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School Transportation Update

April 8, 2020

1. Drug and Alcohol Testing
2. HB 197
3. Bus Purchase information released
4. Railroad Information posted
5. New MTA dates
6. New T-report class options

1) Drug and Alcohol Testing – the impact of school closure

Employers are required to ensure that dates for administering random alcohol and controlled substances tests are spread reasonably throughout the calendar year. DOT guidance further recommends that you perform random selections and tests at least quarterly.

FMCSA has issued a new guidance stating: "If, due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 national emergency, you are unable to perform random selections and tests sufficient to meet the random testing rate for a given testing period, you should make up the tests by the end of the [calendar] year. You should document in writing the specific reasons why you were unable to conduct tests on drivers randomly selected, and any actions taken to locate an alternative collection site or other testing resources."

Applying this to our current situation in Ohio: if your drivers are not performing safety sensitive functions, calling them to report for a random test does not meet the requirements for random testing. FMCSA's guidance is to defer any tests scheduled during the national emergency to a time when the drivers have returned to work and testing facilities are available.

For further guidance please see:

https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/sites/fmcsa.dot.gov/files/docs/Best_Practices_for_DOT_Random_Drug_and_Alcohol_Testing_508CLN.pdf

2) HB 197 – modifications to deadlines and licenses

HB 197 has been signed into law and addresses a variety of school related issues resulting from the pandemic closures. Included in these are licenses and license renewals, with extensions being mandated in the bill. We have reached out to ODE to ask how bus driver's recertifications and physicals will be managed. Follow-ups with them indicate that they are working on this and hope to release their guidance soon. Look for an additional communication from OSBA as soon as information is available.

3) Bus purchase information released

House Bill 166 (budget bill) established a one-year bus purchase program, with the procedures to be established jointly between ODE and the department of public safety. This plan is required to be in place during Fiscal Year 21 (next school year).

Information is now posted on ODE's pupil transportation page regarding this plan. For further information please see:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/School-Transportation/School-Bus-Purchase-Program>

4) Railroad information posted

We have published railroad contact information (including their emergency numbers) as well as a new list of exempt crossings in Ohio. This information is available in the training library for MTA and VTS participants. Thank you to Sherri Malloy for her efforts in coordinating the work to declare a number of new exempt crossings in Mahoning county.

5) Master of Transportation Administration

The final classes for this year's MTA program have been rescheduled. Like all businesses, we have been trying hard to stay flexible with scheduled events and working to select new dates that have minimal conflicts. The new dates for the final MTA class of the year are June 2 and June 4. The June 4 date is also scheduled as a live streaming session in addition to an in-person training.

6) T-report class

This annual training was scheduled for May 20. Even if schools are able to reopen in May, this will be a very busy time, and not the best opportunity for administrators to attend an out-of-district training. With that in mind, we are rescheduling to a later date in June and will also offer the training as an on-line learning opportunity that can be done at your convenience. Stay tuned for additional updates.

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