

# Transportation **Safety Topics**

**February 2014**

Article written by **Gary Holbrook**  
*Director of Safety Services and  
Area Vice President*

Gallagher Transportation Services,  
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.

The information contained in this report was obtained from sources which, to the best of the writer's knowledge, are authentic and reliable. Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. makes no guarantee of results, and assumes no liability in connection with either the information herein contained, or the safety suggestions herein made. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein, or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures.

© 2014 Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. All rights reserved.

## Driver's Medical Certificate Changes

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recently amended its regulations to extend the rule that requires drivers to carry their medical certificate on the road with them, and make them available during roadside inspections. This rule has been extended until January 30, 2015. This extension was issued because some states have not yet integrated the medical certificate into the Commercial Driver's License System. As a result, drivers will still be required to make notification to the state of license agency and provide them a copy and the appropriate certification of any new medical certificate received after January 30, 2012. Drivers should also confirm that the information was received and posted on their CDL.

Even though professional drivers must be medically examined and certified at least every twenty- four months, it remains difficult for drivers to maintain a healthy life style. Irregular hours, extremes in climates and temperatures, demanding schedules and a poor diet and lack of exercise contribute to health problems. Poor health also increases the effects of fatigue and stress for drivers.

### Listed below are some recommendations to get you on the road to good health:

- A healthy diet is essential to good health. This means eating more fruits, vegetables and lean meats and less fried fast foods. It may be helpful to eat more frequent smaller meals instead of one or two larger meals during the day. Substitute dried fruit or apples and bananas instead of chips and chocolates for snacks. Drink plenty of water and avoid sugary drinks and those loaded with caffeine such as tea, coffee, soda and energy drinks. Go light on the salt; most foods have enough salt in them naturally. If you drink alcohol, it is never allowed on duty and should only be consumed in moderation when off duty.

- If you smoke, **quit**. It has extremely damaging health effects that are difficult to reverse. Smoking also depletes the oxygen inside the cab, which adds to fatigue. If you do smoke, circulate fresh air in the cab or wait until you are outside the cab to smoke.
- Exercise is tough to do when you are a professional driver, especially an over-the-road driver, but there are things you can do to improve your health. Walking is a great and simple exercise you can do anywhere. If you only walk around your truck ten times when you park, that equates to over one quarter mile. Walking will get your heart rate up and improve you circulation, making you more alert and feeling better.
- Be careful about the medication you take, both prescription and over-the-counter medications. If your doctor prescribes a medication make sure he knows you are a truck driver and cannot take anything that will make you sleepy. Be sure to read the label on over-the-counter medications and don't take them if they may make you drowsy or if they may react with another medication you are taking.
- Getting enough sleep is an important part of being healthy. There is no substitute for proper rest and sleep and it will reduce fatigue and allow your body to recover. Do not ever try to drive if you are sleepy, It is dangerous and can have terrible consequences.

As you get older, it becomes even more important to maintain your health. The solutions discussed above are simple, but they aren't easy for a professional driver. Remember, we are only issued one body, so let's work at being healthy just as hard as we work at our job.

*Drive Safely  
Drive Responsibly  
Drive Professionally*