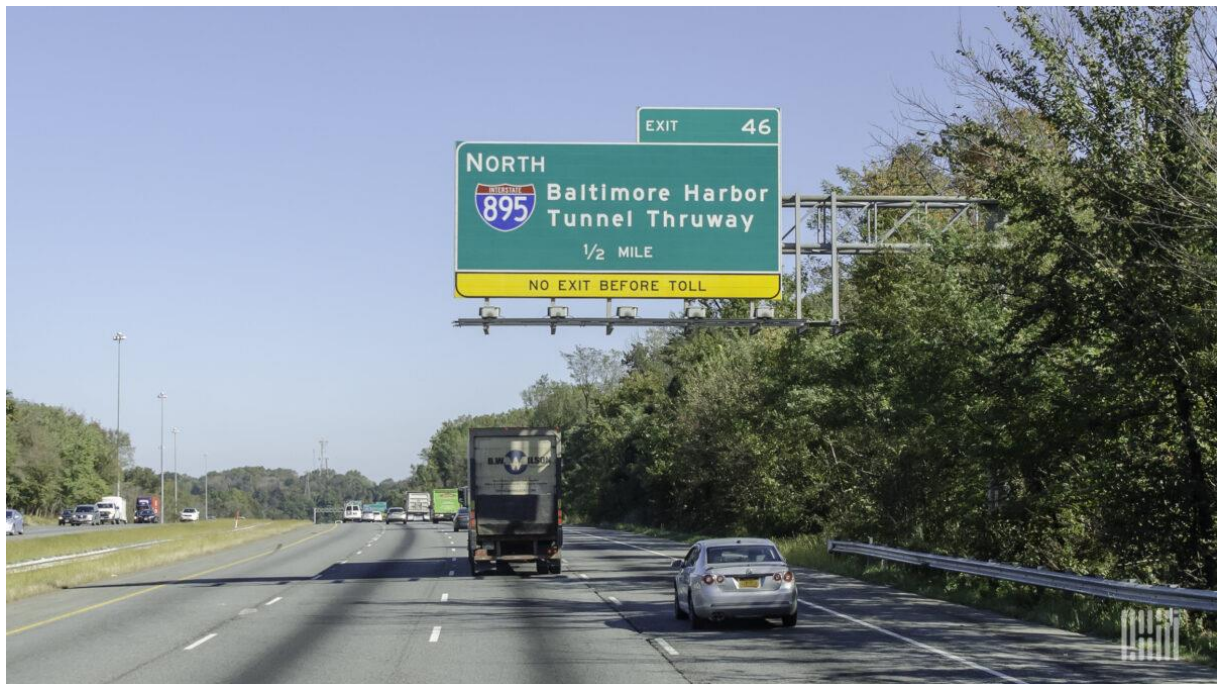


# FMCSA sees 'significant impacts' on truck drive times in Baltimore area

Agency may expand waivers, offer truck parking relief in wake of bridge collapse

[John Gallagher](#)

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I-895 beginning to feel effects of shrinking highway capacity in Baltimore. (Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

WASHINGTON — The loss of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge is ramping up truck drive times in the region as data from the government and private sources begins to accumulate.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration confirmed on Wednesday that it is seeing "significant impacts" on truck trips in the region based on data supplied by the University of Maryland, particularly on traffic now

being diverted through the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel (Interstate 895), the Fort McHenry Tunnel (Interstate 95) and the western side of the Baltimore Beltway (Interstate 695).

“We’re monitoring these roadways for reliability and how much variation there is in the travel time,” said Nicole Katsikides, an FMCSA transportation specialist, speaking on an FMCSA-sponsored webinar.

“We know truck drivers are concerned about reliability when route planning, because high variability in travel time impacts on-time deliveries and efficient operations. We will continue to monitor this information, which helps best to support the commercial vehicle community as things change related to the port.”

FMCSA’s data is supported by the most recent data compiled by Geotab Inc., a Toronto-based transportation telematics company.

Geotab supplied FreightWaves with the following information on drive time increases for commercial vehicle traffic through Baltimore’s two tunnels, as of Saturday, compared to average drive times before the bridge collapse:

**Baltimore Harbor Tunnel:**

- Long-haul: 25%.
- Regional: 20%.
- Local: 18%.

