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PART 376—LEASE AND INTERCHANGE OF VEHICLES

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Subpart A—General Applicability and Definitions

§ 376.1 Applicability.

The regulations in this part apply to the following actions by motor carriers registered with the Secretary to transport property:

(a) The leasing of equipment with which to perform transportation regulated by the Secretary.

(b) The leasing of equipment to motor private carrier or shippers.

(c) The interchange of equipment between motor common carriers in the performance of transportation regulated by the Secretary.

[44 FR 4681, Jan. 23, 1979. Redesignated at 61 FR 54707, Oct. 21, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 15423, Apr. 1, 1997]

§ 376.2 Definitions.

(a) *Authorized carrier.* A person or persons authorized to engage in the transportation of property as a motor carrier under the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 13901 and 13902.

(b) *Equipment.* A motor vehicle, straight truck, tractor, semitrailer, full trailer, any combination of these and any other type of equipment used by authorized carriers in the transportation of property for hire.

(c) *Interchange.* The receipt of equipment by one motor common carrier of property from another such carrier, at a point which both carriers are authorized to serve, with which to continue a through movement.

(d) *Owner.* A person (1) to whom title to equipment has been issued, or (2) who, without title, has the right to exclusive use of equipment, or (3) who has lawful possession of equipment registered and licensed in any State in the name of that person.

(e) *Lease.* A contract or arrangement in which the owner grants the use of equipment, with or without driver, for a specified period to an authorized carrier for use in the regulated transportation of property, in exchange for compensation.

(f) *Lessor.* In a lease, the party granting the use of equipment, with or without driver, to another.

(g) *Lessee.* In a lease, the party acquiring the use of equipment with or without driver, from another.

(h) *Sublease.* A written contract in which the lessee grants the use of leased equipment, with or without driver, to another.

(i) *Addendum.* A supplement to an existing lease which is not effective until signed by the lessor and lessee.

(j) *Private carrier.* A person, other than a motor carrier, transporting property by motor vehicle in interstate or foreign commerce when (1) the person is the owner, lessee, or bailee of the property being transported; and (2) the property is being transported for sale, lease, rent, or bailment, or to further a commercial enterprise.

(k) *Shipper.* A person who sends or receives property which is transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

(l) *Escrow fund.* Money deposited by the lessor with either a third party or the lessee to guarantee performance, to repay advances, to cover repair expenses, to handle claims, to handle license and State permit costs, and for any other purposes mutually agreed upon by the lessor and lessee.

(m) *Detention.* The holding by a consignor or consignee of a trailer, with or without power unit and driver, beyond the free time allocated for the shipment, under circumstances not attributable to the performance of the carrier.

[44 FR 4681, Jan. 23, 1979, as amended at 49 FR 47850, Dec. 7, 1984; 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997]

Subpart B—Leasing Regulations

§ 376.11 General leasing requirements.

Other than through the interchange of equipment as set forth in § 376.31, and under the exemptions set forth in subpart C of these regulations, the authorized carrier may perform authorized transportation in equipment it does not own only under the following conditions:

(a) *Lease.* There shall be a written lease granting the use of the equipment and meeting the requirements contained in § 376.12.

(b) *Receipts for equipment.* Receipts, specifically identifying the equipment to be leased and stating the date and time of day possession is transferred, shall be given as follows:

(1) When possession of the equipment is taken by the authorized carrier, it shall give the owner of the equipment a receipt. The receipt identified in this section may be transmitted by mail, telegraph, or other similar means of communication.

(2) When possession of the equipment by the authorized carrier ends, a receipt shall be given in accordance with the terms of the lease agreement if the lease agreement requires a receipt.

(3) Authorized representatives of the carrier and the owner may take possession of leased equipment and give and receive the receipts required under this subsection.

(c) *Identification of equipment.* The authorized carrier acquiring the use of equipment under this section shall identify the equipment as being in its service as follows:

(1) During the period of the lease, the carrier shall identify the equipment in accordance with the FMCSA's requirements in 49 CFR part 390 of this chapter (Identification of Vehicles).

