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Building confidence around your ELD adoption and implementation

When you head out on the road, it pays off to plan a safe and efficient route to your end destination. The more you prepare ahead of time, the more you will ensure you are ready to tackle those potential bumps and challenges that inevitably lie ahead on your journey. This same principle applies to your electronic logging device (ELD) adoption and implementation.

Making the decision to transition from paper or automatic on-board recording devices (AOBRDs) to ELDs is the easy part. The challenging part is in setting clear goals and realistic expectations around the changes or adjustments that come with implementing a new technology solution. However, once you clearly grasp the key steps involved with achieving a successful implementation, the more prepared you'll be to devise your own strategic plan and approach that aligns with your specific operational needs.

Your experience with ELD implementation relies heavily on the strength of the partnership you forge with your ELD provider. For instance, there are various touch points that involve coordination between your team of drivers and support staff, and the provider's team of experts. It's important to inquire and discover the level of engagement, training and ongoing support you require and expect to receive from your provider.

Clearly, there's no one-size-fits-all model for ELD implementation. The best place to start is to understand your specific operational needs so that you can build the confidence to begin your adoption and implementation.

Let's scope out your operational needs and variables for implementation

Depending on the way you run your operation, your choice for adoption and steps involved with implementation will vary. The following are some of the most common operational needs that influence your choice in and rolling it out across your fleet.

• WORKING IN REMOTE AREAS

Drivers operating in specific industries such as oil fields, forestry and logging and agriculture are more likely to find themselves in geographical areas that lack cellular or satellite connectivity. Similarly, over-the-road drivers may encounter times without connectivity as they travel through remote or poorly networked locations while on various routes.

Even the most robust devices may drop connectivity from time to time. However, it is crucially important if you have drivers going through remote areas, to inquire and understand how frequently it may occur, what happens when signal does go down, and whether the system has built-in backup and redundancy capabilities that will ensure the data integrity will not be compromised.

When connectivity does go down, there is increased risk of drivers losing their data, and elevated potential for malfunctions or data diagnostic events on the ELD. For example, an ELD must trigger a positioning compliance malfunction when the ELD is unable to retrieve a location for 60 minutes over a 24-hour period.

Your evaluation must turn to how the ELD solutions are designed. You should look for hardware devices with backup and redundancy capability that stores the driver's information while offline and transfer the data when the connectivity is established. Further, inspect the ELD back-end

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system for ways that will alert you of data diagnostics and malfunctions as they occur. The best way to manage your remotely-operating fleet is to ensure you have the correct visibility over any issues as they arise.

• MIXED FLEET OF VEHICLES

The makeup of your fleet can be comprised of heavy and light vehicles of various makes, models and years. Depending on the types of vehicles and the electronic control module (ECM) it may (or may not) have, you might require different types of installations. Specifically, the installation will involve matching the correct cables or connectors for your vehicle and the ELD device.

You must be aware that certain ELD devices may not be compatible with some of your vehicles. For instance, there are some ELD devices that cannot connect to older vehicles; whether it be vehicles that lack an ECM or those that have specific types of ECMs.

Per the ELD mandate, and recently issued guidance from Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), only the vehicles that have pre-2000 engines are exempted from ELDs. Although exempt, you may voluntarily choose to implement ELDs across your entire vehicle fleet to take advantage of having complete visibility and management in one system. In this case, it's incumbent upon you to check with the ELD provider and ask if all your vehicles are compatible with the ELD device.
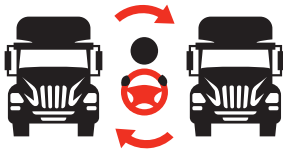
• SLIP SEAT DRIVING

You may be running a 24/7 operation with day and night shift drivers that switch in and out between vehicles. This means you'll probably have drivers that constantly change vehicles and multiple drivers that login and logout of an ELD installed into a vehicle each day. To support this busy operation, you'll need to look for an ELD that's simple and intuitive allowing drivers to login/logout and easily access their logs.

