



The American Companies

"NEWS-UPDATE"

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Long Beach delays truck fee

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The Port of Long Beach will delay for several weeks the collection of a \$35 per-TEU clean-trucks fee that was scheduled to take effect on Oct. 1.

In a statement Tuesday, the port explained that it is still developing the computerized PortCheck collection system. It expected the system to be operational "a few weeks" after Oct. 1.

It is uncertain if the Port of Los Angeles will also delay collection of the fee. Port executives could not be reached for comment

The clean-truck fee, charged to cargo owners, will generate hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue to be used to help truckers purchase new vehicles that comply with the port's strict emission standards.

The goal of the clean-trucks program is to reduce truck pollution in the harbor by 80 percent by 2012. Although Long Beach is delaying the fee on all trucks that do not meet its clean-air standards, the port intends to move forward with other aspects of the program.

Beginning Oct. 1, Long Beach will ban pre-1989 trucks from the harbor. Also on Oct. 1, only motor carriers holding a port-issued concession agreement will be allowed to send trucks to the harbor.

Until the PortCheck system is ready, Long Beach will issue temporary ID stickers to trucking companies that have signed port concessions. As of Monday, some 500 motor carriers representing about 6,000 trucks have applied for concessions in Long Beach.

The stickers will be issued only for model year 1989 trucks or newer, so marine terminal operators should have no trouble keeping out older harbor trucks, said port spokesman Art Wong.

Also on Oct. 1, drivers must have a Transportation Worker Identification Credential, or at least a receipt showing that they have applied for the federal ID card, Wong said.

Although the port intends to launch most of the elements of the clean-trucks program on Oct. 1, there is still a chance that the concession requirement could be held up by litigation.

The American Trucking Associations has appealed to the 9th Circuit Court a Sept. 9 decision by the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles denying the request by the ATA for a preliminary injunction against the concession requirement.

The 9th Circuit last week received written arguments from the ports and the ATA, as well as other parties on both sides of the issue that joined in the lawsuit. The appellate court is expected to issue its ruling before Oct. 1.

Also, the Federal Maritime Commission requested information from the ports about their clean-trucks plans and has yet to decide whether or not it will challenge the plans in federal court.

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