Wage and Hour Division, Labor

§ 782.5 Loaders.

(a) A “loader,” as defined for Motor Carrier Act jurisdiction (Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, 133, 134, 139), is an employee of a carrier subject to section 204 of the Motor Carrier Act (other than a driver or driver’s helper as defined in §§782.3 and 782.4) whose duties include, among other things, the proper loading of his employer’s motor vehicles so that they may be safely operated on the highways of the country. A “loader” may be called by another name, such as “dockman,” “stacker,” or “helper,” and his duties will usually also include unloading and the transfer of freight between the vehicles and the warehouse, but he engages, as a “loader,” in work directly affecting “safety of operation” so long as he has responsibility when such motor vehicles are being loaded, for exercising judgment and discretion in planning and building a balanced load or in placing, distributing, or securing the pieces of freight in such a manner that the safe operation of the vehicles on the highways in interstate or foreign commerce will not be jeopardized. (Levinson v. Spector Motor Service, 300 U.S. 649; Pyramid Motor Freight Corp. v. Ispass, 330 U.S. 695; Walling v. Gordon’s Transport (W.D. Tenn.), 10 Labor Cases par. 62,931, 6 W.H. Cases 916. See also Levinson v. Spector Motor Service, 330 U.S. 649; Pyramid Motor Freight Corp. v. Ispass, 330 U.S. 695; Dallum v. Farmers, Coop Trucking Assn. 46 F. Supp. 785 (D. Minn.).) The exemption has been held inapplicable to so-called helpers who ride on motor vehicles but do not engage in any of the activities of “helpers” which have been found to affect directly the safety of operation of such vehicles in interstate or foreign commerce. (Walling v. Gordon’s Transports (W.D. Tenn.) 10 Labor Cases par. 62,934, 6 W.H. Cases 916, affirmed 162 F. (2d) 203 (C.A. 6), certiorari denied, 332 U.S. 774; Huber Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 855; Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, 133, 134).

(b) The section 13(b)(1) exemption applies, in accordance with principles previously stated (see §782.2), to an employee whose job involves activities consisting wholly or in part of doing, or immediately directing, a class of work defined: (1) As that of a loader, and (2) as directly affecting the safety of operation of motor vehicles in interstate or foreign commerce within the meaning of the Motor Carrier Act jurisdiction (Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, 133, 134, 139), is an employee of a carrier subject to section 204 of the Motor Carrier Act (other than a driver or driver’s helper as defined in §§782.3 and 782.4) whose duties include, among other things, the proper loading of his employer’s motor vehicles so that they may be safely operated on the highways of the country. A “loader” may be called by another name, such as “dockman,” “stacker,” or “helper,” and his duties will usually also include unloading and the transfer of freight between the vehicles and the warehouse, but he engages, as a “loader,” in work directly affecting “safety of operation” so long as he has responsibility when such motor vehicles are being loaded, for exercising judgment and discretion in planning and building a balanced load or in placing, distributing, or securing the pieces of freight in such a manner that the safe operation of the vehicles on the highways in interstate or foreign commerce will not be jeopardized. (Levinson v. Spector Motor Service, 300 U.S. 649; Pyramid Motor Freight Corp. v. Ispass, 330 U.S. 695; Walling v. Gordon’s Transport (W.D. Tenn.), 10 Labor Cases par. 62,934, affirmed 162 F. (2d) 203 (C.A. 6), certiorari denied, 332 U.S. 774; Walling v. Huber & Huber Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 855; Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, 133, 134).

“helpers” whose such buses are being operated in interstate or foreign commerce, because in instances when accidents occur, they help the driver in obtaining aid and protect the vehicle from oncoming traffic.

