; after which time their eligibility for the waiver will end, even if the date is prior to the valid thru date shown on the first page of the blanket waiver letter. The PDF will be updated to clearly identify a driver’s or motor carrier’s change in eligibility status.

Drivers or motor carriers whose names do not appear on the list for a pilot program have not been granted a waiver by FMCSA and are not eligible to utilize it. A driver’s eligibility dates will be noted in association with their name and CDL number in the list. They may not utilize the waiver outside of the date range shown.

Participating drivers’ identities are not being made public by FMCSA. **The lists available at the link contain personally identifiable information and should only be accessed by or made available to enforcement personnel for the purposes of completing an inspection.** For privacy compliance reasons, do not provide drivers, carriers or non-enforcement parties with the lists of participating drivers. If it is necessary to show the driver their or their employing motor carrier’s status on the list to proceed with a particular inspection, ensure information for other participating drivers is not visible.

The information in Query Central is generally real time; however, delays are possible, such as when FMCSA adds motor carriers or drivers to the list. If you are unable to verify a driver’s participation in a pretest, contact one of the following individuals to confirm the motor carrier and/or driver’s participation and waiver status. Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) is FMCSA’s research services contractor for the HOS pilot programs.

Samuel White (Samuel.White@dot.gov)
Engineering Psychologist, Applied Research Division
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
202-875-1029

Rebecca Hammond, M.S. (rhammond@vtti.vt.edu)
Group Leader, Heavy Vehicle Programs and Initiatives,
Division of Freight, Transit and Heavy Vehicle Research
Virginia Tech Transportation Institute
540-231-1584

Are any drivers participating in both pilot programs at the same time?

No. No driver will be issued simultaneous waivers for both pilot programs. Each driver will hold eligibility for no more than one of the pilot programs at the same time. A motor carrier, however, may be approved for both pilot programs, as they may have drivers participating in either or both pilot programs.

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How long will each driver participate?

Each participating driver will participate in a pretest for approximately six weeks. However, their eligibility for using the waiver is restricted to the dates shown for the driver in the PDF on Query Central; this eligibility period will usually be less than six weeks.

Why are the valid from/thru dates on the first page of the waiver letter longer than six weeks?

The dates on the main waiver letter are intended to reflect the timeline over which all drivers in the pretest will participate. While most drivers will participate for approximately six weeks, not all drivers will begin participating at the same time. Some drivers’ participation may end early. Please refer to the driver list on Query Central to verify an individual driver’s eligibility and validity. These will be updated in case of any changes.

Are drivers able to combine the waiver with other provisions in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations that also affect hours-of-service requirements and limits?

It depends. Please refer to the waiver letter for the program in which the driver is participating for details on restrictions on combining the specific program’s waiver with other hours-of-service provisions, such as adverse driving conditions. If no restrictions are listed for the combination, the combination is allowed. Each pilot program has different restrictions on combining the waiver with other provisions. So ensure you review the letter for the program in which the driver is participating.

Is the driver required to annotate the entries in their record of duty status to show waiver usage?

Participating drivers have received training on using the waiver and have been instructed to annotate the entries in their electronic logging device (ELD) RODS to show use of the waiver – such as breaks for a 5/5 or 6/4 split for drivers in the FSB pilot program pretest, or breaks used to extend their 14-hour driving window for drivers in the SDP pilot program pretest. However, the driver is not in violation if they fail to do so, if the driver is eligible for the terms of the waiver of the program in which they are enrolled.

What if a driver is listed in the PDF on Query Central but the motor carrier is not?

We recommend that you interview the driver to determine the reason for the discrepancy. The driver is eligible while working for the approved motor carrier shown in the PDF. If the driver recently stopped working for the motor carrier listed in the PDF, the driver would no longer be eligible unless their new employing motor carrier obtained approval and was issued a waiver (in this case, FMCSA would update the PDF to reflect the changes). If the driver’s documents show the wrong carrier and the driver is operating for the carrier shown in the PDF, treat the driver as eligible, absent other information to the contrary. You may also reach out to the FMCSA/VTI points of contact listed in this bulletin if you need assistance verifying a driver or carrier’s status. If you cannot verify the driver’s eligibility and status after reasonable due diligence, proceed with the inspection as though the driver is not eligible for the waiver.

