

Truck Stop

I'm going to file for an Exemption regarding the ELD that I've been using in my truck the past month and a half. Not sure what my particular exemption will entail but, whereas, everybody else in the trucking industry is applying for exemptions, I don't want to be left out.

Problem is, the darned thing is actually working quite well. Oh sure, **ELDOR** and I got off to a somewhat rocky start, but we are running smoothly now, sorta... (*ELDOR* is the name of the ELD device in my truck... *ELDOR*, the Ruler of all Time, Space and Dimension, Cousin of Chronos, Nephew of Zeus, and good buddy of Herculeez himself...)

I managed to install the ELD box on the dash without having to pull the engine, and instantly after plugging it into the truck wiring the two "blinky, ya I'm working OK, lights" started blinking.

As this system is one that uses your tablet or cell phone, I installed their App and fired it up. It tells me my user ID isn't valid so I speed-dialed their number and, almost instantly, I was chatting with Tech-Support. (Major plus for this particular company: when you call them, they answer instantly; Major minus for this particular company: Headquarters for Tech-Support is located right by where the borders of Nepal, India, and Pakistan all come together.)

Anyway, the nice young man tells me that my user name "Richarddatatarka" "I've got it, sir, still nothing... Richardtatarka, right?" "Yes, Richarddartatarka..." "Wait, What? RichardDartTatarka?" "Yes, Richarddartatarka." So I tried RichardDartTatarka... Still nothing.

So I told him "Richard Dart Tatarka ain't working, sir." "What's the Dart for?" I asked. "Dart? Not Dart," he says, "Doat." "Doat?" "Yup, Doat." "Do you mean Dot maybe?" Richard.tatarka, perhaps? **Bingo, we're in!** We now have a fully functional ELD... Sheesh...

Day one starts out a bit slow as I'm also running a paper log, just in case *ELDOR* should suddenly find itself out the window. For a little over three years now we have been having to deal with the half hour break we are required to take no later than 8 hours after you come on duty. Also referred to as the Federally Mandated Nap, it largely is nothing but a pain to deal with.

I had mine coming up that first day so I pulled over and hit the off-duty button on the ELD control panel. In the paper logbook galaxy, ones world is divided into 15 minute intervals and one rounds up or down when making logbook entries. Not so in the world that *ELDOR* rules... My half hour break on paper was 30 minutes long but on the ELD it was 29 minutes and 37 seconds and as such didn't count as a half hour break. I was forced to take another half hour break in order to stay in compliance.

The next morning I got my pre trip inspection done, my start times entered on my ELD, and when I got to my next stop I flipped open the tablet and a big red "VIOLATION" is flashing on the screen. Upon further review I logged on after my 10 hour break at 9 hours 59 minutes and 43 seconds. Oops...

One other way cool thing about the ELD is the "Yard Move" feature. That allows you to drive and count as on-duty time (instead of drive time) the driving you might do at the mill, or even in the woods.

The ELD is also programmed to not start tallying drive time until it detects you're moving over 5 mph. Theoretically one can drive a long ways and not start your drive time clock at 4.9 mph, but realistically a typical Livingston, Montana wind rocks your cab equivalent to about 9 mph. The ELD is programmed to record any movement over 5 mph, and goes in the Drive column unless you're in the Yard Move Mode.

Drive time is NOT editable at all; but the on-duty not-driving and the off-duty time are changeable if you need to edit them. That feature allows you to put details in your E-logs after the fact... nice for making changes at the end of the day, thus making the ELD not quite so restrictive. And, thanks to the exemption that the guys in the Brown Trucks that bring all the Christmas presents asked for, you don't have to be in your truck to put the finishing touches on your daily log. Yay.

I always wondered how *ELDOR* would perform in fringe areas where there is no cell coverage, and it seems to work just fine. It actually stores your info in the box with the two blinky lights (now covered with black electrical tape by the way) and soon as you hit cell coverage or a Wi-Fi spot it updates your account on the big computer somewhere near the Nepal-India-Pakistan border.

But another problem arises if you need to print copies for your records. I need a copy for my tax guy and a copy for the guy I'm leased to. The two page paper log produced two copies per day, one for each of us, 60 per month. The same thing from the ELD requires 186 pieces of paper. Buy stock in some paper companies before the 18th of December I'd say....

That said, the ELD is here to stay, as all attempts to delay the implementation have failed. Hopefully by now, if you need one you have it installed and are working the bugs out of it and learning how to run it. Welcome to the Future, I guess...

I've got to close now as a general lack of global warming has caught me off guard and I need to walk down to the UFA and see if they have any warm boots...

Until next time, That is All, **Rich Tee**