

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Alabama Department of Public Safety

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### State Begins Enforcing Highway Safety Law on Commercial Vehicles

MONTGOMERY – The Department of Public Safety will begin enforcing a highway safety law passed by the Legislature in 1998 thanks to new resources being provided by the federal government.

Commercial motor vehicle operators involved in interstate commerce already have to display a USDOT number on their vehicles. Starting July 1, that requirement will extend to commercial motor vehicle operators involved in intrastate commerce – as a 1998 state law requires.

Public Safety Director Col. Mike Coppage said the requirement will not result in increased insurance costs to commercial vehicle operators. He also stressed that there is no fee involved in obtaining the USDOT number and that the regulation applies only to commercial motor vehicles used in commerce. It does not apply to vehicles used for recreational or non-business purposes.

The law enhances the ability of state and federal motor carrier safety officials to gather and maintain safety records for all the state's commercial carriers.

“This number enables us to track the safety records of commercial drivers operating within the state, and it promotes increased safety among all who travel Alabama's roadways,” said Coppage.

He said the federal USDOT number requirement for intrastate carriers was adopted into state law in 1998, but never enforced because state resources have not been available to implement the regulations. With assistance that has recently become available from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, that situation has changed.

According to federal motor carrier regulations, a “commercial motor vehicle” is defined as any self-propelled or towed vehicle used on the highways in commerce to transport passengers or property if the vehicle meets any of the following:

- It has a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) of more than 10,000 lbs., whether operated in interstate or intrastate commerce.
- It is designed or used to transport more than 8 passengers (including the driver) for compensation.
- It is designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver.
- It is used to transport hazardous materials in a quantity requiring placards under regulation of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

*for more information contact:*

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Public Information/Education • P.O. Box 1511 • Montgomery AL 36102-1511

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The regulations define “commerce” as:

- Interstate - Any trade, traffic, or transportation within the jurisdiction of the United States between a place in a state and a place outside of the state including a place outside the United States.
- Intrastate - Any trade, traffic, or transportation beginning and ending within the boundaries of this state.

Information regarding the USDOT number requirement and the application process is located online at [www.dps.state.al.us/mc](http://www.dps.state.al.us/mc). Applications may also be made by contacting the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration at 1-800-832-5660.

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