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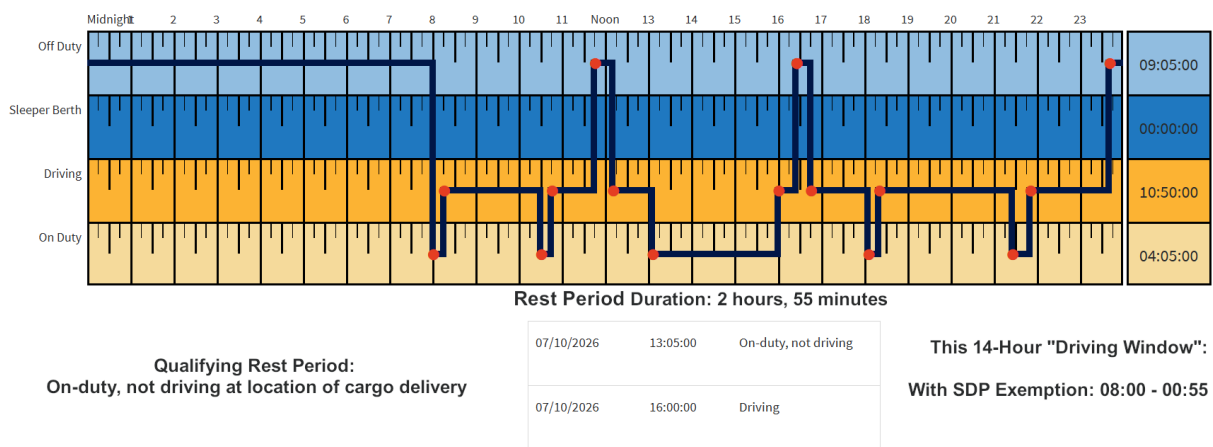
How do I review the driver’s record of duty status to check for potential violations?

All participating drivers should be utilizing electronic logging devices. However, the devices have not been modified to display usage of the waivers for either pilot program. They have also not been modified to correctly identify potential violations given the drivers’ participation in one of the pilot programs. Drivers who correctly and compliantly utilize the terms of either waiver will likely have ELD RODS that show potential violations in their eRODS, on their ELD or both. For example, a driver in the SDP pilot program who utilizes a three-hour pause of the 14-hour driving window will have an ELD RODS that shows a potential violation of the 14-hour limit if they drive after the 14th hour since coming on duty, even though the waiver they have been issued allows them to do so. Similarly, drivers in the FSB pilot program may show potential violations of either or both of the 11-hour and 14-hour limit.

Therefore, whether you use the driver’s ELD, eRODS or another tool to review the driver’s RODS, you must review compliance manually and not rely on automatically flagged potential violations reported by the ELD, eRODS or another tool.

Not including automatically flagged violations that might appear, the following graphic shows an example of a record of duty status for a driver in the SDP pilot program for a driver in compliance with the terms of the waiver in one scenario, with additional information added for context.

