

Some common citations can be easily avoided by ensuring drivers have the required information onboard their vehicle and in their company files.

Onboard Documentation and Supporting Documents

Motor carriers and drivers have specific requirements under the ELD regulations. Some of the most commonly cited violations pertain to the documents and materials drivers are required to have with them in the commercial motor vehicle (CMV), or that motor carriers must retain in their files, and provide to enforcement personnel upon request. Below are a few reminders to help motor carriers and drivers adhere to these requirements.

What ELD user documentation must be onboard a driver's CMV?

A driver using an ELD must have an ELD information packet onboard the CMV containing the following items:

- A user's manual for the driver describing how to operate the ELD;
- An instruction sheet describing the data transfer mechanisms supported by the ELD and step-by-step instructions to produce and transfer the driver's hours-of-service records to an authorized safety official;
- An instruction sheet for the driver describing ELD malfunction reporting requirements and recordkeeping procedures during ELD malfunctions; and
- A supply of blank driver's records of duty status (RODS) graph-grids sufficient to record the driver's duty status and other related information for a minimum of 8 days.

Can the ELD information packet be in electronic form?

Yes. The user's manual, instruction sheet, malfunction instruction sheet, and supply of blank driver's RODS graph grid can be in electronic form. A logging software app would meet the requirement for supply of blank RODS. This is in accordance with the FMCSA rule titled "Electronic Document and Signatures" published April 16, 2018 (83 FR 16210). See 49 CFR 390.32(b).

What are the supporting documents required in the normal course of business to verify a driver's records of duty status (RODS)?

They consist of five categories, described in 49 CFR 395.11(c):

- Bills of lading, itineraries, schedules, or equivalent documents that indicate the origin and destination of each trip;
- Dispatch records, trip records, or equivalent documents;
- Expense receipts related to any on-duty not-driving time;
- Electronic mobile communication records, reflecting communications transmitted through a fleet management system; and
- Payroll records, settlement sheets, or equivalent documents that indicate what and how a driver was paid.

Note: If a driver keeps paper RODS under 49 CFR 395.8(a)(1)(iii), the carrier must also retain toll receipts. For drivers using paper RODS, toll receipts do not count toward the eight-document cap.

What information should be in the supporting documents?

Supporting documents must contain the following elements:

- Driver name or carrier-assigned identification number, either on the document or on another document enabling the carrier to link the document to the driver. The vehicle unit number can also be used if it can be linked to the driver;
- Date;
- Location (including name of nearest city, town, or village); and
- Time.

How many supporting documents must be retained by motor carriers, and when must drivers submit them to the motor carrier?

Motor carriers must retain up to 8 supporting documents for every 24-hour period that a driver is on duty. Drivers must submit their RODS and supporting documents to the motor carrier no later than 13 days after receiving them.

If a motor carrier retains more than eight supporting documents, the motor carrier must maintain the first and last document generated during the regular course of business.

Are there specific categories of supporting documents that drivers can provide electronically?

Two categories—electronic mobile communications and payroll records—are not documents a driver would have to physically retain. They may be part of a larger record that the carrier retains electronically or physically at the dispatch location or principal place of business. In applying the eight-document limit, all information in an electronic mobile communication record will be counted as one document per duty day.

You can find this information, as well as questions and answers on many more topics in the [ELD Frequently Asked Questions](#). Browse the topics or search for key terms.