

# Los Angeles Times

## Attorney general Brown sues 2 port trucking firms over labor practices

He says the lawsuits signal a crackdown on trucking companies at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach that classify drivers as independent contractors to get around taxes and labor laws.

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

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California Atty. Gen. Edmund G. Brown Jr. filed lawsuits against two small trucking companies on Friday on grounds they allegedly deprived drivers of benefits and “cheated the state of California out of thousands of dollars in payroll taxes.”

Brown said in a statement that the lawsuits filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court signaled a crackdown on trucking companies at the adjacent ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach that classify drivers as independent contractors to circumvent state employment taxes and labor laws, and have an unfair advantage over competitors.

Officials for the companies named in the lawsuits, Pac Anchor Transportation Inc. and Jose Maria Lira, were unavailable for comment. But Brown said Lira, for example, “controlled all aspects of his drivers’ work, yet classified his employees as independent contractors and made them sign documents stating they were independent.”

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-brown7-2008sep07,0,5792376.story>