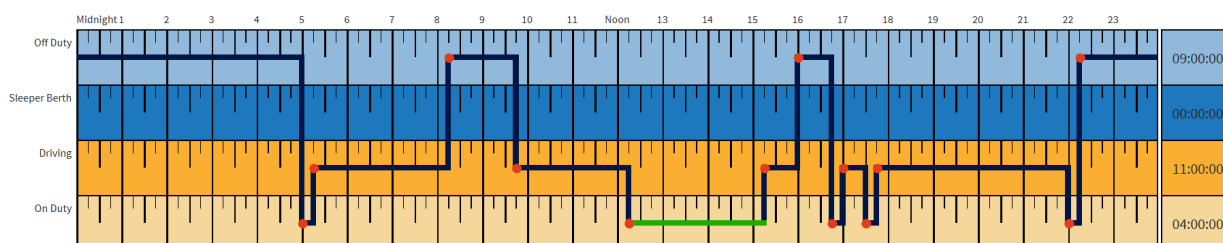
Record of Duty Status



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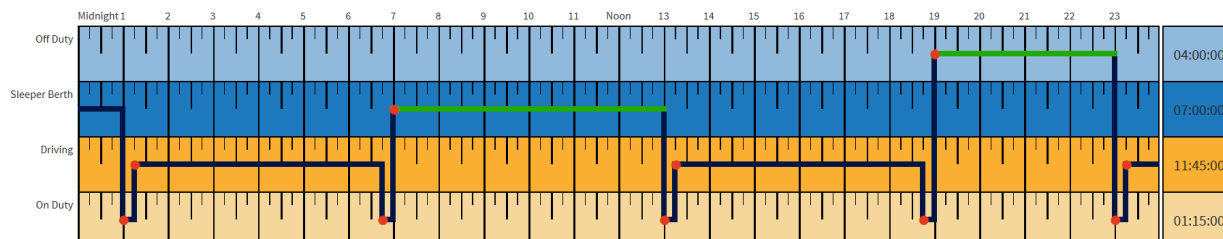
The following graphic shows another compliant example for a driver in the SDP pilot program utilizing an on-duty/not driving status break, with the qualifying rest break highlighted in green for the purposes of illustration.

Record of Duty Status



The following graphic shows a compliant example for a driver in the FSB pilot program utilizing a 6/4 split. The breaks are highlighted in green for illustration purposes only.

Record of Duty Status



For drivers in the SDP pilot program, how does pausing the 14-hour limit affect the requirement to take a 30-minute interruption of driving time, the 60-hour/seven-day limit or the 70-hour/eight-day limit?

A driver who takes a qualifying split duty period rest break may use that same period as their 30-minute interruption of driving time if it qualifies under the requirements of that regulation and the terms in the waiver. The 60-hour/seven-day limit and the 70-hour/eight-day limit are unaffected by the waiver. If the driver utilizes on-duty/not driving time for a qualifying split duty period rest break, that time continues to count against the 60- or 70-hour on-duty time limit, as applicable.

For drivers in the SDP pilot program who use on-duty/not driving time as their qualifying split duty period rest break, how do I verify whether the driver spent that time at the location of their last or next delivery or pickup of cargo?

Depending on the availability of information and documents, you may not be able to verify this during an inspection. If information about the location can be verified – such as through information showing the pickup or delivery location on a bill of lading, dispatch report or trip sheet provided by the driver – you may compare this information to the driver’s ELD vehicle location data for the entry in their RODS corresponding to the rest break in question.

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Using an available tool, compare the location in the RODS to the verified location of the pickup or delivery of cargo. If the locations are different, you will need to verify the distance between the two locations in air miles. If the discrepancy between the locations is greater than seven air miles, the driver’s break did not meet the requirements of the waiver; therefore, it was not valid for the purpose of pausing the 14-hour driving window. The reason for this threshold is to provide an allowance for variance in the reported location in the ELD data based upon the minimum accuracy of GPS coordinates for ELD RODS prescribed by Appendix A to Part 395.

Note: The location-based requirement for qualifying breaks only applies for breaks taken in an on-duty/not driving status. There is no location requirement for breaks in an off-duty or sleeper berth status.

How should I handle a situation in which a driver has taken multiple breaks that would qualify as a qualifying split duty period rest break under the SDP pilot program?

Because a driver may only utilize a single break to obtain a single extension of up to three hours, you will need to determine which of the breaks, when treated as the single break extending the 14-hour driving window, provides the driver with the most beneficial outcome in terms of a review of their RODS. For instance, if treating one of the breaks as the extending break would result in a violation but treating another break as the extending break would not, review the RODS treating the non-violation-outcome break as the extending break. If you need assistance reviewing a complex case, call the FMCSA point of contact listed in this bulletin.

What if I need additional information about the HOS pilot programs?

Basic information is available at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/hours-of-service.

Details about the waivers’ terms are available in the waiver letters in the FSB/SDP Lists file on Query Central.

If you have further questions, you may contact the individuals listed in this inspection bulletin.