(c) In accordance with principles previously stated (see §782.2), the section 13(b)(1) exemption applies to employees who are, under the Secretary of Transportation’s definitions, engaged in such activities as full- or partial-duty “helpers” on motor vehicles being operated in transporation in interstate or foreign commerce within the meaning of the Motor Carrier Act. (Ispass v. Pyramid Motor Freight Corp., 152 F. (2d) 619 (C.A. 2); Walling v. McGinley Co. (E.D. Tenn.), 12 Labor Cases, par. 63,731, 6 W.H. Cases 916. See also Levinson v. Spector Motor Service, 330 U.S. 649; Pyramid Motor Freight Corp. v. Ispass, 330 U.S. 695; Dallum v. Farmers, Coop Trucking Assn. 46 F. Supp. 785 (D. Minn.).) The exemption has been held inapplicable to so-called helpers who ride on motor vehicles but do not engage in any of the activities of “helpers” which have been found to affect directly the safety of operation of such vehicles in interstate or foreign commerce. (Walling v. Gordon’s Transports (W.D. Tenn.) 10 Labor Cases par. 62,934, 6 W.H. Cases 916, affirmed 162 F. (2d) 203 (C.A. 6), certiorari denied, 332 U.S. 774; Huber Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 855; Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, 133, 134).
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(c) An employee is not exempt as a loader where his activities in connection with the loading of motor vehicles are confined to classes of work other than the kind of loading described above, which directly affects “safety of operation.” (Pyramid Motor Freight Corp. v. Ispass, 330 U.S. 695; Levinson v. Spector Motor Service, 330 U.S. 649) The mere handling of freight at a terminal, before or after loading, or even the placing of certain articles of freight on a motor carrier truck may form so trivial, casual, or occasional a part of an employee’s activities, or his activities may relate only to such articles or to such limited handling of them, that his activities will not come within the kind of “loading” which directly affects “safety of operation.” Thus the following activities have been held to provide no basis for exemption: Unloading; placing freight in convenient places in the terminal, checking bills of lading; wheeling or calling freight being loaded or unloaded; loading vehicles for trips which will not involve transportation in interstate or foreign commerce within the meaning of the Motor Carrier Act; and activities relating to the preservation of the freight as distinguished from the safety of operation of the motor vehicles carrying such freight on the highways. (Pyramid Motor Freight Corp. v. Ispass, 330 U.S. 695; Levinson v. Spector Motor Service, 330 U.S. 649; Porter v. Poindexter, 158 F. (2d) 759 (C.A. 10); McKeown v. Southern Calif. Freight Forwarders, 49 F. Supp. 543; Walling v. Gordon’s Transports (W.D. Tenn.), 10 Labor Cases, par. 62,934; affirmed 162 F. (2d) 203 (C.A. 6), certiorari denied 332 U.S. 774; Walling v. Huber & Huber Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 855; Walling v. Silver Fleet Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 846; Crean v. Moran Transportation Lines, 50 F. Supp. 107, 54 F. Supp. 765 (cf. 57 F. Supp. 212); Gibson v. Glasgow (Tenn. Sup. Ct.) 157 S.W. (2d) 814. See also Keeling v. Huber & Huber Motor Express, 57 F. Supp. 617.) As is apparent from opinion in Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, red caps of bus companies engaged in loading baggage on buses are not loaders engaged in work directly affecting safety of operation of the vehicles. In the same opinion, it is expressly recognized that there is a class of freight which, because it is light in weight, probably could not be loaded in a manner which would adversely affect “safety of operations.” Support for this conclusion is found in Wirtz v. C&P Shoe Corp. 335 F. (2d) 21 (C.A. 5), wherein the court held the loading of boxes of shoes, patterned on the last in, first out principle clearly was not of a safety affecting character “in view of the light weight of the cargo involved.” In the case of coal trucks which are loaded from stockpiles by the use of an electric bridge crane and a mechanical conveyor, it has been held that employees operating such a crane or conveyor in the loading process are not exempt as “loaders” under section 13(b)(1). (Barrick v. South Chicago Coal & Dock Co. (N. D. Ill.), 8 Labor Cases, par. 62,242, affirmed 149 F. (2d) 960 (C.A. 7).) It seems apparent from the foregoing discussion that an employee who has no responsibility for the proper loading of a motor vehicle is not within the exemption as a “loader” merely because he furnishes physical assistance when necessary in loading heavy pieces of freight, or because he deposits pieces of freight in the vehicle for someone else to distribute and secure inplace, or even because he does the physical work of arranging pieces of freight in the vehicle where another

§ 782.6 Mechanics.

