until that record is public. Full comment and the funding exhibit are attached''.

1—Response: These matters fall outside the scope of this **Federal Register** notice, which addresses the proposed information collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act, including its necessity, practical utility, estimated burden, and opportunities to improve or streamline the collection. The comment does not address the proposed data collection or its associated burden estimates. Accordingly, no revisions to the information collection are warranted in response to this comment. Requests for agency records or concerns regarding contracts, awards, or potential conflicts of interest should be submitted through the appropriate separate administrative process.

2—Comment: ''FHWA currently estimates an average burden of 10 hours to prepare and submit each project proposal and 10 hours annually for project administration and annual progress reports. Based on TxDOT staff experience with similar projects, we recommend increasing both estimates to 15 hours.''

2—Response: After careful consideration, FHWA maintains that 10 hours is sufficient for a State DOT to complete and submit a project proposal, that 10 hours annually is adequate for project administration, and the annual progress report. FHWA has developed and will provide standardized templates for applicants to use for project proposals, annual progress reports, and final reports. Because these templates leverage information State DOT already develop for project planning and management, FHWA anticipates that most will take less time than estimated.

Title: State Transportation Roadway Innovation Deployment Excellence (STRIDE) program proposals, annual reports, and final reports.

Background: The proposed State Transportation Roadway Innovation Deployment Excellence (STRIDE) Program would be administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program (TIDP), authorized by 23 U.S.C. 503(c). TIDP supports the implementation and adoption of innovations across highway transportation, including planning, financing, operations, structures, rights-of-way, materials, pavements, environmental activities, construction, and project delivery. Subject to final program approval and the availability of funds, the STRIDE Program will make TIDP funding available to accelerate the implementation and adoption of the following:

- Innovations promoted under Every Day Counts Round 8 (EDC–8); and
- Other significant highway innovations consistent with the U.S. Department of Transportation's strategic priorities and applicable statutory requirements.

Respondents: Eligible applicants and recipients are the transportation departments or equivalent transportation agencies of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, Tribal governments, Federal Land Management Agencies, and other entities may participate as subrecipients through an eligible State DOT, subject to the requirements set forth in the final STRIDE program guidance. The State DOT would remain the direct applicant and recipient of federal-aid funds. FHWA estimates that about 35 applicants would submit project proposals in each application cycle.

Frequency: Applicants would submit project proposals during the established STRIDE application period. Selected recipients are required to submit an annual progress report for each active project and one final report following project completion.

Estimated Average Burden per Response: FHWA estimates an average burden of:

- 10 hours to prepare and submit each project proposal;
- 10 hours annually for project administration and annual progress reports; and
- 20 hours to prepare and submit each final project report.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: Assuming 35 eligible applicants, the estimated annual burden would be:

- *Project proposals:* 35×10 hours = 350 hours.
- *Annual reporting and project administration:* 35×10 hours = 350 hours.
- *Final reports, assuming approximately one-half of the projects are completed annually:* 17.5×20 hours = 350 hours year 1 and 17.5×20 hours = 350 hours year 2.

For an estimated total average annual burden hours of 1,050 hours for year 1, 350 hours for year 2, and a total for the two-year program being 1,400 hours.

Public Comments Invited: You are asked to comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) Whether the proposed collection is necessary for the FHWA's performance; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burdens; (3) ways for the FHWA to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways that the burden could be minimized, including the use of electronic technology, without reducing the quality of the collected information. The agency will summarize and/or include your comments in the request for OMB's clearance of this information collection.

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995; 44 U.S.C. chapter 35, as amended; and 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: November 24, 2026.

Jazmyne Lewis,

Information Collection Officer.

[FR Doc. 2026–24123 Filed 11–25–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2022–0148]

Commercial Driver's License Standards: Application for Renewal of Exemption; National School Transportation Association

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of final disposition; grant of application for exemption.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to renew the exemption granted to the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) for a period of two years to permit all commercial driver's license (CDL) applicants seeking a school bus endorsement to forgo the engine compartment portion of the pre-trip vehicle inspection skills testing requirement, known informally as the ''under-the-hood'' testing requirement. Drivers issued CDLs pursuant to the requested exemption are restricted to intrastate operation of school buses only. FMCSA has analyzed the exemption application and the public comments and has determined that the exemption, subject to the terms and conditions set forth below, is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved in the absence of the exemption.

DATES: The exemption is effective for the period of November 28, 2026, through November 28, 2028.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Richard Clemente, FMCSA Driver and Carrier Operations Division; Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety Standards; *richard.clemente@dot.gov*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Participation

Viewing Comments and Documents

To view any documents mentioned as being available in the docket, go to *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FMCSA-2022-0148/document* and choose the document to review. To view comments, click this notice, then click ''Document Comments.'' If you do not have access to the internet, you may view the docket by visiting Dockets Operations in the DOT West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, W58–213, Washington, DC 20590–0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

II. Legal Basis

FMCSA has authority under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b) to grant exemptions from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). FMCSA must publish a notice of each exemption request in the **Federal Register** (49 CFR 381.315(a)). The Agency must provide the public an opportunity to inspect the information relevant to the application, including the applicant's safety analysis. The Agency must provide an opportunity for public comment on the request.

