Title 11
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Subtitle 16 MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION—VEHICLE OPERATIONS
11.16.05 Unified Truck Travel

Authority: Transportation Article, §§12-104(b) and 21-310(f), Annotated Code of Maryland

Notice of Proposed Action

[21-095-P]

The Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Administration proposes to adopt new Regulations **.01—.04** under a new chapter, **COMAR 11.16.05 Unified Truck Travel.**

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action is to adopt new regulations to set procedures for the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration to govern truck travel in a unified manner in order to conform to Chapter 118, Senate Bill 291, Acts of 2021.

Comparison to Federal Standards

There is no corresponding federal standard to this proposed action.

Estimate of Economic Impact

The proposed action has no economic impact.

Economic Impact on Small Businesses

The proposed action has a meaningful economic impact on small business. An analysis of this economic impact follows.

Truck platooning has the potential to reduce operational costs for motor carriers, shippers, and logistics firms by reducing fuel consumption. Typical studies have shown a fuel reduction of between 5 percent and 10 percent for the following vehicles in a platoon, which in turn creates route efficiencies that permit industry to do more with existing resources. This is especially critical in the trucking industry which reported a driver shortage of over 60,000 drivers in July of 2019.

This deployment of truck platooning systems would benefit Maryland small businesses that either: (1) provide commercial driving services; or (2) ship goods to/from the state by commercial trucks.

Commercial driving companies in Maryland will benefit from increased safety and reduced fuel costs associated with truck platooning.

Maryland companies will benefit from safer truck operations, more predictable truck operations, and lower shipping rates due to fuel reductions.

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Comments may be sent to Tracey Sheffield, Regulations Coordinator, MDOT MVA, 6601 Ritchie Highway N.E., Room 200, Glen Burnie, MD 21062, or call 410-768-7545, or email to tsheffield@mdot.maryland.gov, or fax to 410-768-7506. Comments will be accepted through August 16, 2021. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

.01 Approval for Operation.

A. Except as provided in §B of this regulation, a person may not operate a motor vehicle without leaving enough space so that an overtaking vehicle may enter and occupy the space between the trucks unless the driver is in receipt of written approval from the Administration.

B. A person may apply to the Administration for written approval for the operation of trucks in an electronically unified manner in conformity with Transportation Article, §21-310(f), Annotated Code of Maryland and with this chapter.

C. The applicant shall certify to the Administration that the trucks will be operated in conformity with this chapter and related policies or procedures established by the Administration.

D. The driver shall carry copies of the written approval while operating the truck in a unified manner in accordance with this chapter.

.02 Operational Requirements.

A. The applicant shall submit an Operational Plan to the Administration. The Operational Plan shall include:

(1) A description of the type of technology that is being utilized in the participating truck, including detailed descriptions of the vehicle safety features;

(2) The route information, including the locations, dates, and times of planned travel;

(3) The types of traffic and roadway conditions expected to be encountered;

(4) Any environmental condition limitations;

(5) A description of the driver training plan for drivers of the participating truck; and

(6) A company contact for the purpose of communication with the Administration.

B. The Administration shall conduct a safety evaluation of the Operational Plan in consultation with appropriate agencies, including but not limited to the Maryland State Police, the Maryland Transportation Authority, and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration. The Administration may:

(1) Approve the plan without changes;

(2) Request modifications to the Operational Plan; or

(3) Deny the Operational Plan.

C. The Administration, the Maryland State Police, the Maryland Transportation Authority, or the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration may request an inspection of all technology and safety equipment prior to or any time after approval.

D. The Administration reserves the right to withdraw written approval for any lawful reason, including but not limited to failure to comply with this regulation or any related policies or procedures established by the Administration.

.03 Prohibitions.

A. A driver may not operate a truck as permitted by Transportation Article, §21-310(f), Annotated Code of Maryland:

(1) In a highway work zone as defined in COMAR 11.04.15.01B(5);

(2) While transporting hazardous materials as defined by the Hazardous Material Regulation of the U.S. Department of Transportation;

(3) While transporting loose materials as defined in Transportation Article, §24-106.1(d), Annotated Code of Maryland;

(4) On any road except a controlled access highway as defined in Transportation Article, §21-101(g), Annotated Code of Maryland; and

(5) While carrying an overweight or oversize load as defined in Transportation Article, §24-112, Annotated Code of Maryland.

B. No more than two trucks may operate as permitted by Transportation Article, §21-310(f), Annotated Code of Maryland.

.04 Safety.

A. While traveling under the authority of an approval of this chapter, the driver shall comply with:

(1) The vehicle laws of Maryland;

(2) The regulations of this chapter; and

(3) Any other conditions, both general and specific, attached to the approval.

B. When operating a truck under the approval of this chapter, the driver shall ensure the safety of the public.

CHRISTINE NIZER
Administrator
Motor Vehicle Administration