



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Date: May 27, 2021

To: Andrew O'Connell, Administrative Law Judge, Administrative Law Division

From: Mathew Perkinson, Assistant Director, Transportation Safety Division

Re: TV-210284 and TV-210285 GM Move Transport LLC
Evaluation of Safety Management Plan, Recommendations regarding the company's safety rating, and the cancellation of household goods operating authority (THG068988)

On April 21, 2021, Commission staff (Staff) completed a routine safety investigation of GM Move Transport LLC (GM Move or Company) which resulted in a proposed conditional safety rating.

Provisional household goods companies must achieve a satisfactory safety rating prior to receiving permanent status. As the Company has yet to achieve a satisfactory safety rating, the Commission afforded GM Move the same opportunity as companies that receive a proposed unsatisfactory safety rating to provide evidence, in the form of an approved safety management plan, showing that the Company took corrective action to address the identified violations.

Commission rules prohibit motor carriers from operating beginning on the 61st day after the date of the notice of a proposed unsatisfactory rating. A company may request a change in its safety rating based on evidence that it has taken corrective actions to address the identified violations, and that its operations currently meet the safety standard and factors in 49 CFR § 385.5 and 385.7. In this case, GM Move has until June 18, 2021, to come into compliance with applicable laws and rules by obtaining Commission approval of a safety management plan.

The proposed conditional safety rating was based on three violations of critical regulations – 49 CFR § 391.51(a), 395.8(a)(1) and WAC 480-15-555.

“Critical” regulations are those identified as such where non-compliance relates to management and operational controls. These are indicative of breakdowns in a company's management controls. Patterns of non-compliance with a critical regulation are linked to inadequate safety management controls and higher than average accident rates.

Critical violations discovered during investigation:

1. Two violations of 49 CFR § 391.51(a) – Failing to maintain driver qualification file on each driver employed.
2. Fifteen violations of 49 CFR § 395.8(a)(1) – Failing to require a driver to prepare a record of duty status using the appropriate method.
3. Two violations of WAC 480-15-555 – Failing to conduct or retain paperwork containing criminal background check for a household goods carrier in the state of Washington as required.

In a May 6, 2021, Notice of Intent to Cancel, the Commission instructed GM Move to submit its proposed safety management plan no later than May 27, 2021.

On May 10, 2021, the Commission issued a penalty assessment against GM Move in the amount of \$400 as a result of violations discovered during the routine safety investigation.¹ The penalty includes:

1. A \$100 penalty for two violations of 49 CFR § 391.51(a) for failing to maintain driver qualification file on each driver employed.
2. A \$100 penalty for 15 violations of 49 CFR § 395.8(a)(1) for failing to require a driver to prepare a record of duty status using the appropriate method.
3. A \$200 penalty for one violation of WAC 480-15-555 for failing to conduct or retain paperwork containing criminal background check information for a household goods carrier in the state of Washington as required.

On May 18, 2021, GM Move paid the \$400 penalty in full.

On May 26, 2021, GM Move submitted a safety management plan addressing each violation noted during the investigation. Staff only recommends approving a safety management plan that addresses the following seven items:

1. The plan must address each acute, critical, or serious violation discovered during the most recent investigation. It must also include corrective actions that address other violations noted during the investigation.
2. Identify why the violations were permitted to occur.
3. Discuss the actions taken to correct the deficiency or deficiencies that allowed the violations to occur. Include actual documentation of this corrective action.
4. Outline actions taken to ensure that similar violations do not reoccur in the future. The plan must demonstrate that the company's operations currently meet the safety standard

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and factors specified in 49 CFR § 385.5 and 385.7. To do so, the plan must demonstrate the company now has adequate safety management controls in place which function effectively to ensure acceptable compliance with applicable safety requirements.

5. If the request includes actions that will be conducted in the near future, such as training, reorganization of departments, purchasing of computer programs, etc., companies must include a detailed description of the activity or training and a schedule of when that activity will commence and when it will be completed.
6. Include any additional documentation relating to motor carrier safety and the prevention of crashes that the company believes supports its request.
7. Include a written statement certifying the company will operate within federal and state regulations and the company's operation currently meets the safety standard and factors specific in 49 CFR § 385.5 and 385.7. A corporate officer, partner, or the owner of the company must sign the statement.

Summary and Recommendations

Staff reviewed GM Move's safety management plan and concludes it is acceptable and meets the requirements of 49 CFR § 385. Because of the Company's actions, Staff recommends the Commission not cancel GM Move's permit and extend its provisional period until such a time that the Company achieves a satisfactory safety rating. Staff further recommends that dockets TV-210284 and TV-210285 be consolidated.

Staff confirmed with the Company that it waived its right to a hearing and recommends that the brief adjudicative proceeding scheduled for June 10, 2021, be cancelled.

The Company took all the required steps to bring its safety operations into compliance with Commission regulations. GM Move submitted a safety management plan that addresses each violation, identifies how the violations occurred, describes the steps taken to correct them, and put controls in place to ensure the Company maintains compliance.

Documentation of company policies, driver qualifications, criminal background checks, leasing documents, vehicle maintenance, and hours of service information were included in the plan.