



## Why Rugged Tablets Are Key to ELD Compliance and Productivity

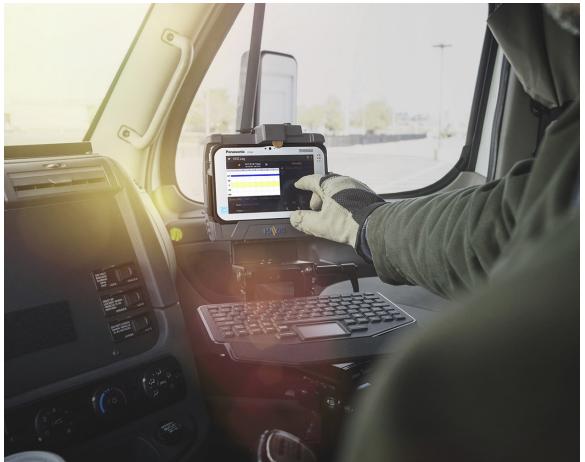
Ruggedized hardware can meet the challenge of most conditions and keep fleets in compliance with the ELD Rule. Since the ELD Rule went into effect in late December 2017, truck fleets have faced the challenge of not having hardware tough enough to stay up and running.

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Since the ELD Rule went into effect in 2017, regulated truck fleets have had to make numerous adjustments to the way they monitor, track, and report their drivers' hours of service (HOS).

The ELD Rule requires drivers to use an electronic logging device (ELD) to record their hours of service as part of their record of duty status (RODS). Except for some limited and specific exceptions, not doing so will result in violations, fines (often against both the driver and the fleet), and drivers and their trucks being put out of service. In extreme circumstances, the fleet's operation may be audited by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) for other potential violations.

As part of complying with the rule, drivers are required to provide an inspector either a printout of their RODS or show it on a display. The rule also requires that drivers be able to transfer data to an inspector via Bluetooth or USB 2.0 — not being able to comply with these technical aspects of the rule will likely result in a violation.



In reality, one of the biggest challenges for fleets during the first year of ELD enforcement has been the technical side of the rule. There have been a number of providers who entered the market, but didn't have the track record or capabilities of more established and proven providers.

In extreme cases, fleets have been left high and dry when these companies have been unable to provide the level of service required by the rule to keep ELDs up and running. In one notable instance, a newer provider shut down unexpectedly — leaving its customers scrambling to remain compliant. The happy ending to this story is other ELD providers stepped in to support the suddenly non-compliant and unsupported fleets.<sup>1</sup>