(a) A “mechanic,” for purposes of safety regulations under the Motor Carrier Act is an employee who is employed by a carrier subject to the Secretary’s jurisdiction under section 204 of the Motor Carrier Act and whose duty it is to keep motor vehicles operated in interstate or foreign commerce by his employer in a good and safe working condition. (Ex parte Nos. MC–2 and MC–3, 28 M.C.C. 125, 139, 194. Ex parte No. MC–40 (Sub. No. 2), 88 M.C.C. 710 (repair of refrigeration equipment.) See also Morris v. McComb, 332 U.S. 422.) It has been determined that the safety of operation of such motor vehicles on the highways is directly affected by those activities of mechanics, such as keeping the lights and brakes in a good and safe working condition, which prevent the vehicles from becoming potential hazards to highway safety and thus aid in the prevention of accidents. The courts have held that mechanics perform work of this character where they actually do inspection, adjustment, repair or maintenance work on the motor vehicles themselves (including trucks, tractors and trailers, and buses) and are, when so engaged, directly responsible for creating or maintaining physical conditions essential to the safety of the vehicles on the highways through the correction or prevention of defects which have a direct causal connection with the safe operation of the unit as a whole. (Walling v. Silver Bros., 136 F. (2d) 168 (C.A. 1); McDuffie v. Hayes Freight Lines, 71 F. Supp. 755; Walling v. Silver Fleet Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 846; Keeling v. Huber & Huber Motor Express, 57 F. Supp. 617; Walling v. Huber & Huber Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 855; Tinerella v. Des Moines Transp. Co., 41 F. Supp. 798; Robbins v. Zabarsky, 44 F. Supp. 867; West V. Smoky Mt. Stages, 40 F. Supp. 296; Walling v. Cumberland & Liberty Mills Co. (S.D. Fla.), 6 Labor Cases, par. 61,184; Esibill v. Marshall (D. N.J.), 6 Labor Cases, par. 61,266; Keegan v. Ruppert (S.D. N.Y.), 7 Labor Cases, par. 61,726; Baker v. Sharpless Hendler Ice Cream Co. (E.D. Pa.), 10 Labor Cases, par. 62,956; Kentucky Transport Co. v. Drake (Ky. Ct. App.), 182 SW (2d) 960.) The following activities performed by mechanics on motor vehicles operated in interstate or foreign commerce are illustrative of the specific kinds of activities which the courts, in applying the foregoing principles, have regarded as directly affecting “safety of operation”: The inspection, repair, adjustment, and maintenance for safe operation of steering apparatus, lights, brakes, horns, windshield wipers, wheels and axles, bushings, transmissions, differentials, motors, starters and ignition, carburetors, fifth wheels, springs and spring hangers, frames, and gasoline tanks (McDuffie v. Hayes Freight Lines, 71 F. Supp. 755; Walling v. Silver Fleet Motor Express, 67 F. Supp. 846; Wolfe v. Union Transfer & Storage Co., 48 F. Supp. 855; Mason & Dixon Lines v. Ligon (Tenn. Ct. App.), 7 Labor Cases, par. 61,962; Walling v. Palmer, 67 F. Supp. 12; Kentucky Transport Co. v. Drake (Ky. Ct. App.), 182 SW (2d) 960.) Inspecting and checking air pressure in tires, changing tires, and repairing and rebuilding tires for immediate replacement on the vehicle from which they were removed.