(2) Unless a copy of the lease is carried on the equipment, the authorized carrier shall keep a statement with the equipment during the period of the lease certifying that the equipment is being operated by it. The statement shall also specify the name of the owner, the date and length of the lease, any restrictions in the lease relative to the commodities to be transported, and the address at which the original lease is kept by the authorized carrier. This statement shall be prepared by the authorized carrier or its authorized representative.

(d) *Records of equipment.* The authorized carrier using equipment leased under this section shall keep records of the equipment as follows:

(1) The authorized carrier shall prepare and keep documents covering each trip for which the equipment is used in its service. These documents shall contain the name and address of the owner of the equipment, the point of origin, the time and date of departure, and the point of final destination. Also, the authorized carrier shall carry papers with the leased equipment during its operation containing this information and identifying the lading and clearly indicating that the transportation is under its responsibility. These papers shall be preserved by the authorized carrier as part of its transportation records. Leases which contain the information required by the provisions in this paragraph may be used and retained instead of such documents or papers. As to lease agreements negotiated under a master lease, this provision is complied with by having a copy of a master lease in the unit of equipment in question and where the balance of documentation called for by this paragraph is included in the freight documents prepared for the specific movement.

(2) [Reserved]

[44 FR 4681, Jan. 23, 1979, as amended at 49 FR 47269, Dec. 3, 1984; 49 FR 47850, Dec. 7, 1984; 50 FR 24649, June 12, 1985; 51 FR 37406, Oct. 22, 1986; 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997; 78 FR 58479, Sept. 24, 2013]

§ 376.12 Written lease requirements.

Except as provided in the exemptions set forth in subpart C of this part, the written lease required under § 376.11(a) shall contain the following provisions. The required lease provisions shall be adhered to and performed by the authorized carrier.

(a) *Parties.* The lease shall be made between the authorized carrier and the owner of the equipment. The lease shall be signed by these parties or by their authorized representatives.

(b) *Duration to be specific.* The lease shall specify the time and date or the circumstances on which the lease begins and ends. These times or circumstances shall coincide with the times for the giving of receipts required by § 376.11(b).

(c) *Exclusive possession and responsibilities.* (1) The lease shall provide that the authorized carrier lessee shall have exclusive possession, control, and use of the equipment for the duration of the lease. The lease shall further provide that the authorized carrier lessee shall assume complete responsibility for the operation of the equipment for the duration of the lease.

(2) Provision may be made in the lease for considering the authorized carrier lessee as the owner of the equipment for the purpose of subleasing it under these regulations to other authorized carriers during the lease.

(3) When an authorized carrier of household goods leases equipment for the transportation of household goods, as defined by the Secretary, the parties may provide in the lease that the provisions required by paragraph (c)(1) of this section apply only during the time the equipment is operated by or for the authorized carrier lessee.

(4) Nothing in the provisions required by paragraph (c)(1) of this section is intended to affect whether the lessor or driver provided by the lessor is an independent contractor or an employee of the authorized carrier lessee. An independent contractor relationship may exist when a carrier lessee complies with 49 U.S.C. 14102 and attendant administrative requirements.

(d) *Compensation to be specified.* The amount to be paid by the authorized carrier for equipment and driver's services shall be clearly stated on the face of the lease or in an addendum which is attached to the lease. Such lease or addendum shall be delivered to the lessor prior to the commencement of any trip in the service of the authorized carrier. An authorized representative of the lessor may accept these documents. The amount to be paid may be expressed as a percentage of gross revenue, a flat rate per mile, a variable rate depending on the direction traveled or the type of commodity transported, or by any other method of compensation mutually agreed upon by the parties to the lease. The compensation stated on the lease or in the attached addendum may apply to equipment and driver's services either separately or as a combined amount.

