

INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW WORK RULE FOR TRUCKERS ISN'T IMPROVING SAFETY; SURVEY SHOWS TRUCKERS DRIVE MORE, TIRED DRIVING STILL PREVALENT

ARLINGTON, VA — A new Insurance Institute for Highway Safety survey indicates that drivers of interstate trucks spend more time behind the wheel under a federal work rule that went into effect in 2004. This new rule lengthens the mandatory rest period by two hours but lets drivers stay on the road an extra hour every day. A work-week restart provision increases allowable driving hours in a 7-day period from 60 to 77. A quarter of drivers who were surveyed said they drive more than the new daily limit of 11 hours. Eight of 10 drivers said they're taking advantage of the restart provision that allows them to drive 25 percent more in a week.

While the drivers said their sleep time has increased under the new rule, they reported slightly more instances than the previous year (when the old work rule was in effect) of driving drowsy or falling asleep at the wheel. When drivers were asked about dozing at the wheel at least once in the past month, the reported percentage increased from 13 percent (2003, under the old rule) to 15 percent (2004).

"Studies show that fatigue is a significant factor in truck crashes," says Anne McCartt, Institute vice president for research. "The new rule was supposed to improve safety, but our survey shows the opposite. Truckers are using the restart provision to squeeze even more driving hours into the week."

Enforcement of work hours has long been a problem because written logbooks are easily falsified. The survey shows this hasn't changed. About a third of drivers said they sometimes or often omit hours worked from their logbooks. A proposal to include electronic onboard recorders (tamper-resistant devices that can monitor driving hours) was dropped before the new rule went into effect.

"Without electronic recorders the rule can't be enforced effectively," McCartt says.

**End 1-page news release on survey of truckers re driving hours
Attachment: Institute comments, including details of the survey
For more information go to www.iihs.org**