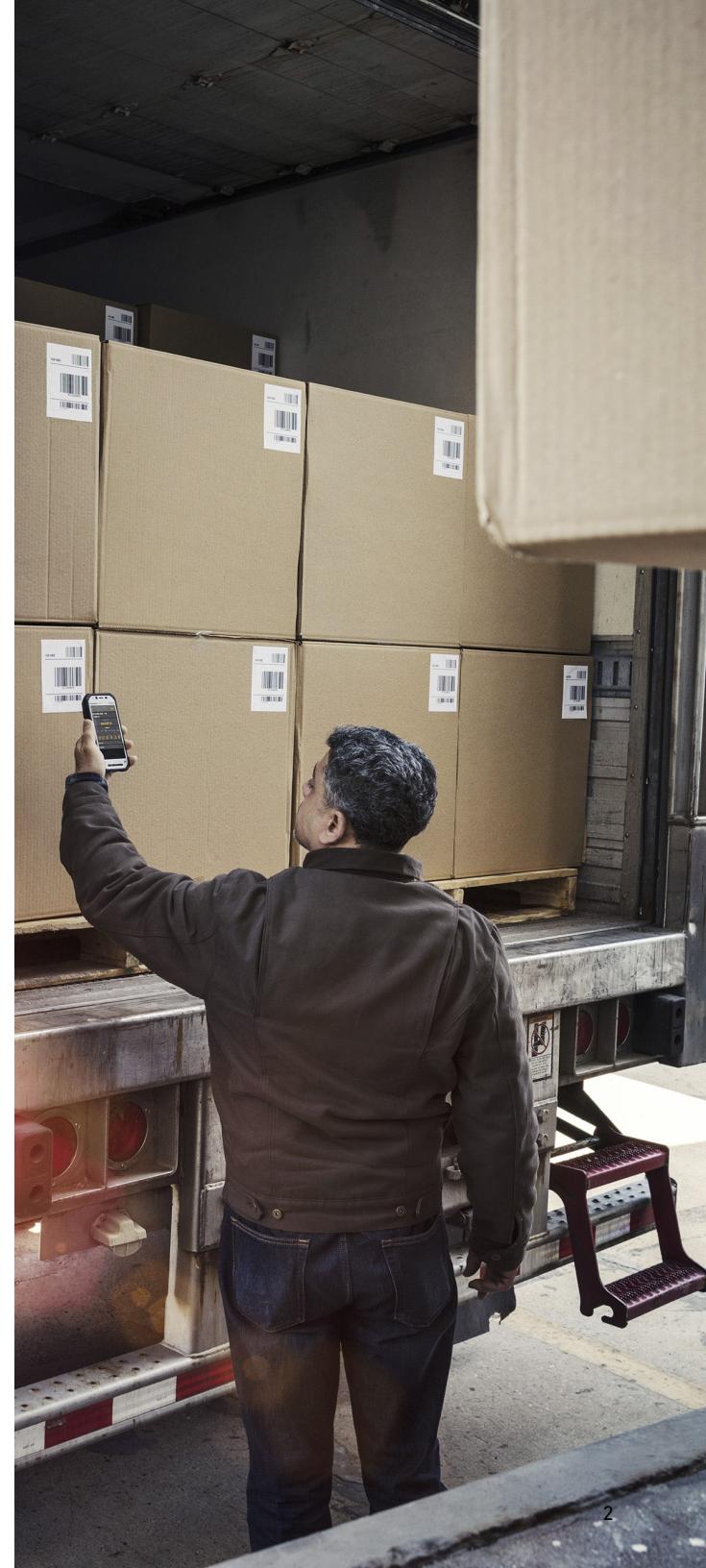
While many fleets have adopted ELDs on time, they have found it necessary to switch to more proven providers for rugged ELD components and more capable displays to remain compliant and productive.

## Following the ELD Rule(s)

The ELD Rule consists of numerous regulations, including specific ones covering display hardware.

For example, the rule allows for the use of a computer, tablet, or smartphone device to create, electronically sign, and store a driver's RODS. The hardware display must conform to section 395.8 of the rule, and the display or printout must include three elements:

1. A daily header
2. A graph grid showing driving duty status changes
3. Detailed daily log data



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## How to Choose an ELD Hardware Provider

As the past year has demonstrated, not every ELD hardware provider is equal. Fundamentally, a provider needs to be both experienced and reputable within the industry.

A good measure of a provider's reputation and experience is how closely and well the provider understands and abides by the ELD Rules, including:

- Can the provider verify that its device meets all of the technical specifications in the ELD Rule?
- Does its display include the required standardized data to authorized safety officials on demand — including the three display elements: a daily header, a graph grid showing driving duty status changes, and detailed daily log data?
- Is it capable of transferring data either via USB 2.0 or Bluetooth and/or via a web or e-mail transfer interface?
- Does it have a volume control or mute functionality?

A reputable and experienced provider will also be able to meet the needs of clients and the requirements of the rule if there's a malfunction or other reason a device goes out of service. Keep in mind, fleets have just eight days to repair or replace a unit once a malfunction or other



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issue is reported or they face the possibility of a violation, fine, and being put out of service. The hardware provider has to be able to respond to any malfunction or any compliance issue — whether it's a single unit or several hundred — within this eight-day window.

## Why a Ruggedized Mobile Device Matters

Finding a reputable, reliable, experienced provider who can follow the rules is the first step of being ELD compliant — the second step is choosing the right hardware.

