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Portal will allow carriers to manage chassis rentals

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The Port of Virginia has begun registering motor carriers for an online portal that will allow them to manage the rentals of chassis from the port's HRCP II pool.

Currently, ship lines are the sole providers of chassis to the pool, and the portal is designed to help in the transition to move away from that model. Starting in October, carriers will have the option of transferring their fleets to third-party ownership or lease.

Virginia officials expect about 60 percent of HRCP II's 11,500 chassis to be transferred. They emphasized the change will be optional – carriers will be free to continue current practices.

The online portal, developed with IAS, is designed to smooth the transition, said Art Ellerman, HRCP II general manager. "This is the first step in creation of the new chassis paradigm," he said.

The portal will manage chassis rental functions such as user registration and administration. It establishes and enforces criteria for chassis user acceptance and business rules, and integrates with an industry-specific insurance compliance clearinghouse.

A key feature will enable truckers to review bills online. This will allow motor carriers to manage their accounts and dispute errors immediately instead of waiting for a bill to arrive in the mail, said Joe Ruddy, executive vice president and chief operating officer at Virginia International Terminals.

There will be no significant change to HRCP II's operations, officials said. Chassis users will still be able to keep chassis for multiple moves instead of having to return empty chassis to terminals after each trip.

Maintenance and repair of chassis in Virginia's port-wide pool will continue to be performed by International Longshoremen's Association labor.

Ruddy said 300 to 400 motor carriers that regularly operate in the port are expected to sign up for the online portal.

HRCP II is the current version of an innovative port-wide pool launched in 2004, run by Virginia Intermodal Management, a subsidiary of the Virginia Port Authority's operating company, Virginia International Terminals.

The pool has reduced the number of chassis stored in the port area from 22,000 to 11,500. The reduction has been credited with reducing costs and congestion at port terminals.

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