



Idealease Safety Bulletin

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Prescription Drugs and Commercial Motor Vehicle Operation Do Not Always Mix

Over the recent years we have seen numerous high profile deaths occur using prescription drugs. For example we have seen an actor who died of an overdose of prescription drugs and a doctor on trial for the death of a famous musician who died as a result of an overdose of a prescribed medication.

As managers of commercial drivers we need to be aware of the medications that our drivers are taking as they may have a direct effect on their driving skills and operation of a CMV. Prescription medications have increased substantially in the last 50 years.

In 1950, on average each person had two prescriptions dispensed per year. In 1994, 7.9 was the average and in 2009 it increased to 12.6. It is also alarming to see that Hydrocodone, an opiate-based painkiller, was the largest single prescription dispensed in 2004 at 92.7 million prescriptions. Incidentally, this is one of the five drug groups that are tested for in the FMCSA Controlled substance-testing program.



So what can you do to guard against prescription drug use in your vehicles?

1. Communicate with the drivers and be aware of their physical condition. If you know that a driver has been injured on or off of work, talk to the driver to see if medications have been prescribed.

In work related injuries, make sure the examining physician is aware that the employee operates a CMV as part or their entire job. Go to the examining physician's office with your employee.

Contact your Medical Review Officer for your drug and alcohol-testing program for assistance in reviewing the prescription medication.

BREAKING NEWS

Appeals Court Hears Challenges, Defense of HOS Rule

WASHINGTON — The federal government told an appeals court today that industry objections to its latest changes to the hours-of-service rules for truck drivers boil down to “simple scientific disputes” and that the government should be free to use its discretion in such cases.

Jonathan Levy, a Department of Justice attorney representing the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, told the court that it is “not the court’s duty to weigh in on that kind of dispute,” and that the agency acted reasonably when it wrote the December 2011 regulation requiring drivers to take rest breaks after driving eight hours and limiting use of the 34-hour restart.

Levy’s defense before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit came after Erika Jones, an attorney with the Mayer Brown law firm representing American Trucking Associations, accused FMCSA of overestimating the societal benefits of the regulatory changes by misinterpreting scientific studies to justify HOS restrictions.

***Develop a relationship with your medical care providers so they have an understanding of your employee’s job requirements.**

Registration is now open on line for the 2013 Idealease/NPTC Safety Seminars

Idealease, its affiliates and the National Private Truck Council NPTC will again be hosting safety seminars in 2013. The one day seminars this year will focus on basic safety and compliance, regulation changes 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. To view the schedule and register for an upcoming seminar in 2013 click on the following link:

www.Idealease.com/safety



2013 Idealease/Safety Seminar Schedule

20-Mar: Los Angeles, CA

21-Mar: Santa Fe Springs, CA

26-Mar: Memphis, TN

28-Mar: Atlanta, GA

2-Apr: Hyattsville, MD

3-Apr: Baltimore, MD

4-Apr: Harrisburg, PA

9-Apr: Milwaukee, WI

10-Apr: Fort Wayne, IN

11-Apr: Green Bay, WI

11-Apr: Grand Rapids, MI

17-Apr: Sacramento, CA

18-Apr: San Leandro, CA

18-Apr: Orlando, FL

23-Apr: Altoona, IA

24-Apr: Oklahoma City, OK

25-Apr: Chattanooga, TN

25-Apr: Dallas, TX

8-May: Denver, CO

9-May: Mississauga, Ontario