



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2025-0093]

Hours of Service of Drivers; Northern Clearing, Inc.'s Application for Exemption

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of application for exemption; request for comments.

SUMMARY: FMCSA requests public comment on Northern Clearing Inc.'s (Northern Clearing) application for an exemption from the hours-of-service (HOS) maximum driving time limits for drivers of property-carrying commercial motor vehicles (CMV). The requested exemption would allow Northern Clearing to provide continued restoration, clean up, and re-construction services in North Carolina, under the same conditions set out in the FMCSA Regional Emergency Declaration and Extension of Emergency Declarations Number 2024-008, which was in effect from October 4 through December 26, 2024.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by Docket Number FMCSA-2025-0093 by any of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** www.regulations.gov. See the Public Participation and Request for Comments section below for further information.
- **Mail:** Dockets Operations, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Ground Floor, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- **Hand Delivery or Courier:** 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Ground Floor, Washington, DC 20590-0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.
- **Fax:** (202) 493-2251.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. Each submission must include the Agency name and the docket number (FMCSA-2025-0093) for this notice. Note that DOT posts all comments received without change to www.regulations.gov, including any personal information included in a comment. Please see the Privacy Act heading below.

Docket: To view any documents mentioned as being available in the docket, go to <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FMCSA-2025-0093/document> and choose the document to review. To view comments, click this notice, then click “Browse Comments.” If you do not have access to the internet, you may view the docket online by visiting Dockets Operations on the ground floor of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 366-9317 or (202) 366-9826 before visiting Dockets Operations.

Privacy Act: In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315(b), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its exemption process. DOT posts these comments, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice DOT/ALL-14 FDMS, which can be reviewed under the “Department Wide System of Records Notices” link at <https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/privacy/privacy-act-system-records-notice>. The comments are posted without edit and are searchable by the name of the submitter.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pearlie Robinson, Driver and Carrier Operations Division; Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety Standards, FMCSA;

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001; (202) 366-4225;
pearlie.robinson@dot.gov. If you have questions on viewing or submitting material to
the docket, contact Dockets Operations at (202) 366-9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Participation and Request for Comments

FMCSA encourages you to participate by submitting comments and related materials.

A. Submitting Comments

If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this notice (FMCSA-2025-0093), indicate the specific section of this document to which the comment applies, and provide a reason for your suggestions or recommendations. You may submit your comments and material online or by fax, mail, or hand delivery, but please use only one of these means. FMCSA recommends that you include your name and a mailing address, an e-mail address, or a phone number in the body of your document so the Agency can contact you if it has questions regarding your submission.

To submit your comment online, go to <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FMCSA-2025-0093/document>, click on this notice, click “Comment,” and type your comment into the text box on the following screen.

If you submit your comments by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing.

FMCSA will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Comments received after the comment closing date will be filed in the public docket and will be considered to the extent practicable.

B. Confidential Business Information (CBI)

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to the notice contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to the notice, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission that constitutes CBI as “PROPIN” to indicate it contains proprietary information. FMCSA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the Freedom of Information Act, and they will not be placed in the public docket of the notice. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Brian Dahlin, Chief, Regulatory Evaluation Division, Office of Policy, FMCSA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001 or via email at brian.g.dahlin@dot.gov. At this time, you need not send a duplicate hardcopy of your electronic CBI submissions to FMCSA headquarters. Any comments FMCSA receives not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this notice.

II. Legal Basis

FMCSA has authority under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b) to grant exemptions from Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). FMCSA must publish a notice of each exemption request in the *Federal Register* (49 CFR 381.315(a)). The Agency must provide the public an opportunity to inspect the information relevant to the application, including any safety analyses that have been conducted. The Agency must provide an opportunity for public comment on the request.

The Agency reviews the application, safety analyses, and public comments submitted and determines whether granting the exemption would likely maintain a level of safety equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption pursuant to the standard in 49 U.S.C 31315(b)(1). The Agency must publish

its decision in the *Federal Register* (49 CFR 381.315(b)). If granted, the notice will identify the regulatory provision from which the applicant will be exempt, the effective period, and all terms and conditions of the exemption (49 CFR 381.315(c)(1)). If the exemption is denied, the notice will explain the reason for the denial (49 CFR 381.315(c)(2)). The exemption may be renewed (49 CFR 381.300(b)).

III. Applicant's Request

Northern Clearing is requesting an exemption from the HOS maximum driving time limits for property-carrying vehicles in 49 CFR 395.3 for its CMV drivers. The exemption would allow continued support for restoration, clean up, and re-construction efforts in North Carolina under the FMCSA Regional Emergency Declaration and Extension of Emergency Declarations Number 2024-008, which was in effect from October 4 through December 26, 2024. The original Declaration granted regulatory relief for CMV operations providing direct assistance in emergency response, regardless of trip origin. However, this relief does not cover long-term infrastructure rehabilitation once the immediate threat has passed.

Under the requested exemption, Northern Clearing would follow the conditions outlined in Emergency Declaration No. 2024-008 and align its HOS practices with the “utility service vehicle” exemption in 49 CFR 395.1(n). A copy of the application for exemption is available for review in the docket for this notice.

IV. Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315(b), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on Northern Clearing's application for exemption from 49 CFR part 395. All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated at the beginning of this notice will be considered and will be available for examination in the docket at the location listed under the Addresses section of this notice. Comments received after the comment closing date will be filed in the public docket and

will be considered to the extent practicable. In addition to late comments, FMCSA will also continue to file in the public docket relevant information that becomes available after the comment closing date. Interested persons should continue to examine the public docket for new material.

Larry W. Minor,
Associate Administrator for Policy.

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