(e) *Items specified in lease.* The lease shall clearly specify which party is responsible for removing identification devices from the equipment upon the termination of the lease and when and how these devices, other than those painted directly on the equipment, will be returned to the carrier. The lease shall clearly specify the manner in which a receipt will be given to the authorized carrier by the equipment owner when the latter retakes possession of the equipment upon termination of the lease agreement, if a receipt is required at all by the lease. The lease shall clearly specify the responsibility of each party with respect to the cost of fuel, fuel taxes, empty mileage, permits of all types, tolls, ferries, detention and accessorial services, base plates and licenses, and any unused portions of such items. The lease shall clearly specify who is responsible for loading and unloading the property onto and from the motor vehicle, and the compensation, if any, to be paid for this service. Except when the violation results from the acts or omissions of the lessor, the authorized carrier lessee shall assume the risks and costs of fines for overweight and oversize trailers when the trailers are pre-loaded, sealed, or the load is containerized, or when the trailer or lading is otherwise outside of the lessor's control, and for improperly permitted overdimension and overweight loads and shall reimburse the lessor for any fines paid by the lessor. If the authorized carrier is authorized to receive a refund or a credit for base plates purchased by the lessor from, and issued in the name of, the authorized carrier, or if the base plates are authorized to be sold by the authorized carrier to another lessor the authorized carrier shall refund to the initial lessor on whose behalf the base plate was first obtained a prorated share of the amount received.

(f) *Payment period.* The lease shall specify that payment to the lessor shall be made within 15 days after submission of the necessary delivery documents and other paperwork concerning a trip in the service of the authorized carrier. The paperwork required before the lessor can receive payment is limited to log books required by the Department of Transportation and those documents necessary for the authorized carrier to secure payment from the shipper. In addition, the lease may provide that, upon termination of the lease agreement, as a condition precedent to payment, the lessor shall remove all identification devices of the authorized carrier and, except in the case of identification painted directly on equipment, return them to the carrier. If the identification device has been lost or stolen, a letter certifying its removal will satisfy this requirement. Until this requirement is complied with, the carrier may withhold final payment. The authorized carrier may require the submission of additional documents by the lessor but not as a prerequisite to payment. Payment to the lessor shall not be made contingent upon submission of a bill of lading to which no exceptions have been taken. The authorized carrier shall not set time limits for the submission by the lessor of required delivery documents and other paperwork.

(g) *Copies of freight bill or other form of freight documentation.* When a lessor's revenue is based on a percentage of the gross revenue for a shipment, the lease must specify that the authorized carrier will give the lessor, before or at the time of settlement, a copy of the rated freight bill or a computer-generated document containing the same information, or, in the case of contract carriers, any other form of documentation actually used for a shipment containing the same information that would appear on a rated freight bill. When a computer-generated document is provided, the lease will permit lessor to view, during normal business hours, a copy of any actual document underlying the computer-generated document. Regardless of the method of compensation, the lease must permit lessor to examine copies of the carrier's tariff or, in the case of contract carriers, other documents from which rates and charges are computed, provided that where rates and charges are computed from a contract of a contract carrier, only those portions of the contract containing the same information that would appear on a rated freight bill need be disclosed. The authorized carrier may delete the names of shippers and consignees shown on the freight bill or other form of documentation.

(h) *Charge-back items.* The lease shall clearly specify all items that may be initially paid for by the authorized carrier, but ultimately deducted from the lessor's compensation at the time of payment or settlement, together with a recitation as to how the amount of each item is to be computed. The lessor shall be afforded copies of those documents which are necessary to determine the validity of the charge.

(i) *Products, equipment, or services from authorized carrier.* The lease shall specify that the lessor is not required to purchase or rent any products, equipment, or services from the authorized carrier as a condition of entering into the lease arrangement. The lease shall specify the terms of any agreement in which the lessor is a party to an equipment purchase or rental contract which gives the authorized carrier the right to make deductions from the lessor's compensation for purchase or rental payments.

(j) *Insurance.* (1) The lease shall clearly specify the legal obligation of the authorized carrier to maintain insurance coverage for the protection of the public pursuant to FMCSA regulations under 49 U.S.C. 13906. The lease shall further specify who is responsible for providing any other insurance coverage for the operation of the leased equipment, such as bobtail insurance. If the authorized carrier will make a charge back to the lessor for any of this insurance, the lease shall specify the amount which will be charged-back to the lessor.

