

## Chapter 39

### CSA (Compliance, Safety, Accountability)

#### What is CSA?

“Compliance, Safety, Accountability.” CSA is a new FMCSA safety program to improve large truck and bus safety and ultimately prevent crashes, injuries, and fatalities related to commercial motor vehicles. It introduces a new enforcement and compliance model that allows FMCSA and its State Partners to contact more carriers earlier in order to address safety deficiencies before crashes occur. The program establishes a new nationwide system for making the roads safer for motor carriers and the public alike.

CSA monitors on-road safety performance data on a monthly basis using roadside performance data available in FMCSA’s Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS) collected during the previous 24 months. This data is then used in a Safety Measurement System (SMS) that gives a more comprehensive profile of carriers and drivers, better pinpoints the source(s) of safety problems, and more effectively identifies high crash-risk behavior in seven BASICs.

#### What are BASIC’s?

The new Compliance Safety Monitoring System (CSMS) uses all safety-based inspection violations which are given a risk based violation weight and groups this data into seven Behavioral Analysis Safety Improvement Categories (BASICs):

1. Unsafe Driving
2. Fatigued Driving (Hours-of-Service)
3. Driver Fitness
4. Controlled Substances and Alcohol
5. Vehicle Maintenance
6. Hazardous Material
7. Crash History

*CSMS produces a percentile ranking for each BASIC from 0 to 100 for motor carriers having sufficient roadside inspection or crash events to be evaluated. Higher percentile rankings reflect poor performance relative to other motor carriers with similar levels of exposure or inspection activity. For example, a Vehicle BASIC of 80 indicates that approximately 80% of the motor carrier population with a similar number of inspections had better vehicle inspection results.*

Each BASIC's overall status will display a ⚠️ symbol if either the on-road performance's percentile is over the established threshold or the investigation results show the discovery of a Serious Violation. This indicates that the BASIC is ⚠️ and the motor carrier may be prioritized for an intervention, which can include a warning letter, investigation, and identification for a roadside inspection.

## What is an intervention?

There are three categories of interventions: early contact, investigation, and follow-on.

### Early Contact

- [Warning Letter](#)– Correspondence sent to a carrier's place of business that specifically identifies a deficient Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) and outlines possible consequences of continued safety problems. The warning letter provides instructions for accessing carrier safety data and measurement as well as a point of contact.

### Investigation

- **Offsite Investigation** – A carrier is required to submit documents to FMCSA or a State Partner. These documents are used to evaluate the safety problems identified through the SMS and to determine their root causes. Types of documents requested may include third party documents such as toll receipts, border crossing records, or drug testing records. The goal is to identify issues responsible for poor safety performance. If the carrier does not submit requested documents they may be subject to an Onsite Investigation or to subpoena records (see below).
- **Onsite Focused Investigation** – The purpose of this intervention is to evaluate the safety problems identified through the SMS and their root causes. An Onsite Focused Investigation may be selected when exceeding the threshold in two or fewer BASICs. Onsite Focused Investigations target specific problem areas (for example, maintenance records), while Onsite Comprehensive Investigations address all aspects of the carrier's operation.
- **Onsite Comprehensive Investigation** – This intervention is similar to a Compliance Review and takes place at the carrier's place of business. It is used when the carrier exhibits broad and complex safety problems through BASICs continually exceeding the threshold, worsening BASICs (three or more), or a fatal crash or complaint.

### Follow-on

- **Cooperative Safety Plan** – Implemented by the carrier, this safety improvement plan is voluntary. The carrier and FMCSA collaboratively create a plan, based on a standard template, to address the underlying problems resulting from the carrier's substandard safety performance.

- **Notice of Violation (NOV)** – The NOV is a formal notice of safety problems that requires a response from the carrier. It is used when the regulatory violations discovered are severe enough to warrant formal action but not a civil penalty (fine). It is also used in cases where the violation is immediately correctable and the level of, or desire for, cooperation is high. To avoid further intervention, including fines, the carrier must provide evidence of corrective action or initiate a successful challenge to the violation.
- **Notice of Claim (NOC)** – An NOC is issued in cases where the regulatory violations are severe enough to warrant assessment and issuance of civil penalties.
- **Operations Out-of-Service Order** – An order requiring the carrier to cease all motor vehicle operations.

For more information go to frequently asked questions at:  
<http://cas.fmcsa.dot.gov/faqs.aspx?faqid=1502>

## How can a carrier find their CSA scores?

Motor carriers can sign in via the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration \(FMCSA\) Portal](#) or directly through the [SMS Website](#). From this SMS page, a carrier representative can log in with its U.S. DOT Number and PIN in order to access the carrier's non-public data. The carrier sign-in is at the bottom center of the screen. Once signed in, you will be guided back to the SMS homepage. After that, in the search box in the middle right section of the screen, you should type in the U.S. DOT # or MC # and hit search.

Motor carriers can request an FMCSA Portal account by clicking here and following the instructions to request an account. For additional assistance with an FMCSA Portal account, contact the Help Desk at 800-832-5660. To sign in via the SMS Website, you will need your U.S. DOT Number and PIN. Note that a Docket Number PIN will not enable you to see your SMS data. If they cannot locate their PIN or were never assigned one, complete the [PIN registration process](#). A notification letter with their PIN will be generated and mailed to the address that was submitted on the most recent MCS-150 form. This letter should be received within two weeks.

When motor carriers sign in, they will be able to see additional data:

- Hazardous Materials (HM) Compliance BASIC percentile rank
- Crash Indicator BASIC percentile rank
- Driver names and other privacy-related material from individual inspection results