The Agency reviews the application, safety analyses, and public comments submitted and determines whether granting the exemption would likely achieve a level of safety equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption, pursuant to the standard set forth in 49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(1). The Agency must publish its decision in the **Federal Register** (49 CFR 381.315(b)). If granted, the notice will identify the regulatory provision(s) from which the exempted party will be exempt, the effective period, and all terms and conditions of the exemption (49 CFR 381.315(c)(1)). If the exemption is denied, the notice will explain the reason for the denial (49 CFR 381.315(c)(2)). The exemption may be renewed (49 CFR 381.300(b)).

III. Background

Current Regulatory Requirements

Under 49 CFR 383.113(a), CDL applicants are required to possess basic pre-trip vehicle inspection skills for the vehicle class that the applicant operates or expects to operate. For all test vehicles, applicants must be able to identify each safety-related part on the vehicle and explain what needs to be inspected to ensure a safe operating condition of each part, including the engine compartment.

Applicant's Request

The renewal application for exemption from NSTA was described in detail in a **Federal Register** notice published on June 30, 2026 (91 FR 39656) and will not be repeated as the facts have not changed.

IV. Public Comments

The Agency received 38 comments; 35 supported the exemption, two opposed the exemption, and one was neutral. Twenty of the 34 comments in support of the exemption were identical submissions from members of the Pennsylvania School Bus Association (PSBA). Various school bus companies, contractors and industry associations, including NSTA, the National Association of Pupil Transportation, the American Bus Association, and Anderson Coach and Travel were also among commenters supporting the exemption. The 20 identical comments from the PSBA members stated, ''As a member of the Pennsylvania School Bus Association and a provider of student transportation services, I strongly support extending this exemption. The waiver has helped remove an unnecessary barrier in the driver licensing process while maintaining the high safety standards expected in pupil transportation.''

The American Bus Association stated, ''School buses remain one of the safest forms of transportation in the United States, and drivers operating under this exemption continue to meet all applicable training, testing, and operational safety requirements. The exemption simply removes a testing element that does not meaningfully measure the knowledge and skills required for the safe operation of a school bus.''

Anderson Coach and Travel said, ''Removing the under the hood barrier has not come at the expense of safety. School bus transportation continues to be one of the safest modes of transportation available, and drivers licensed under this exemption remain fully accountable for comprehensive pre-trip inspections and safe operation of their vehicles. The exemption has instead helped qualified candidates who would otherwise be discouraged from pursuing school bus driving enter the profession, while also supporting longer term retention within the industry.''

The National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT) did not oppose the exemption and commented, ''We are eager to learn more about the impact of the exemption and will work with FMCSA and NSTA to gather more information.''

The Colorado Department of Education opposed the exemption and said, ''Converting this emergency waiver into a long-term exemption directly contradicts the intent of Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) regulations (49 CFR part 380), which were specifically created to eliminate competency and educational gaps across the commercial driving industry. Not only that, but it creates a regulatory double standard: property-carrying CDL operators are required to demonstrate engine compartment literacy, while exempting those who are carrying our nation's most precious cargo—children.''

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) opposed the exemption and expressed concerns that many public schools rely on school bus drivers to perform pre-trip inspections, and that many rural drivers take their buses home each night, where they must perform pre-trip inspections. NASDPTS additionally noted that there is a shortage of school bus maintenance personnel and if school bus drivers are not capable of performing the pre-trip inspection, districts might be left in a position to compromise safety. NASDPTS added that school bus drivers must be capable of performing tasks that require physical strength during an emergency, including assisting passengers with an emergency evacuation, operating the fire extinguisher, and operating the emergency exits. NASDPTS believes that a driver who is capable of those physical tasks is capable of inspecting under the hood of the bus. Finally, NASDPTS noted that few drivers have used the exemption and questioned the costs incurred by States to implement the exemption. NASDPTS requested that FMCSA release data related to the exemption.

V. FMCSA Decision

FMCSA has evaluated NSTA's application and the public comments and grants the exemption renewal request for a two-year period. Due to the limited scope, terms, conditions, and restrictions of the exemption and the existing regulatory requirements that remain in place, FMCSA has determined that the ''under-the-hood'' exemption will likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to the level of safety that would be obtained absent the exemption. The exemption does not apply to the remaining elements of the pre-trip vehicle inspection components of the skills test, as set forth in 49 CFR 383.113(a)(1)(ii–ix). Accordingly, drivers obtaining CDLs under this exemption will have demonstrated the

ability to safely operate the special features of a school bus.

