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## Driving Under the Influence - of Allergy Medicine



March 6, 2020



### Daylight Savings Time Begins This Sunday March 8 (Except for AZ and HI)

Spring will arrive on Thursday March 19th in the U.S., bringing along a slew of seasonal allergies. Experts suggest that the 2020 allergy season could be more severe in comparison to previous years.

With allergy season officially starting, you should be aware that some over-the-counter allergy drugs can seriously impair your ability to drive a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV).

University of Iowa researchers who tested allergy sufferers in a driving stimulator found that the antihistamine diphenhydramine (found in many allergy and cold medications) significantly impaired a driver's ability to follow, steer, and maintain the correct lane. The study showed that diphenhydramine has more significant impact on driving performance than alcohol does.

Researchers said that of the 39 million Americans who suffer from hay fever and allergies only 4.8 million take prescription medications. The remainders of these folks go without treatment or take over-the-counter medications. These medications may be effective, but they often come with warnings stating drowsiness may occur and to use caution when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery.

Make sure that all your drivers are aware of the change to daylight savings time this Sunday. Caution route drivers especially that the amount of daylight will change according to their stops with the change.

Remember to change the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors as well.

Most sleep experts recommend a minimum of 7 hours of sleep a night. Many people sleep an average of 40 minutes less Sunday night, March 9 after Daylight Saving Time returns. Plan to avoid being sleepy. Sleep in Sunday morning and nap Sunday afternoon.

Researchers say even if you don't feel drowsy on allergy medications, you can still be impaired. When drivers take over the counter medications, they often forget that the medication has effects on their cognitive and motor abilities. It doesn't usually cross their minds that they are taking a drug and will be impaired. Even if they read the warning, it's common to assume that it only applies a few certain people and that "do not operate heavy machinery" means farm equipment or tractors, forgetting that CMV's should be included as well. Also, many drugs carry warnings about drowsiness or dizziness that people ignore. However, this is a serious problem that leads to thousands of vehicle crashes each year.

The danger of getting behind the wheel of a CMV when a driver is too tired to drive can be fatal.

Drugs impair our bodies in a variety of ways. They may blur our vision; make us tired or too excited; alter depth perception; make us see or hear things that may not be there; raise or lower blood pressure; react too quickly, too slowly, or not at all. They cause problems with concentrating on the task at hand. These problems can result from taking any type of drug: illegal, prescription or over-the-counter. When our brain function is altered, our muscle and nerve function changes.

Antihistamines - which block allergic reactions - slow down reaction time and impair coordination.

Over-the-counter decongestants can cause drowsiness, anxiety, and dizziness. Drowsy driving is responsible for an estimated 100,000 traffic crashes and about 1,500 deaths every year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Common prescription drugs (including medications to treat allergies, pain, diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, ulcers, depression, anxiety disorders, and insomnia) can cause drowsiness, affect vision and other skills that can be serious hazards on the road.

Tranquilizers, sedatives, and sleeping pills slow down the central nervous system causing drowsiness and diminished reaction time and impairing the ability to concentrate.

Over-the-counter drugs such as cold and cough medicines, antihistamines, drugs to prevent nausea or motion sickness, pain relievers, decongestants, and diuretics can cause drowsiness or dizziness that can impair a driver's skills and reflexes.

Some drugs may make you feel alert and confident in your driving. In reality, the situation may be quite different. Drugs can fool you into believing you are in control of your driving when you are, in fact, impaired.

Here is a partial list of legal drugs that



**The theme for this year's seminar is "Transcending Technology in Transportation Safety".**

Idealease and the National Private Truck Council NPTC will again be hosting safety seminars in 2020. The one-day seminar this year will focus on new safety technologies available on trucks today, basic safety and compliance, regulation changes, load securement and CSA. The seminars and will be provided to all Idealease customers, potential customers and NPTC members at no charge. The seminar provides important information applicable for both the novice and experienced transportation professionals.



**Spring Dates**

- |           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 3/11/2020 | San Leandro, CA |
| 4/6/2020  | Columbia, SC    |
| 4/7/2020  | Atlanta, GA     |
| 4/14/2020 | Cleveland, OH   |
| 4/15/2020 | Youngstown, OH  |
| 4/16/2020 | Tampa, FL       |
| 4/21/20   | Kansas City, MO |
| 4/22/2020 | Dallas, TX      |
| 4/23/20   | Memphis, TN     |
| 4/30/2020 | Chattanooga, TN |
| 5/5/2020  | Wausau, WI      |

can - in the right amount - impair your ability to drive:

