

8/22/2011 - FMCSA Improves CSA Safety Measurement System

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) recently took another step towards improving safety through its Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program. In the August 3, 2011 Safety Measurement System (SMS) release, FMCSA refined the criteria that determines which motor carriers are subject to the more stringent Hazardous Materials (HM) intervention threshold. This improvement, which was made after several months of careful monitoring and listening to industry and enforcement safety professionals, allows FMCSA to more accurately identify those motor carriers that transport placardable quantities of HM and thereby ensures that enforcement resources are deployed as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Background

CSA's SMS assesses 24 months of motor carriers' safety performance information (inspections and investigations) by seven Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS). The seven BASICS are Unsafe Driving, Fatigued Driving (Hours-of-Service), Driver Fitness, Controlled Substances/Alcohol, Vehicle Maintenance, Cargo-Related, and Crash Indicator. Every month FMCSA updates motor carriers' percentiles in each BASIC and motor carriers with BASIC percentiles above the FMCSA threshold are prioritized for an FMCSA intervention. Motor carriers that transport placardable quantities of HM are subject to more stringent BASIC thresholds because of the higher safety risk placardable HM pose to the public in the event of a crash or a spill.

What Changed?

Previously, the HM intervention threshold was applied to motor carriers based solely on their registration information indicating they transported any quantity of HM. This resulted in some motor carriers being subjected to the lower HM threshold that in fact were not carrying placardable quantities of HM, and conversely, resulted in some carriers not being subjected to the lower HM threshold that should have been. The HM intervention threshold now applies to motor carriers that transport placardable quantities of HM based on operational evidence. These are motor carriers that meet one of the following criteria:

- Inspection in the last 24 months where the motor carrier was identified as carrying placardable quantity of HM
- Review or safety audit in the last 24 months where the motor carrier was identified as carrying placardable quantity of HM
- Motor carrier has a HM permit

For more detailed information on the HM regulations and how to comply with them, motor carriers should visit FMCSA's Website at the following link: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/hazmat/complyhmregs.htm#hm>

How Can a Motor Carrier Learn about Its Status Regarding this Change?

Motor carriers should:

1. Go to the SMS Website at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms>.
2. Enter their U.S. DOT or MC number on the right-hand side of the page.
3. Scroll down to the registration information at the bottom of the page.
4. View the item entitled "Subject to Placardable Hazardous Material Threshold" where they will see either a "Yes" or a "No."
5. If the answer is "Yes," motor carriers can click on the link where a table will outline why the motor carrier is assessed using the placardable HM threshold.

Questions and Feedback

Motor carriers can contact their local FMCSA Division Offices or the CSA technical support staff using the contact information on the CSA Outreach Website. To learn more about CSA and to stay up-to-date, subscribe to the CSA RSS feed or email list at http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/stay_connected.aspx.

Thank You,
CSA Web Team
USDOT/Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration