

I can speak from first hand experience because I drove for a USPS contractor for 3 years. My employer's practices were consistent with those of other contractors. We were paid only for the trips we ran, not for the down-time waiting for loading, unloading, etc. As a result, it was common to spend 12 hours (or more) of my day and be paid for only five or six. This encourages some mail drivers to hold down second jobs, and seldom do they (or their employer) faithfully track the hours as required.

Many of this nation's carriers, drivers, shippers and consignees would like to purge the 14-hour consecutive clock because of the constraints it places on flexibility. Most have made the necessary adjustments. To make this exemption on the basis of safety would essentially concede that the new rules are less safe; do we really want to open that door?

The 14-hour rule has been a huge adjustment for many of the nation's motor carrier operations. Many carriers have been able to force shippers and consignees to acknowledge the fact that the driver's time (and the carrier's resources of truck/trailer) are time-valued, rather than free storage and/or free labor. The USPS should also make necessary adjustments; holding itself 'above the law' would not be morally right, nor would it improve safety.