**Fort McHenry Tunnel:**

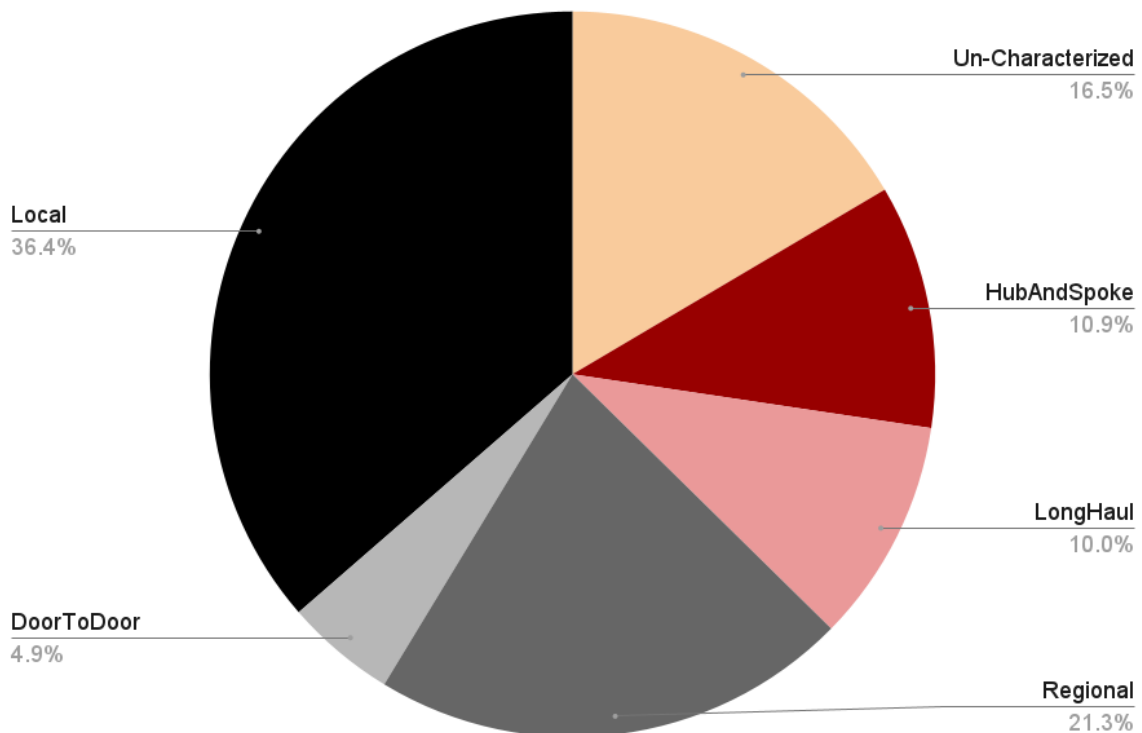
- Long-haul: 20%.
- Regional: 20%.

- Local: 20%.

With an [emergency declaration](#) extended until May 8 that adds two hours to the 11-hour driving limit for drivers hauling freight that now must be diverted to other ports, FMCSA is now focusing on longer-term impacts of the bridge collapse, according to Thomas Liberatore, the agency's state programs division chief.

"This is a marathon, not a sprint, so this is not something we're committed to just in the short term," Liberatore said during the webinar. "We will continue to monitor traffic impacts and other issues that could be expanding or impacting the movement of freight in and around Baltimore and the surrounding region."

Francis Scott Key Bridge - Commercial Vehicle Vocational Breakdown



**Trucking operations using FSK bridge before collapse that are now being rerouted. Source: Geotab Inc.**

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That could mean expanding the current hours-of-service emergency order to include other types of long-haul freight moving through the region that is being affected by the added congestion, Liberatore said, depending on FMCSA's ongoing analysis.

"We're going to continue to monitor the data, and if there are things we need to do following consultation within the department and with state and local partners, we have the ability to do so."

### **Truck parking comes into play**

Delays caused by the sudden shortfall in highway capacity could also mean providing more truck parking relief, Liberatore said, in the form of providing resources for motor carriers and drivers to help identify new or expanded parking options.

"Truck parking comes mostly under the domain of the Federal Highway Administration, who we're working with on a daily basis," he said.

"But it's trying to identify where those traffic congestion points may lie, particularly for drivers that are coming up to their hour-of-service limits: Are they going to require a 30-minute break or sleeper berth time? We want to try to provide resources particularly for those drivers that may not be used to running into these issues around certain corridors as to where they can stop safely if they need to."