**DRIVE SAFE Act Implementation**

The DRIVE Safe Act in the form of a 3000 driver pilot program over a 3 year period was included in the Senate bipartisan infrastructure package.  While we would prefer the permanent lifting of the restriction on under 21 drivers in interstate commerce, this is a good first step. Now we need to make sure every slot is filled by a quality training program for carriers with high-quality candidates to ensure we get data to support a permanent change to the age requirements for our industry and the next generation of American truck drivers.

US DOT has 60 days from today to implement the program. We are optimistic that they will move expeditiously to do so. We expect US DOT will largely mirror the under-21 military pilot program which will mean motor carriers will need to apply to be part of the program. That existing program is available here at USDOT’s website for ease of reference and can be a good reference point for how the new program will likely be implemented: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/under21military>

In the meantime, it is vital that we as industry be prepared to implement the program as quickly as possible. Accordingly, this document provides a list of what will be needed by participant carriers. Accordingly, if you or a motor carrier you know would like to participate in the program, the specific implementation needs including equipment, personnel and training are the following:

1. **Identify and recruit eligible candidates.** Candidates must be between 18-20 and hold an existing commercial driver’s license to join the program.
2. **Add/Amend insurance provisions to cover these drivers and their movement in interstate commerce.** It may take time for insurers to write new policies to cover these drivers so it is vital to begin that process.
3. **Procure /Configure compliant Equipment**- All DRIVE Safe act drivers must use equipment that includes the following: an automatic manual or automatic transmission; an active braking collision mitigation system; a forward-facing video event capture system; and a governed speed of 65 miles per hour— at the pedal; and under adaptive cruise control.
4. **Identify experienced driver trainers** - DRIVE Safe Act apprentices must be accompanied by an experienced driver when they are developing their skills and driving in interstate commerce. The legislation defines as someone 26 or older, with 5 years of experience and no points on license for moving violations or at fault accidents for 2 years.
5. **Set up a training regime that complies with the requirements.** The training requirements are 400 hours broken down as follows: • **120-Hour Probationary Period.** First, the apprentice must complete 120 hours of “on-duty time,” 80 hours of which must be “driving time”. During the 80 hours of “driving time,” the apprentice may drive a truck in interstate commerce, but only when accompanied by an experienced driver. **Performance Benchmarks required to be demonstrated include** interstate, city traffic, rural two lanes, and evening driving; safety awareness; speed and space management; lane control, mirror scanning, and right and left turns; and logging and complying with hours of service. • **280-Hour Probationary Period.** Second, the apprentice must complete 280 hours of “on-duty time,”160 hours of which must be “driving time”. During the 160 hours of “driving time,” the apprentice may drive a truck in interstate commerce, but only when accompanied by an experienced driver. **Performance Benchmarks required to be demonstrated include** backing and maneuvering in close quarters; pre-trip inspections; fueling procedures; weighing loads, weight distribution, and sliding tandems; coupling and uncoupling procedures; and trip planning, truck routes, map reading, navigation, and permits.

5. **Ensure rigorous compliance and documentation.** Participants will need to set up record keeping and interact with USDOT regularly with data and ensure full compliance. DRIVE Safe act apprentice participants may not transport passengers or hazardous cargo or operate a special configuration vehicle or a vehicle with a gross weight over 80,000 pounds.

As DOT implements the program, we will provide updates. We are also working towards having this program qualified as a registered apprenticeship and supported nationally through US DOL and state workforce development funding and will provide updates on that as well. If you have any questions, please contact Nick Geale or Dan Horvath.