It is a requirement outlined in the ELD mandate for the drivers to be able to access their record of duty status (RODs) when they log into any ELD device across the carrier's chosen system. Be aware that the ELDs that connect to the vehicle via Bluetooth may take longer for your drivers to login. The Bluetooth connection must be re-established each time. Bring-your-own-device ELD solutions typically rely on Bluetooth connections and would exhibit the login delay. Clearly, if drivers are required to login/logout frequently, this may take up valuable time that drivers have for the road.

You should consider an option where drivers can easily jump into any vehicle with their login credentials and have their logs downloaded to the device automatically. The dedicated ELD solutions that are tethered to the vehicle will not require drivers to wait for any connection and ensures that drivers can quickly login and access their logs as they enter the vehicle.

• TEAM DRIVING

Similarly, your drivers may be operating as a team and switch driving throughout the day. In this scenario, both drivers are required to log into the ELD at the same time; with one being the primary driver that's on duty driving, while the co-driver may be resting in the sleeper or in the passenger seat off duty.

Like slip seat driving, look for an ELD that has been designed with the drivers in mind: that makes it easy for both drivers to login to the ELD, and ensures that the driving time can be reviewed and correctly assigned to the correct driver.

The FMCSA mandate also requires an ELD to include a mute function to prevent disturbing a driver in the sleeper berth. It is possible for the mute function to be either manually selected or automatically built-in to stop audible alerts when one of the drivers enters sleeper berth status. Work with your team drivers to discover an ELD that caters to their driving scenario.

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• OWNER OPERATORS

Your operations may be partially or entirely comprised of, of owner operator drivers to meet the demands of your business customers. Especially where you have a lease contract with owner operators that works under your authority, you'll need to carefully consider the most appropriate way to: procure an ELD for the fleet; set up the drivers on the ELD system; and ensure that, as part of your implementation, you roll out policies outlining compliance obligations.

Depending on the nature of your relationship with the owner-operators, you may be able to procure an ELD system and provide that to your owner-operators. You may set up arrangements with the owner-operators to adopt the ELD you have chosen to use.

Where drivers operate under your authority, FMCSA has clearly outlined that it is the carrier that will be responsible for setting up the driver's ELD user accounts and ELD record keeping. This directly establishes the obligation on you, as the designated carrier, to maintain drivers' ELD records and monitor your drivers' hours of service (HOS) and ELD compliance.

Owner-operators commonly use their vehicles for personal use while not under load for the carrier's operations. With ELDs, it is imperative for the carriers to be intentional about setting up drivers with personal conveyance status and monitoring that it is used appropriately, for adequate periods by the drivers.

• MULTIPLE HOME TERMINALS

To manage your fleet efficiently across a wide geographical area, you may be running your operation out of multiple home terminals. Given where the terminals are located, you may have different administrative teams that support the dispatch of your drivers from your respective terminals.

The operations teams may only want access to, and visibility of, the drivers that they directly oversee. Seek out ELD systems that allow you to set up multiple home terminals for grouping your drivers and control user access by home terminal groups. This functionality is necessary for you to effectively delegate responsibility to fleet managers, dispatchers and safety managers by their respective terminals.

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It takes two to make the thing go right

You're the expert that knows how your operation thrives. Equally, your chosen ELD technology provider should be an expert that knows how an ELD solution can be effectively implemented to complement your operation. Your ELD provider can, and should, help you take out the guesswork and guide you through the key implementation steps.

Coordination, communication and collaboration are the main pillars that will cement a trusted partnership throughout the process and ensure successful outcomes for both parties.

Here are the key steps involved with ELD implementation that you and your ELD provider must discuss and set clear expectations and timeframes for.

