



Home-style Cooking

safety *If your drivers are “adjusting” their logs, it’s only because you want them to. By Brian Botham*

When *Today’s Trucking’s* sister publication, *highwaySTAR* magazine, conducted a driver survey last year, a full 83.7 percent of the respondents admitted to falsifying their logs.

Does that surprise you?
It doesn’t me.

And if I had a nickel for every time a driver told me that he was forced to run illegal, over hours or when tired, I would be a rich man. Granted, many drivers don’t complain about cooking the books. They’re natural rule-breakers.

But most are only doing what they must to get the day’s work done.

So whose fault is this? The drivers? The dispatch department’s? Or maybe you think it’s the safety department who’s doing something wrong.

The correct answer of course is, if there’s any falsifying of logs going on, it’s probably the boss’s responsibility.

As owner, president or CEO, you are the person who controls the company. Of course you have people in place to carry out the day-to-day operations, but they are all operating under your direction, trying to reflect your attitudes, morals, values and beliefs.

You have either built a company where everyone has put safety as a top priority or you haven’t. And judging from what I’m seeing and the drivers I’ve been speaking with, there a lot of companies who have not.



Sleep experts will tell you that between midnight and 6:00 a.m. most people are likely to be sleepy.

A few years ago I attended a seminar put on by the CEO of a U.S. carrier who lost two drivers killed in fatigue-related crashes. These deaths forced the owner to take a very hard look at his entire operation so he’d find out how the tragedies had happened.

The company hired fatigue specialists and examined the operation and followed their recommendations.

Among the changes: The company put tight restrictions on drivers operating between midnight and 6:00 a.m. (Sleep experts will tell you that those

are the hours during which the human animal is most likely to be sleepy.)

The carrier cut back the hours the drivers were permitted to operate, increased their freight rates and driver pay. Today the company has more drivers accomplishing more work for better pay, with fewer violations and—knock on wood—no fatalities. Not only that but the company increased its customer base.

Every carrier can learn a lesson from this company. By taking a stand against pressuring drivers to run beyond their limits whether legally or personally and by working with customers on the fatigue issue, you can eliminate fatigue-related crashes. I hardly need to mention that the company in question

actually has a waiting list of drivers who want to sign on.

Over the past few years, we’ve seen increased regulations and restrictions from lawmakers on both sides of the border. The prime reason for the changes is safety. Governments want to eliminate fatalities.

That must mean we have not been doing a good enough job policing ourselves.

This trend will continue. There’s talk of mandatory speed limiters and EOBRs. I maintain that if we had been doing things right in the first place, speed limiters and EOBRs would not even be on the lawmakers’ radar screens.

The safety of your employees, owner-operators and everyone with whom you come into contact should be your number-one priority. Compromise shouldn’t even be considered. And you’re the one setting the bar that determines how seriously your people will take the issue.

It’s also the law. The owner of a company can be held criminally negligent for the death or injury of an employee if safety regulations have been skirted or ignored (Section 217.1 of the Criminal Code commonly known as Bill C-45).

Finally, if our American example is anything to go by, a safe company is also a profitable one. ▲

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