Further, because school buses are typically operated for relatively short distances, mechanics or other qualified personnel can readily provide roadside assistance in the event of an engine malfunction. In response to NASDPTS's concerns about the shortage of vehicle maintenance personnel, the exemption does not change FMCSA's vehicle maintenance requirements in 49 CFR part 396, including that every motor carrier must systematically inspect, repair, and maintain all vehicles (49 CFR 396.3) and that unsafe operations of a CMV are forbidden (49 CFR 396.7). All State or local school bus inspection maintenance standards continue to apply.

In response to concerns about the costs for States to adopt the exemption, FMCSA notes that use of the exemption is optional, as a State may elect to continue to require all CDL applicants to meet the requirements of 49 CFR 383.113(a)(1)(i). This exemption is expressly limited to intrastate operations and drivers obtaining licenses under the exemption must adhere to that restriction. A driver granted a CDL under this exemption would not be eligible to drive a school bus on a route that crosses State lines; to drive on such a route would require a CDL without a K restriction granted upon passing the full skills test. FMCSA acknowledges that only 15 States notified the Agency that they had adopted the exemption, with one State subsequently discontinuing its adoption of the exemption. Most CDL applicants in the States that adopted the exemption who received a CDL with S and P endorsements elected to take the full CDL skills test rather than to use the exemption. The lack of widespread adoption and use of the exemption, on its own, however, does not indicate that the application should be denied.

FMCSA concludes that the exemption, subject to the terms and conditions set forth in section VI, would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(1).

VI. Exemption

A. Applicability of Exemption

This exemption covers States for the period beginning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) on November 28, 2026, through 11:59 p.m. on November 28, 2028. Under this exemption, a State may, but is not required to, waive the engine compartment portion of the pre-trip vehicle inspection skills test, set forth in 49 CFR 383.113(a)(1)(i), only for CDL applicants seeking the S and P endorsements, subject to the K restriction limiting their operation to intrastate commerce. States issuing CDLs pursuant to this exemption are not subject to the requirement in 49 CFR 383.133(c)(1) that this portion of the pre-trip vehicle inspection test be administered in accordance with an FMCSA pre-approved examiner information manual.

B. Terms and Conditions

When operating under this exemption, States issuing CDLs pursuant to this exemption must abide by the following terms and conditions:

1. The State Driver's Licensing Agency, when requested by FMCSA, must submit the names and CDL numbers of drivers who are issued a CDL pursuant to the terms of this exemption, as authorized by 49 CFR 383.73(h) and 384.225(e)(2), monthly to *MCPSD@dot.gov.*

2. The CDL credential must conform to the requirements of 49 CFR part 383, subpart J.

3. When issuing a K-restricted CDL with the S and P endorsements pursuant to this exemption, States must continue to comply with the applicable provisions set forth in 49 CFR 383.73.

4. When issuing a K-restricted CDL with the S and P endorsements pursuant to this exemption, States must place a school bus-only restriction on the CDL, in accordance with 49 CFR 383.153(a)(10)(ix).

5. States must conduct the remaining pre-trip vehicle inspection components of the skills test for drivers subject to this exemption, as set forth in 49 CFR 383.113(a)(1)(ii–ix).

6. This exemption applies only to the intrastate operation of school buses used to transport pre-primary, primary, or secondary school students from home to school, from school to home, or to and from school-sponsored events, as defined in 49 CFR 383.5.

C. Termination

FMCSA does not believe the drivers covered by this exemption will experience any deterioration of their safety record. However, the exemption will be revoked if: (1) States fail to comply with the terms of the exemption.; (2) the exemption has resulted in a lower level of safety than was maintained before it was granted; or (3) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of Title 49, chapter 313 or section 31136.

Derek D. Barrs,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2026–24085 Filed 11–25–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–EX–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2026–1520]

Hours of Service (HOS) of Drivers: Precision Fireworks LLC; Application for Exemption

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of final disposition; grant of application for exemption.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to grant an exemption to Precision Fireworks LLC (Precision) (USDOT #3129980) during the designated Independence Day periods. The exemption allows drivers to exclude off-duty and sleeper berth time of any length from the calculation of the 14-hour limit. FMCSA has analyzed the exemption application and the public comments and has determined that the exemption, subject to the terms and conditions set forth below, is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved in the absence of the exemption.

DATES: The exemption is effective for the period June 28 through July 8, at 11:59 p.m. local time, each year through 2030.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Pearlie Robinson, FMCSA Driver and Carrier Operations Division; Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety Standards; *pearlie.robinson@dot.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Participation

Viewing Comments and Documents

To view any documents mentioned as being available in the docket, go to *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FMCSA-2026-1520/document* and choose the document to review. To view comments, click this notice, then click ''Document Comments.'' If you do not have access to the internet, you may view the docket by visiting Dockets Operations in the DOT West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, W58–213, Washington, DC 20590–0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.