As long as the hardware meets the technical specifications in section 395.8, the ELD Rule is relatively flexible in terms of the type of hardware a fleet can use — including mobile devices. There is no specific rule or guidance about using a ruggedized device, but the realities of a truck driver's day-to-day environment and the enforcement requirements makes it clear that a ruggedized device makes the most sense for today's truck fleets.

For example, Panasonic offers a family of rugged products that meets the compliance requirements of the ELD Rule, but also provides fleets with a tough mobile device that can:

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- Take the wear and tear of a truck environment, including hot/cold temperatures and vibration
- Provide waterproof and dustproof protection
- Survive being dropped
- Meet military-spec (Mil Spec) requirements for durability

Panasonic's TOUGHBOOK and TOUGH PAD family of products can also improve driver productivity:

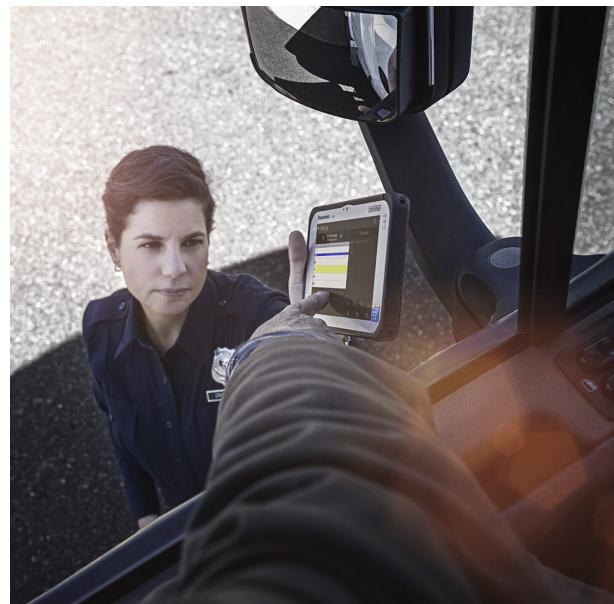
- The devices are portable and have strong web connectivity
- The ruggedized mobile devices lead the industry with the lowest failure rate and uninterrupted uptime — keeping drivers connected and in compliance, while delivering low total cost of ownership
- The long-lasting batteries mean that drivers don't have to worry about whether their devices will run out of power during a shift or will need to be constantly plugged in
- The display can be read in bright/noontime sunlight — making it ideal both for the driver to monitor his or her hours of service/use for other work in a bright-light environment and for roadside enforcement personnel to be able to see the driver is in compliance
- The devices can be used in all environments; they can be operated while wearing gloves and are resistant to vibration

## Why Rugged Devices Are a Smart Investment

For fleets that have to adhere to the ELD Rule, a ruggedized mobile device will help keep them in compliance by being up-and-running no matter the working conditions.

Ruggedized devices are more reliable and have significantly better uptime than their non-rugged cousins. Research shows that Panasonic rugged devices have only a 2% failure rate compared to an average 11% failure rate for non-rugged devices. The rugged devices reviewed by researchers were typically used in much more demanding environments than the non-rugged devices.<sup>2</sup>

While rugged devices have a lower failure rate, they typically have a higher price tag, but the return on investment is realized quickly — as little as one year, depending on the device type<sup>3</sup> — making them a good investment for fleets of all types and sizes.



## ➤ Have an AOBRD: Get Ready to Switch Now

Not every regulated truck fleet needs to switch to an electronic logging device (ELD) — yet. Fleets that already had automatic onboard recording devices (AOBRDs) installed on their trucks before the 2017 ELD Rule implementation date can continue using them until December 2019.

In addition, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) expanded the rules to allow fleets that were using AOBRDs before 2017 to add devices to their vehicles. Originally, fleets were not allowed to add new AOBRDs to their vehicles — they could only move them to new vehicles as trucks were cycled out — but that changed in early 2018. Fleets now can add new AOBRDs to their vehicles as long as the hardware running the AOBRD software is ELD compliant with the technical specifications found in section 395.8 of the ELD Rule.<sup>4</sup>

There are numerous key differences between an AOBRD and an ELD — and one of them is the display. Technically, an AOBRD doesn't need to meet the same display requirements as an ELD.

