

**JOB AID**

**Compliance, Safety, Accountability,  
(CSA) Overview for Drivers**

# Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) Overview for Drivers

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In 2010, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) implemented the Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program to introduce compliance and enforcement standards for FMCSA and state partners. The CSA program impacts both employers and drivers. It affects how you do your job and, potentially, your career and livelihood.

Note: This job aid is intended as a CSA program overview and is not comprehensive. YOU are responsible for making sure you understand and are compliant with the program.

## Purpose of the CSA

The goals of the CSA program are to:

- Increase FMCSA contact with carriers and drivers
- Improve performance measurements for identifying high-risk motor carrier and driver behavior
- Correct high-risk behavior before it becomes chronic and habitual

## Program Components

The components of the CSA program are data collection, safety measurement, evaluation and intervention.

### Data Collection

The FMCSA uses three types of data to track, measure and evaluate carriers and drivers:

- Roadside inspections
- Violations found during interventions or carrier audits
- Federally recorded crashes

Federally recorded crashes include:

- Any accident in which there has been a fatality
- An injury resulting in transportation to a hospital
- A vehicle towed from the scene of the accident

### Interventions

Interventions are tools and activities that the FMCSA uses to provide carriers with information so that they can understand their safety problems and change unsafe behavior early on. CSA interventions may range from warning letters to comprehensive onsite investigations.

CSA investigators:

- Evaluate why safety problems are occurring
- Recommend remedies
- Encourage corrective actions
- Invoke strong penalties (when corrective action is inadequate)

Interventions are triggered when one or more of the Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS) are deficient, there are high crash indicators, there are complaints or when fatal crashes occur.

### **Driver Responsibilities**

Many roadside inspections are triggered as a result of speeding, vehicle operation or noticeable vehicle defects. Vehicle operation includes practicing defensive driving techniques and using blinkers and horns when necessary. Drivers are responsible for:

- Knowing and following their carrier's or employer's safety rules
- Being familiar with CSA, state and other applicable regulations
- Understanding CSA BASICS and how the CSA program assesses safety
- Keeping copies of all inspection reports
- Driving safely

### **Safety Measurement System**

Before the CSA program, the FMCSA used a system called SafeStat that evaluated carriers (not drivers) based on four Safety Evaluation Areas (SEAs): accident, driver, vehicle and safety management. The FMCSA phased out the SafeStat operational model and replaced it with the Safety Measurement System (SMS).

The SMS applies to both carriers and drivers, and:

- Identifies candidates for interventions
- Determines specific safety problems
- Monitors whether safety problems are improving or worsening
- Uses crash records and all roadside inspection safety-based violations
- Assigns weights to the time and severity of violations based on their relationship to crash risk
- Triggers the FMCSA intervention process including whom to investigate and where to focus the investigation
- Calculates safety performance based on the BASICS

### **Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement (BASICS)**

As stated, safety performance is based on seven BASICS categories.

1. UNSAFE DRIVING occurs when drivers operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in a dangerous, aggressive or careless manner by:
  - Following too closely
  - Improperly changing lanes
  - Speeding
  - Engaging in any unsafe act that merits a moving violation
2. HOURS-OF-SERVICE COMPLIANCE violations include operating a CMV while ill, fatigued or not in compliance with hours-of-service (HOS) regulations. Note that these regulations include logbooks as they relate to HOS.
3. DRIVER FITNESS violations occur when drivers who are unfit operate CMVs. Drivers may be unfit due to:
  - Lack of training
  - Not having a valid commercial driver's license (CDL)
  - Lack of experience
  - Medical disqualifications

4. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE AND ALCOHOL violations are those in which CMV drivers are impaired due to:
  - Alcohol
  - Illegal drugs
  - Misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medications
5. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE violations are caused by failure to properly maintain a CMV. Your carrier will make an effort to maintain your CMV, but as a driver, you must ensure that your vehicle is in proper working order. Driver pre- and post-trip inspections are a crucial factor in maintaining CSA compliance.
6. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMPLIANCE violations occur when a driver fails to properly prevent:
  - Shifting loads
  - Spilled or dropped cargo
  - Overloading
  - Unsafe hazardous materials handling
7. CRASH INDICATORS are histories or patterns of high crash involvement. They include crash frequency and severity data and are based on information from state-reported crashes. There are three crash indicator crash types – those involving:
  - Towing but no injuries or fatalities
  - Injuries or fatalities
  - HAZMAT releases (freight-related spills only)

A carrier's measurement for each BASIC depends on the number of adverse safety events, the severity of violations or crashes, and when the adverse safety event occurred (more recent events have more weight). After the SMS measures the BASICs, it places carriers in peer groups. These peer groups are made up of carriers with similar numbers of inspections. The SMS compares the BASIC measurements of a carrier to the measurements of similar carriers and assigns a percentile from 0 to 100. 100 is the worst percentile because it means 100% of the other carriers in the peer group are safer than the carrier in question.

### Driver Safety Measurement System (DSMS)

The FMCSA uses the DSMS to assign safety profile ratings to drivers. These ratings will follow drivers regardless of who employs them or the lease of the motor carrier. The DSMS calculates driver measures and percentiles for each BASIC. How recent and severe a violation is will impact the driver's rating. The formula used is  $\text{Severity Weight} \times \text{Time Weight} = \text{Level of Severity Rating}$ . Regarding the severity weight factor, 1 is the lowest multiplier and 10 is the highest.