

October 05, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Over the course of 2013, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has made important strides in implementing regulations designed not only to prevent the occurrence of [truck accidents](#), but also to improve overall highway safety. Although many safety experts have applauded the FMCSA's efforts, some Congressional leaders are criticizing the agency, saying that it is not acting as quickly as it should be.

One of the most notable changes to federal safety regulations came on July 1 of this year, when new federal hours of service regulations went into effect. Under these new rules, truck drivers are required to take 30 minute breaks and may only work 72 hours in a given week. These may seem like small changes, but the final publication and implementation of these rules ended a battle with the trucking industry that lasted for many years. As far as some industry insiders were concerned, requiring breaks and limiting the number of hours drivers could work was unnecessary and bound to cost trucking companies millions of dollars in lost productivity each year.

In addition to changes to the hours of service requirements, this year has seen the FMCSA, along with the U.S. Department of Transportation and other federal agencies, taking action. In January of 2012, President Obama signed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act. The MAP-21 Act provides funding not only for infrastructure improvements, but also some safety initiatives.

Among the programs funded by MAP-21 is a study of hours of service requirements by the FMCSA. Under the terms of the law, the FMCSA is required to issue a report of its findings by September 30, 2013. According to Representative Richard Hanna of New York, however, the FMCSA will not meet this deadline. Hanna, along with others in Congress, has requested that the FMCSA provide them with a date when its study of the efficacy of the new hours of service rules will become available.

It is currently difficult to determine what will come of Congressional leaders' efforts to put pressure on the FMCSA to release its data. Some have said that they will move to defund the FMCSA's enforcement of the new hours of service requirements unless the agency moves soon. This move not only seems unlikely to gain traction, it also appears to be a bad idea: truck driver fatigue is a contributing factor in many truck accidents and the FMCSA is taking steps to stop it.

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