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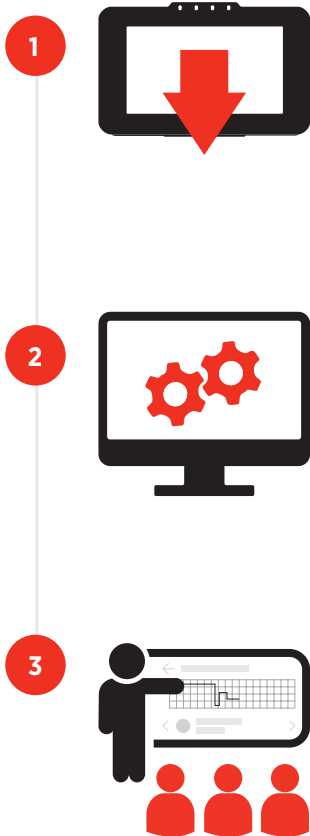
STEP 1: DEVICE INSTALLATION
You will need to share an up-to-date list of your vehicles with your ELD provider. This list should include, at a minimum, the vehicle's identification number, make, model and year.

The ELD provider should help you determine the correct cable and connector that you will need for each vehicle and outline the options available to you for installation – whether it is self-install or through a certified installer. It's worth asking if your mechanics can be guided or trained through the first few installations.

To minimize the interruption to your operations, it's most beneficial for the ELD providers to work with your dispatchers and fleet managers to identify the best times and locations for installation. Ideally, check the schedule for when the vehicle will be returning to a home terminal for service and maintenance and couple it with an ELD installation at the same time.

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STEP 2: BACK-END SYSTEM SETUP
Working closely with your ELD provider, your team will need to set up your entire fleet of vehicles and drivers on the back-end system. Identify individuals within your operations team, typically fleet managers and dispatchers, who are responsible for managing drivers' logs and require access to control the back-end system.

Consider the security and privacy of the information that you will be adding to the system and ensure that the individuals that are provided access to the back-end fully understand and adhere to any company policies you implement around safeguarding the information.

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STEP 3: TRAIN YOUR DRIVERS
The success of your ELD implementation hinges on your drivers' initial experience with learning how to use the ELD. A well-designed ELD that appreciates the driver's day-to-day work habits will make it simple for the driver to quickly and easily navigate through the logging in/out process, changing duty status, annotating, certifying and reviewing their logs.

FMCSA requires the ELD providers to develop user manuals and to ensure that the drivers using their ELDs are carrying it with them in the cab. A user manual is a good training tool for your drivers. However, you may want more effective training tools or options such as in-person training, training videos, webinars or train-the-trainer programs.

From the training content, to the methods you'll use to deliver the training, your available options depend upon the competency of your ELD provider, who must ensure that you have all the tools you need to successfully train your drivers. In other words, the strength of your provider – whether they have deep subject matter expertise around the mandate, HOS compliance, and the industry's best practices - will be reflected throughout your relationship.

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## Additional tips for a successful adoption and implementation

Depending on the complexity of your operations, there are different plans and strategies that would be most appropriate for your ELD roll out. That said, as you go through your implementation, you may want to consider these helpful tips from fellow carriers that have successfully implemented ELDs.

• RECRUIT DRIVER CHAMPIONS

Getting buy-in from your drivers is a critical piece in your implementation. Enabling one of your drivers to experience and walk through the steps and test out the ELD affords you with invaluable early feedback on your implementation strategy.

Your driver champion can also serve as an advocate for you. They will be able to highlight the benefits, quickly troubleshoot common issues and help train other drivers to understand how to navigate the ELD. These drivers can also serve as an extremely valuable feedback conduit for you to connect back to your provider with suggestions, dialogue around the product, and other unforeseen challenges.
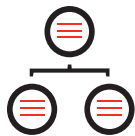
• PHASE IT OUT

Any good project manager will advise you that breaking down large tasks into smaller pieces will make the big picture implementation less daunting and more manageable. For carriers that have a large size fleet with multiple terminals, it can help to start with a small group of drivers in one terminal and understand what works and what doesn't.

By taking a phased-in approach, you unlock an opportunity to iron out any issues and share lessons learnt across to the other driver groups and terminals. You can also achieve a level of consistency across your company.

• OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND UPDATE COMPANY POLICIES

With ELDs, drivers must inevitably adapt to the new electronic means of recording their HOS data. For example, as ELDs automatically start recording driving time once the vehicle reaches 5 mph: drivers must remember to log in to avoid creating an unassigned driving event which imposes increased back office administration of these events; and, if they are conducting yard move and personal conveyance, they select those statuses before they drive the vehicle.

It's important to take note of these key changes and outline clear expectations and best practices in your safety and compliance policies. Because the bottom line is that you are ultimately responsible for your drivers' HOS compliance and maintaining good record keeping of ELD data for audits.

• THINK LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES

Transitioning your drivers to ELDs may inadvertently provide you with extra visibility and insights around other aspect of your operations such as driver behavior or destination, delivery times and vehicle utilization. By optimizing the data at your fingertips, you may be able to improve outcomes in other areas of your business.

Working together with the technology provider, you may set mid- and long-term objectives to improve efficiency with your customers, develop driver coaching and safety programs and reward compliant practices by utilizing electronic tools that should be available on the same ELD platform.

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Your journey with EROAD

When it's time to make the transition, it's important to choose a technology partner that helps you every step of the way. Choosing EROAD means your company has a trusted partner to guide you through the transition from paper, or AOBRDs, to an ELD.

With EROAD's ELD, you can expect:

- **Confidence in every mile** – Our ELD is the only FMCSA registered solution that has been independently tested and third party verified as of June 30, 2017. It has been rigorously tested, in both technical and live operational environments, and proven to meet all the FMCSA technical specifications to assure you and your drivers compliance.

- **Best-in-class customer service** – EROAD's ELD solution is backed by a responsive, friendly and knowledgeable U.S. based customer service team dedicated to your success. From planning to installation to training, EROADs team will work with you to help you on your journey through implementation.

- **All-in-one solution** – We provide one platform with many solutions. As your needs grow, we have the right tool at every turn. From ELD and tax compliance, to driver safety and fleet management, EROAD is your all-in-one solution for eliminating paperwork, streamlining your tax reporting and giving you better insight into your drivers and fleet.

- **Continuous improvement –** We take feedback from our customers to build new and enhanced features. Our goal is to deploy and deliver quality software updates that will continue to meet your needs, now and in the future.

Industry and subject matter expertise – Our staff is deeply engaged in the industry and with key regulatory and commercial stakeholders. We offer thought leadership, education and technical expertise through memberships in our local, state and national associations and at their events, on committees and via speaking engagements on ELD panels. Our goal is to serve as good members within this community.

So start with us.

The route to compliance and the journey you've undertaken doesn't have to be hard. Preparation is the simplest way to success and your ELD partner should be expertly supporting you before you even hit the road and long after your drivers arrive home. Knowing you've got a 360 degrees network in place gives you confidence in every mile.

Soona Lee, Regulatory Compliance Manager, Strategy and Market Development
Soona has been with EROAD since 2013 and brings a strong public policy and legal background developed from working at the New Zealand Department of Treasury. Relocating to the U.S. in 2016, Soona is responsible for understanding regulations, policies and translating technical requirements for development of the company's compliance products. Soona works closely with carriers, drivers and the enforcement community to bridge the gap between the regulations, technology and the industry operations.

ABOUT EROAD, INC.

EROAD, Inc. is a leading transportation technology and services company, headquartered in Tualatin, Oregon. EROAD's in-vehicle technology and global electronic platform enables carriers to efficiently utilize their capital and reduce the costs associated with fleet operations and management. EROAD offers a complete suite of user-friendly compliance and telematics solutions, including automated IFTA, electronic weight-mile tax, ELD-ready electronic logbook, support for driver safety, vehicle maintenance, fuel and fleet utilization reporting. EROAD's independently proven, secure platform guarantees accurate data that you can rely on to provide insight and competitive advantage.