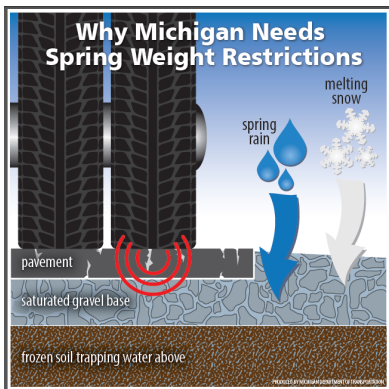
- Anti-anxiety medication
- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Stimulants
- Narcotic pain medications
- Allergy medicines
- Blood sugar medicines
- Antidepressants
- Tranquilizers
- Blood pressure medicines
- Motion sickness medication
- Ulcer medication
- Antibiotics
- Anti-seizure medicines
- Paregoric
- Anti-nausea medicine
- Sedatives
- Cough syrups
- Alcohol-containing medicines
- Caffeine-containing medicines
- Decongestants

To avoid harming yourself or others, partner with your physician and pharmacist to learn information regarding your medication's side effects, and what drugs are usually safe to combine-especially behind the wheel. Never take more than the prescribed dose, or take anyone else's medicine. Ask for non-sedating forms of your prescriptions if you are a professional driver. Allow your body time to adjust to new medications before you drive. Most importantly, each of us is responsible for knowing the signs and symptoms of being drug impaired before we get behind the wheel of any vehicle.

For more information including side effects of any drug go to [www.drugs.com](http://www.drugs.com).

## Frost Laws in 16 states and 9 Provinces

Spring weather often creates driving challenges. Specifically, the change in ground temperature can damage roads and vehicles and result in "roller coaster" rides from "wavy roads."



Consequently, motor carriers need to monitor the many state and provincial spring weight restrictions or risk damage to the road and/or the rig.

**Be ready for an alternate route.**

In order to preserve the integrity of the roadways, many states impose seasonal

5/6/2020	Madison, WI
5/7/2020	Aurora, CO
5/13/2020	Portland, OR
5/14/2020	Santa Fe Springs, CA
5/20/2020	Altoona, IA
5/20/2020	Baltimore, MD
5/21/2020	Mannheim, PA
7/22/2020	Santa Rosa, CA
8/27/2020	Nashville, TN

### Fall Dates

9/23/2020	Brantford, ON
9/23/2020	Indianapolis, IN
9/29/2020	Fort Wayne, IN
10/7/2020	Eugene, OR
10/13/20	Charlottesville, VA
10/22/20	Birmingham, AL
10/29/20	Phoenix, AZ



Please [Click Here](#) to view a schedule of all Safety Seminars offered.

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weight restrictions as early as late February and some lasting into May.

As drivers travel through regions that are experiencing spring thaws, they need to watch for posted signs indicating allowable weights. Signs may also indicate a reduced speed limit.

Trip planning may involve visiting some state websites to know if a specific highway is accessible to your vehicles. In addition, if a driver comes upon a weight restriction, he or she will need to find an alternative route, possibly contacting dispatch for assistance.

To ignore postings may result in more than just fines. It may result in damage to the roads, your vehicle, and/or cargo, and could result in an accident if the roadway is difficult to maneuver. To view the laws in states and provinces, [click here](#).

## FMCSA's Hours-of-Service Rule at Final Review Stage

Potentially significant changes to the federal hours-of-service (HOS) rules have reached their final stage of review, arriving at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Monday, March 2, 2020.

The OMB typically has up to 90 days to complete its review of new regulations, meaning the final rule could be published before summer. The new HOS rule is considered economically significant, meaning it's expected to have an annual economic effect of \$100 million or more.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced proposed changes to the HOS rules in August 2019 and received over 8,000 public comments in response. There's no word on the contents of the final rule, but the agency proposed five changes:

- Allowing drivers to extend the 14-hour limit with one off-duty break of at least 30 minutes, but not more than three hours.
- Allowing drivers to spend their mandatory 30-minute rest breaks on duty rather than off duty, and allowing up to eight hours of driving time (rather than consecutive time) before a break is required.
- Extending the 12-hour limit on the 100-air-mile exception to 14 hours, and extending the allowed radius to 150 air miles.
- Extending the on-duty limit of the "adverse driving conditions" exception by two hours.
- Modifying the sleeper-berth exception to allow drivers to split their required 10-hour breaks into two periods of at least seven consecutive hours in the sleeper berth and another break of at least two consecutive hours.

If the OMB approves the changes, it clears the way for the FMCSA to publish them in the *Federal Register* and put them into effect, likely later this year.

## ELEVATE: QUESTION/TIP OF THE WEEK SIGNUP

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Company \*

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**Q:** My vehicle doesn't have a PTO (Power Take-Off) function. **How is it registering PTO hours in my reports?**

**A:** When a driver, warehouse personnel, or technician overrides the **IST / Idle Shutdown Timer** on a vehicle through manipulation of the cruise pad, this communicates to the **ECM (Engine Control Module)** that the vehicle is now in PTO mode and reports the engine hours as such.

Drivers who have learned the process described above tend to use it when they want the vehicle to stay running in order to keep the AC or heat on during stops throughout their day. This practice should be frowned upon, as it ultimately results in lower fuel economy and higher maintenance costs associated with that vehicle.





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