Remarks from the International Road Transport Union

RU’s US freight member, ATA, has reported the following:

With effect from midnight, Friday 20 March, the US-Canada and US-Mexico border ports of entry have implemented a partial travel ban. This ban does not apply to trade or truck freight of any kind, nor to truck drivers from these three countries (providing the driver is in good health). Please see the highlights below, as well as the attached Federal Register notices.

There have been reports of some Customs and Border Protection officers on the northern border informing drivers that, with effect from 23 March, their loads will not be considered “essential”. There are also reports that some loads have already been turned away for the same reason. ATA has been informed that ALL truck freight is essential, and if drivers are told otherwise then he or she must request the assistance of a supervisor. Furthermore, drivers commuting to work across the border, or persons crossing the border on foot to collect a load, are also permitted to cross.

If you receive reports from your drivers of any issues, please inform ATA immediately to inform the CBP. Field officers should be fully aware that all freight and all truck drivers are considered essential at this point.

Updated situation on Domestic Freight Operations in the United States of America.

On 18 March, the FMCSA released an updated Emergency Declaration for commercial motor vehicle operations providing direct assistance to COVID-19 relief efforts. The declaration can be located on the FMCSA’s website here.

In the update, the FMCSA provided new guidance on which operations are covered by the declaration, clarifying that fuel haulers are in fact included. The updated declaration also provides new guidance on “mixed load” operations.

“We thank Administrator Mullen and the Trump Administration for continued support to our industry as we deliver food, water, medicine, medical supplies, fuel and other essentials throughout this public health crisis,” said Dan Horvath, Vice President of Safety Policy at the American Trucking Associations. “The men and women of the trucking industry are heroes who remain on the front lines in this national effort.”

ATA encourages individuals to review the official declaration to determine whether their operations are included:

This Emergency Declaration provides regulatory relief for commercial motor vehicle operations providing direct assistance in support of emergency relief efforts related to the COVID-19 outbreaks, including transportation to meet immediate needs for: (1) medical supplies and equipment related to the testing, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19; (2) supplies and equipment necessary for community safety, sanitation, and prevention of community transmission of COVID-19 such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap and disinfectants; (3) food, paper products and other groceries for emergency restocking of distribution centers or stores; (4) immediate precursor raw materials - such as paper, plastic or alcohol - that are required and to be used for the manufacture of items in categories (1), (2) or (3); (5) fuel; (6) equipment, supplies and persons necessary to establish and manage temporary housing, quarantine, and isolation facilities related to COVID-19; (7) persons designated by Federal, State or local authorities for medical, isolation, or quarantine purposes; and (8) persons necessary to provide other medical or emergency services, the supply of which may be affected by the COVID-19 response. Direct assistance does not include routine commercial deliveries, including mixed loads with a nominal quantity of qualifying emergency relief added to obtain the benefits of this emergency declaration.
Legislative Powers (i.e. on matters such as imposed quarantine):


Arrival Restrictions and Quarantine Arrangements:


The CDC is working with state and local public health partners to implement after-travel health precautions. Depending on a person’s travel history, that person could be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days from the time the person left an area with widespread or ongoing community spread.

Information on travellers returning from high-risk countries can be found on the CDC website (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html).

In Country Visa Issues:

Inquiries received from non-immigrant travellers in-country whose visas are nearing expiration are referred to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Public Health Advice:


Industry Engagement:

CBP continues to engage with CDC and Industry Stakeholders in order to continue the flow of legitimate trade and travel into and out of the United States.

Planning:

CBP has national pandemic plans and continuity of operations plans in place. CBP has appropriate PPE at all ports, stations, air branches, and at all operational locations globally.

CBP has a Safety and Occupational Health Specialist located in every Field Office and Sector to assist operational components complete the mission of CBP while ensuring that CBP employees remain safe. CBP has activated its Emergency Operations Center to assist in the execution of the CBP response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This 24/7 activity integrates representatives from all offices to manage emergency response assets and coordinate information and resources.

For the most up to date information, visit the DHS website (https://www.dhs.gov/coronavirus) and CBP homepage (https://www.cbp.gov/).