

TAKING STEPS TO HIRE & TRAIN SAFE DRIVERS

By Nathan R. Skeen, Lawyer

*“ Trucking Companies Should Take Reasonable Steps to
Ensure that They Hire and Train Safe Drivers. ”*

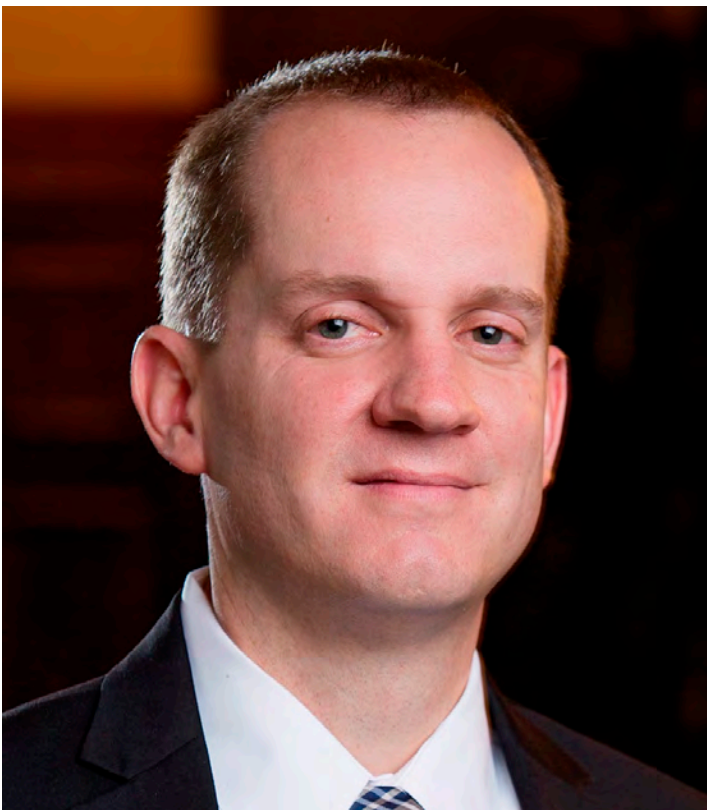
The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recently proposed a new set of mandatory training standards for entry-level commercial truck and bus operators seeking to obtain a CDL license in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. territories. Under the proposal, applicants seeking a Class A CDL would be required to obtain a minimum of 30 hours of behind-the-wheel training from an instructional program that meets FMCSA standards, including a minimum of 10 hours of operating the vehicle on a practice driving range. Class B CDL applicants would need 15 hours of behind-the-wheel training, including at

least seven hours of practice range driving. The proposal does not include a minimum number of classroom study hours.

The purpose of these proposed training standards is obviously to promote greater safety for anyone traveling on highways and roads. While the American Trucking Association approves of entry-level training requirements, it also expressed concern that an arbitrary behind-the-wheel training hours requirement could distract from a more important focus on performance and safety outcomes. In other words, the ATA believes that a driver's ability to safely operate a commercial vehicle is far more important than the number of training or study hours a new driver receives.

Regardless of whether the proposed training requirements become effective, trucking companies should adopt hiring practices and provide training to that ensure their new drivers are well-trained, competent, and safe. Of course, trucking companies must also ensure that they satisfy any applicable requirements imposed by the FMCSA. Failing to do so could expose a trucking company to liability for damage to property, cargo, and people. If you need help navigating any stage of this process, be sure to ask your lawyer for help. Making sure that safety is your company's priority, and that it starts from the ground up, will likely save your company in the long run.

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