



Youth Movement: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Seeks Younger Drivers

Insights

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Recently, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (“FMCSA”) unveiled plans to lower the minimum legal age required to operate commercial motor vehicles in interstate commerce. The FMCSA began the Under-21 Military Pilot Program and has requested public comment on another proposal to allow drivers ages 18-20 to operate commercial motor vehicles. Both these initiatives will address a dearth of drivers in today’s economy and comply with Section 5404 of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Under-21 Military Pilot Program

In June, the FMCSA began its Under-21 Military Pilot Program as a three-year study on the feasibility, benefits, and safety impacts of allowing 18-to-20-year-olds to operate CMVs in interstate commerce. Under this program, the FMCSA will allow 18-to-20-year-olds to operate CMVs if they:

- Have received heavy-vehicle driver training and experience while in military service;
- Carry a designated MOS or job rating approved for this Pilot; and
- Are sponsored (hired) by a participating motor carrier.

Comparing these drivers’ results to drivers aged 21 to 24 with similar experience, the FMCSA hopes to determine the effect of driver age on safety.

Pilot Program to Allow Drivers Ages 18-20 to Operate Commercial Motor Vehicles in Interstate Commerce

The next step to bring younger drivers into CMVs started with a request for comments on May 15, 2019, seeking public opinion on a program mirroring the military program but for those drivers without military service or training. The comment period ended on July 15, 2019. As always, this request for comment prompted supporters and detractors, but most industry associations supported it. Expect the FMCSA to soon create a pilot program that will allow younger drivers with no military experience to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

Although the hottest mainstream topic concerning transportation and logistics is driverless vehicles, there remains a pressing need for drivers that technology has not yet satisfied. Younger drivers may soon help meet that demand.

Contact your Workplace and Transportation Safety Attorney, any Fisher Phillips Attorney, or Ben Ross (bross@fisherphillips.com) with questions about these FMCSA programs or other workplace safety matters.

Service Focus

Workplace Safety and Catastrophe Management