While December 2019 may seem a long way off, it's not. Fleets that are using AOBRDs should begin planning to transition to an ELD before the effective date. And, as the ELD Rule implementation demonstrated, it is highly unlikely that the transition from AOBRDs to ELDs won't happen or will be significantly delayed.

Fleets will have until **Dec. 18, 2019**, to make the transition from a grandfathered AOBRD to an ELD — meaning they should not delay taking the necessary steps to make the switch.

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## Fully Warrantied and Serviced

Adding to the reliability — and compliance — of its TOUGHBOOK products, Panasonic offers a variety of comprehensive warranty and customer service programs for the specific needs and realities of any fleet operation.

For example, the Ultimate Care warranty is designed for customers — such as trucking fleets — that work in challenging or demanding environments that may see their equipment become damaged on a regular basis.

In the case of repairs or replacements, most can be handled in 24 hours — helping fleets beat the eight-day compliance clock for repairs. In extreme cases, if a fleet can't return a piece of equipment to Panasonic, the company will provide a full replacement.

Panasonic also offers an end-of-life recycle service, which can be particularly helpful for fleets to meet sustainability goals related to electronic and other types of waste.

## References

<sup>1</sup>"ELD Provider Shuts Down Without Warning." Lockridge, Deborah. Truckinginfo.com. May 24, 2018. [www.truckinginfo.com/303057/eld-provider-shuts-down-without-warning](http://www.truckinginfo.com/303057/eld-provider-shuts-down-without-warning). Accessed Nov. 8, 2018.

<sup>2</sup>"Mission Critical: The True Cost of Mobile Computer Failure." Panasonic whitepaper. 2016. [ftp://ftp.panasonic.com/computer/whitepaper/true\\_cost\\_mobile\\_computer\\_failure\\_fedgov\\_whitepaper.pdf](ftp://ftp.panasonic.com/computer/whitepaper/true_cost_mobile_computer_failure_fedgov_whitepaper.pdf). Accessed Nov. 8, 2018.

<sup>3</sup>"Pay Now, Save Later: The Business Case for Rugged Devices." Mainelli, Tom. IDC. November 2016. [http://info.panasonic.com/rs/400-JUK-127/images/IDC-report\\_pay-now-save-later\\_the-business-case-for-rugged-devices.pdf](http://info.panasonic.com/rs/400-JUK-127/images/IDC-report_pay-now-save-later_the-business-case-for-rugged-devices.pdf). Accessed Nov. 8, 2018.

<sup>4</sup>"FMCSA Widens Stance on AOBRD Grandfather Clause." Cullen, David. Truckinginfo.com. March 21, 2018. <https://www.truckinginfo.com/279261/fmcsa-widens-stance-on-aobrd-grandfather-clause>. Accessed Nov. 8, 2018.

## ➤ Panasonic Offers Ruggedized Options

Panasonic has three ruggedized options to meet the operational and compliance needs of every regulated truck fleet:

The Panasonic **TOUGHBOOK N1** is a glove and rain touch enabled rugged handheld that features a long-lasting battery, barcode reader, stylus, an Android operating system, numerous enterprise applications, and 4G LTE connectivity. Additionally, it can withstand a drop from 7 feet, which could occur when handing the device out the cab of a truck.

The Panasonic **TOUGHBOOK L1** is a slim and sleek Android OS-based, 7-inch tablet that is designed specifically for field service and transportation environments, and includes a barcode reader, stylus pen, long-lasting battery, has 4G connectivity, is glove and rain touch enabled, and drop rated for 5 feet.

The **TOUGH PAD FZ-G1** Windows 10 Pro tablet has a 10-inch screen, is HD daylight readable, is glove enabled, and features a waterproof digitizer pen — making it ideal for field workers — has the option of thermal and IR cameras, and can support "Windows Hello" for added security.

For more information, including full specifications, go to: [Toughbook.com](http://Toughbook.com)

Visit our knowledge center at: [info.panasonic.com/mobility-premium-content.html](http://info.panasonic.com/mobility-premium-content.html)

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