



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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REST BREAKS FOR STATE SNOW PLOW DRIVERS

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You asked how often state Department of Transportation (DOT) snowplow drivers take rest breaks, whether the same rest break schedule applies to independent contractors DOT hires, and what percentage of Massachusetts snowplow drivers are state employees.

CONNECTICUT SNOWPLOW DRIVERS

DOT Drivers

According to DOT, its employees who drive snowplows are entitled under union contract ([Maintenance & Service NP-2 Bargaining Unit Contract § 52](#)) to a three hour rest period after working 17 consecutive hours. Under that same contract, DOT cannot require an employee to work more than 21 consecutive hours without beginning the rest period. A supervisor has discretion to provide longer rest periods.

Independent Contractors and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Act

Rest breaks for independent snowplow contractors depend on the terms of their contracts with DOT. Assuming that these contracts do not deem the independent contractors state employees (in which case the union contract's terms would apply) independent drivers are subject to federal regulation and state law.

Connecticut law ([CGS § 14-163c](#)) applies federal Motor Carrier Safety Act regulations to drivers of commercial motor vehicles in intrastate commerce that weigh more than 18,000 pounds. The regulations allow drivers of these vehicles to work shifts of up to 14 hours, during which they can only drive a total of 11 hours. They must get 10 consecutive hours off after each 14-hour shift.

However, the regulations allow a “short haul” exception for drivers whose trucks stay within a 100-mile radius of their normal worksite. These drivers can work a 12-hour day, during which they can drive a maximum of 11 hours, and then must get 10 hours off.

Drivers whose snowplow trucks weigh 18,000 pounds or less are regulated under a state law which sets a 12-hour on-duty limit, followed by eight required consecutive hours off-duty ([CGS § 14-274](#)).

MASSACHUSETTS SNOWPLOW DRIVERS

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) relies primarily on independent contractors to remove snow and ice. According to Paul Brown, Director of Snow and Ice Operations for MassDOT, only about 10% of the state’s 3,000 snowplow drivers are state employees.

HYPERLINKS

Maintenance & Service NP-2 Bargaining Unit Contract § 52,
http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/olr/contracts/np2_contract_2012.pdf

CGS § 14-163c,
<http://cga.ct.gov/2011/pub/chap246.htm#Sec14-163c.htm>

CGS § 14-274,
<http://cga.ct.gov/2011/pub/chap248.htm#Sec14-274.htm>

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