(2) If the lessor purchases any insurance coverage for the operation of the leased equipment from or through the authorized carrier, the lease shall specify that the authorized carrier will provide the lessor with a copy of each policy upon the request of the lessor. Also, where the lessor purchases such insurance in this manner, the lease shall specify that the authorized carrier will provide the lessor with a certificate of insurance for each such policy. Each certificate of insurance shall include the name of the insurer, the policy number, the effective dates of the policy, the amounts and types of coverage, the cost to the lessor for each type of coverage, and the deductible amount for each type of coverage for which the lessor may be liable.

(3) The lease shall clearly specify the conditions under which deductions for cargo or property damage may be made from the lessor's settlements. The lease shall further specify that the authorized carrier must provide the lessor with a written explanation and itemization of any deductions for cargo or property damage made from any compensation of money owed to the lessor. The written explanation and itemization must be delivered to the lessor before any deductions are made.

(k) *Escrow funds.* If escrow funds are required, the lease shall specify:

(1) The amount of any escrow fund or performance bond required to be paid by the lessor to the authorized carrier or to a third party.

(2) The specific items to which the escrow fund can be applied.

(3) That while the escrow fund is under the control of the authorized carrier, the authorized carrier shall provide an accounting to the lessor of any transactions involving such fund. The carrier shall perform this accounting in one of the following ways:

(i) By clearly indicating in individual settlement sheets the amount and description of any deduction or addition made to the escrow fund; or

(ii) By providing a separate accounting to the lessor of any transactions involving the escrow fund. This separate accounting shall be done on a monthly basis.

(4) The right of the lessor to demand to have an accounting for transactions involving the escrow fund at any time.

(5) That while the escrow fund is under the control of the carrier, the carrier shall pay interest on the escrow fund on at least a quarterly basis. For purposes of calculating the balance of the escrow fund on which interest must be paid, the carrier may deduct a sum equal to the average advance made to the individual lessor during the period of time for which interest is paid. The interest rate shall be established on the date the interest period begins and shall be at least equal to the average yield or equivalent coupon issue yield on 91-day, 13-week Treasury bills as established in the weekly auction by the Department of Treasury.

(6) The conditions the lessor must fulfill in order to have the escrow fund returned. At the time of the return of the escrow fund, the authorized carrier may deduct monies for those obligations incurred by the lessor which have been previously specified in the lease, and shall provide a final accounting to the lessor of all such final deductions made to the escrow fund. The lease shall further specify that in no event shall the escrow fund be returned later than 45 days from the date of termination.

(l) *Copies of the lease.* An original and two copies of each lease shall be signed by the parties. The authorized carrier shall keep the original and shall place a copy of the lease on the equipment during the period of the lease unless a statement as provided for in § 376.11(c)(2) is carried on the equipment instead. The owner of the equipment shall keep the other copy of the lease.

(m) This paragraph applies to owners who are not agents but whose equipment is used by an agent of an authorized carrier in providing transportation on behalf of that authorized carrier. In this situation, the authorized carrier is obligated to ensure that these owners receive all the rights and benefits due an owner under the leasing regulations, especially those set forth in paragraphs (d)-(k) of this section. This is true regardless of whether the lease for the equipment is directly between the authorized carrier and its agent rather than directly between the authorized carrier and each of these owners. The lease between an authorized carrier and its agent shall specify this obligation.

[44 FR 4681, Jan. 23, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 13092, Feb. 28, 1980; 47 FR 28398, June 30, 1982; 47 FR 51140, Nov. 12, 1982; 47 FR 54083, Dec. 1, 1982; 49 FR 47851, Dec. 7, 1984; 51 FR 37406, 37407, Oct. 22, 1986; 52 FR 2412, Jan. 22, 1987; 57 FR 32905, July 24, 1992; 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997]