

Case Study for Group Discussion

A Road-Side Stop, Part 2

- ➔ This case study focuses on a hypothetical scenario involving a bobtail driver's conversation with a law enforcement officer during a probable cause road-side stop. Safety and preparedness are your responsibility—both you and your employer are accountable for meeting all compliance requirements.

After you read the scenario, discuss the talking points with your group.

Scenario:

OFFICER: How are you doing today?

DRIVER: Fine, is there a problem?

OFFICER: No just a routine seatbelt check. Can you get your driver's license and registration, insurance certification, and medical card for me...actually go ahead and grab your shipping papers, and emergency response information too.

DRIVER: Sure officer, hold on. I need just a minute to find them. Here's everything you asked for and my North American Emergency Response Guidebook.

OFFICER: Sir, I need your shipping papers.

DRIVER: That's what I gave you right?

OFFICER: Just grab all of your paperwork that you can FIND and step out of the vehicle please.

OFFICER: Hold tight a minute while I check out your bobtail. Did you know that one of your placards on the left side of your vehicle is missing? I also noticed that you are overdue for your annual inspection. Did you realize these issues before you took out your vehicle this morning?

DRIVER: No, sir, I didn't. I mean, I was notified that I might be driving another vehicle this month at some point...maybe my supervisor scheduled that...but I didn't notice the missing placard.

OFFICER: Well, today is not your day. It is illegal for you to drive your vehicle without an updated annual inspection. Seems like you have several other violations with your shipping papers and your emergency response information out of reach, and you are also missing a placard.



DRIVER: Please don't contact my supervisor. I have a family to support.

OFFICER: Sir, there is nothing your supervisor can do. In fact, both you and your supervisor are responsible for the annual inspection violation. Sorry to say that you and your company will be cited. Perhaps you could have been a more responsible driver. If you would have taken a few minutes to make sure that your vehicle was in the proper driving condition and had placed your documents in the correct location of your cab, you could have avoided additional infractions.

Now, can I have the name of your company and your supervisor's phone number?



Talking Points:

- When preparing for a delivery, discuss the daily procedures you must follow. Think about the necessary paperwork that must be with you and readily available in your vehicle.
- Discuss policies and procedures the employee should have considered in this scenario, and what, if anything, would you have done differently?

HERE'S WHAT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS HAVE TO SAY:

This case study presents a situation where the driver has neglected to uphold his duties as a bobtail driver and shows a good example of the “snowball effect”—how just one mistake can lead to a law enforcement officer discovering bigger problems. Remember this always: the first thing a law enforcement officer is going to do in any kind of stop is ask for ALL of the required paperwork. If that's in order, in most cases you won't have a problem. Be smart and make sure all of your documentation is on hand and readily available.

In the first scenario, the driver had the required documentation, but didn't know how to properly abide by it. He forgot to wear his glasses. In this case, it's just the opposite. Not only did the driver misunderstand the documentation requirements for both shipping papers and emergency response information, they weren't readily available either. Honest mistake? Perhaps. Regardless, it was a costly one with serious consequences. The North American Emergency Guidebook alone does not satisfy the documentation requirement for both shipping papers and emergency response information. The driver was operating his vehicle without being compliant with the DOT.

Because the driver was stopped for a routine seatbelt check, if there had not been an issue with the paperwork, the officer would have sent him on his way. However, once that issue was discovered, it gave the officer a reason to make the driver step out of the vehicle, allowing him to do a visual inspection of the bobtail. This leads to the next error, the missing placard.

Prior to taking his vehicle out onto the road, the driver should have performed a routine pre-trip inspection. This practice is crucial for maintaining personal and vehicle safety as well as compliance with the DOT. The driver could have had the placard replaced and would have been switched to another truck so that there would have been no delay in his scheduled deliveries. On a more serious note, if the truck was missing a second placard, the vehicle would have been placed out of service. Like the other case study scenario, the driver will be cited and both he and his company will have to pay a fine.