



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2025-0524]

Commercial Driver's License; Electronic Logging Device Requirements: Diamond

Excursions Ladies Edition d/b/a Project GAP; Application for Exemptions

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

ACTION: Notice of final disposition; denial of application for exemptions.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to deny the application from Diamond Excursions Ladies Edition, doing business as Project GAP (Project GAP), for exemptions from the commercial driver's license (CDL) and electronic logging device (ELD) regulations. FMCSA analyzed the application and public comments and determined that the exemptions would not achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemptions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pearlie Robinson, Driver and Carrier Operations Division; Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety Standards, FMCSA; (202) 913-0704; or 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

Viewing Comments and Documents

To view any documents mentioned as being available in the docket, go to <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FMCSA-2025-0524/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 in room W58-213 of the DOT 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.

II. Legal Basis

FMCSA has authority under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b) to grant exemptions from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. 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 the applicant's safety analysis. 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 achieve a level of safety equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption, pursuant to the standard set forth 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. Background

Current Regulatory Requirements

Under 49 CFR 383.23(a)(1), no person shall operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) without having taken and passed both knowledge and driving skills tests for a commercial learner's permit or CDL that meet the Federal standards contained in subparts F, G, and H of Part 383 for the CMV that person operates or expects to operate.

Under 49 CFR 395.8(a)(1)(i), drivers required to prepare records of duty status must do so using ELDs. However, 49 CFR 395.8(a)(1)(ii)(A)(I) states a motor carrier may allow its drivers to record their duty status manually, rather than use an ELD, if the driver is operating a CMV “[i]n a manner requiring completion of a record of duty status on not more than 8 days within any 30-day period.”

Applicant’s Request

Project GAP’s application for exemption was described in detail in a Federal Register notice on November 24, 2025 (90 FR 53048) and will not be repeated, as the facts have not changed.

IV. Public Comments

The Agency received 81 comments to the docket. Two commenters supported granting both the CDL and ELD exemptions. Project GAP also filed a comment in support of its application. Seventy-five commenters opposed granting the CDL portion of the exemption. Twelve of the commenters who opposed granting the CDL portion of the exemption noted that they did not oppose granting an exemption from the ELD requirement only. Finally, there were three unrelated comments filed to the docket.

Commenters in favor of granting the exemptions believed the exemptions were necessary because the applicant’s operation supports communities effected by natural disasters and is a non-profit organization. Erice Burnett stated, “I think having drivers be exempt from elog and being non CDL will help out the community in a great way to bring us closer together in the time of crisis because not only will more people be able to help the community out but supplies would be provided quicker than ever for the people in need.” An anonymous individual wrote, “I think it’s good for non profits to be exempt. It’s not for money[,] it’s to help people.”

Commenters who opposed granting the CDL portion of the exemption cited safety concerns. For example, Tim Kyner said, “This is a safety issue, anyone driving a cmv

should be properly trained and licensed to operate the vehicle it doesn't matter how often or how far. In my opinion it's unsafe to allow anyone to drive a truck that doesn't hold a valid commercial driver's license regardless of reason or frequency. The paper logs should be allowed everyone knows the HOS regulations are bull anyway.”

Some of the commenters suggested alternatives that are available to the applicant. Lee Eastburn wrote, “First, the organization could operate several smaller, non CDL trucks, to move goods. Second, local LTL freight companies can be hired to move the goods for them safely. Third, sponsors could donate driver[s] and equipment to move the goods for this organization and take a tax credit for the lost time and associated costs on a per trip basis.” An anonymous commenter said, “If they want to skirt around the law then get a box truck small enough to accommodate the request.” Jefferson Murray wrote, “A valid CDL ensures a measure of safety, find volunteers that have a CDL or sell the semi and get something smaller. How far could you be going to pickup donations that you need an ELD and not the qualify for short haul?”

Some commenters who opposed the CDL exemption did not oppose the ELD exemption but did not provide specific reasoning. Dave Nelson said, “Please DO NOT give an exemption from requiring a CDL, and I have no problem with those drivers running on paper logs.” Mark Hulsart said, “I can understand no eld but if you’re driving a tractor trailer you MUST have CDL[,] if not[,] why does anyone need a CDL. They are driving a truck[,] not a car!”

V. FMCSA Decision

FMCSA evaluated Project GAP’s application and the public comments submitted in response to the November 24, 2025 notice and denies the requested exemptions. Project GAP failed to establish that the exemptions would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved without the exemptions. While Project GAP states that “All drivers are trained, insured,

and comply with medical and safety screenings,” and indicated that they maintain “detailed records of vehicle use, routes, and trip purposes,” it did not provide information on what training the drivers receive and how that training compares to the training required for a driver to receive a CDL. In addition, Project GAP did not provide any information on the safety management controls it has in place to ensure its drivers would comply with the hours-of-service regulations in 49 CFR part 395 in the absence of an ELD.

In addition, Project GAP states that it provides support during emergencies and natural disasters. On October 13, 2023, FMCSA revised its regulations covering automatic emergency relief from Federal regulations that is triggered by an emergency declaration (88 FR 70897). In that final rule, the Agency acknowledged that although responding to emergency situations is a compelling reason to issue relief from some safety regulations, there was not a sufficient basis to include relief from ELD and CDL requirements in response to emergencies and natural disasters.

Finally, under 49 CFR 381.305, applicants are encouraged to carefully review the regulations to determine whether there are any practical alternatives already available that would allow the applicant to conduct its motor carrier operations. Project GAP did not address the alternatives that are available, including the option to use smaller CMVs that do not require a CDL and the option to use existing exceptions to the ELD requirement.

For the above reasons, Project GAP’s application for exemptions is denied.

Derek D. Barrs,
Administrator.

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