



National Entry Level Training Standards and Ontario adding pre-clearance option for carriers/drivers, 2 positive Announcements for the Industry

On Monday January 21st Federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau made the announcement that a Federal Entry level training standard for Commercial drivers will be in place by January of 2020. While details are scarce at this point, what we do know is the Feds, Provinces and Territories, along with the Industry, will be working together, through the CCMTA, to develop a national standard which will be imbedded within the National Safety Code. This is a step in the right direction, and one that is long overdue. The PMTC has long been an advocate of Mandatory Entry Level Training standards and have been encouraging Transport Canada for years to develop a minimum National Standard to guide all jurisdictions in Canada. Currently Ontario is the only jurisdiction with MELT, requiring 103.5 hours of training. Alberta and Saskatchewan will be joining Ontario in March, requiring 121.5 hours of Training. Manitoba is also currently working with Stakeholders and expect to announce their MELT standard sometime in 2019. A few other jurisdictions are planning consultations for 2019 or 2020 but have not officially announced timelines or framework for these consultations as of the time of penning this article. While this is great news, it still leaves 7 Jurisdictions that have yet to announce any plans for MELT. Guidance from the Feds is needed so we can ensure a minimum standard that all jurisdictions can adopt, that will form the framework for reciprocal agreements for commercial driver license standards, and license exchange from coast to coast to coast. Many will argue that 103.5, or 121.5, or whatever number the feds come up with, are not near enough hours to train somewhere to be a Professional CMV operator. I can't argue this point, as they are correct, but one must keep in mind, these are minimum standards to Provide a better ENTRY LEVEL DRIVER. It is still up to Industry to ensure we provide more guidance, training and mentorship when the new driver enters the industry. MELT is not intended to, nor will it ever replace proper training programs from Industry to expand the skills of new drivers. The PMTC views this announcement as a positive step, and one that hopefully brings us one step closer to having the job of a Professional Truck Driver classified as a skilled occupation. The PMTC looks forward to working with the CCMTA and Transport Canada in developing the new entry level standards, just as we did when working with other jurisdictions on their consultations.

I also briefly want to mention Ontario's announcement on January 24th that they were joining the ranks of Alberta and 41 US States in implementing pre-clearance technology at their weigh scales across the Province. https://www.cfmediaview.com/lp1.aspx?v=16_84040327_12199_14 This is positive news and I encourage all carriers who operate in Alberta, Ontario or the US to look into applying to be part of the program. The program is not mandatory, carriers and/or drivers only need to apply if they want to, however the benefits to everyone, in my view, are more than worth becoming part of the program. As the release states, carriers who have good safety records will have the luxury of being cleared to by pass weigh stations more often, saving the driver and the carrier time and money. This will also allow enforcement officers to spend more time inspecting equipment that historically have higher failure rates, thus removing unsafe vehicles from the roadway until repairs are made. There really is no downside to becoming part of this program. I encourage the remaining jurisdictions in Canada to become part of this program as well, as the more we have involved, the better the payback is to the carriers and drivers enrolled, and the industry as a whole.