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New Requirements for Foreign Drivers in the U.S.

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On June 25 of this year, the English proficiency regulations for commercial vehicle drivers issued by the United States Department of Transportation came into effect. These regulations require drivers to correctly answer at least 80% of the questions posed in English by transportation authorities during inspections.

This rule change by the United States transportation authorities is significant, because failure to meet the English language proficiency requirement may result in sanctions, including the suspension of the driver from their service.

The issue is especially relevant for drivers operating in the so-called "commercial zone" (the first 20 miles inland from the border), as these drivers were not previously subject to this regulation. However, in recent days, federal and state authorities have begun applying this rule to all drivers, regardless of whether they are commercial zone drivers with a foreign license, primarily issued by the Department of Infrastructure, Communications, and Transportation.

Therefore, and given that the sanction is the suspension of the driver's service, this development has significantly impacted the daily operations of international cargo crossing, thereby slowing down international trade between the two countries.

While there have been requests and ongoing discussions aimed to reduce these requirements and/or to limit their territorial scope, we recommend verifying that your drivers meet the aforementioned requirements, to avoid the risk of being removed from service.

At CCN, we remain at your service should you have any questions related to these new requirements.