

You may have read about **CSA-2010** in the past few months. If not, this may be your first exposure to the new safety program being introduced by the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration effective November 2010.

CSA stands for **Comprehensive Safety Analysis**. Its purpose is to improve the way motor carriers and their drivers are being monitored for compliance and to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities on the nation's highways.

- While carriers are used to being monitored by the FMCSA through the monthly SAFESTAT results, one of the new parts of this program is that it now also tracks **you** – the driver.

By tracking both carriers and drivers, the FMCSA believes that it can create a more complete picture of compliance.

The CSA-2010 system consists of four major components:

- ◆ Data Collection
- ◆ Safety Measurement
- ◆ Safety Evaluation
- ◆ Intervention

Under the previous system (SAFESTATS) only crashes, moving violations and/or 'out-of-service' roadside inspections would count towards the rating of a motor carrier.

- However, within CSA-2010, **ALL** violations detected during roadside inspections – whether or not a citation is issued – will count towards the rating of both, the carrier and the driver.

These violations are organized into 7 **BASICs** (Behavioral Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories), namely:

1. **Unsafe Driving** – i.e. moving violations
2. **Fatigued Driving** – i.e. log-book and hours-of-service violations
3. **Driver Fitness** – i.e. valid driver license, endorsements and/or medical card
4. **Controlled Substances and Alcohol** – which includes being in possession of alcohol purchased at a duty-free store
5. **Vehicle Maintenance** – i.e. vehicle defects
6. **Cargo Related** – i.e. load securement issues
7. **Crash Indicator** – which includes all DoT recordable collisions

After the violation has been assigned to the correct BASIC, it will receive **demerit points**, the severity of which is based on that violation's association with crash causation. This process is called "**severity weighting**" the violation.

Low values are assigned to violations which are not often related to crashes, i.e. an expired medical certificate (1 point).

However, violations that have a more severe association to potential crashes are assigned higher values. Examples of '10-pointers' would include:

- ◆ Reckless driving;
- ◆ Driving after being declared 'out-of-service';
- ◆ Operating CMV with more than one license;
- ◆ No flag on projecting load

A violation resulting in an "out-of-service" order increases the demerit value by 2 points!

- There are very few violations which only hold the carrier responsible. This means that in most cases, the demerit points will be assigned to both, the carrier **and** the driver!

Safety-related violations will also be “**time-weighted**”, that is, more recent events count more than violations which occurred some time ago. Essentially, this means that the ratio will be as follows:

<u>Time-weight Ratio:</u>	<u>Carriers:</u>	<u>Drivers:</u>
3:1 for points accumulated from	0 to 6 months	0 to 12 months
2:1 for points accumulated from	7 to 12 months ago	13 to 24 months ago
1:1 for points accumulated from	13 to 24 months ago...	25 to 36 months ago...
	...after which time they drop-off the respective record.	

To put the foregoing information into context, here is a typical example:

A DoT officer notices that you’re not wearing your seat belt as you are pulling into the fixed inspection station. You get the “park and report” instruction. The officer decides to perform a full Level 1 inspection. At the end of the exercise, the inspection report contains the following violations:

1. CFR §393.83(g) – Exhaust leak under truck cab and/or sleeper
2. CFR §392.16 – Failing to use seat belt while operating CMV
3. CFR §395.8(e) – False report of drivers record of duty status (out-of-service)

When this report reaches the data collection system, the violations are allocated to the appropriate BASICs and assigned the respective severity-weighted points:

- “Exhaust Leak” is assigned to Vehicle Maintenance – **1 point**
- “Seat Belt” is assigned to Unsafe Driving – **1 point**
- “False Log” is assigned to Fatigued Driving – **7 points, plus 2 points** for the out-of-service order.

The total of these points is multiplied by 3 on the time-weight, because they were recent events.

- Since you – as the driver – had control over all three violations, the **33 demerit points** thus created, will be added to your DSMS (Driver Safety Measurement System) as well as the CSMS (Carrier Safety Measurement System) records respectively.

Once a month, the FMCSA then tabulates the accumulated DSMS & CSMS points and divides them by a “normalizing factor” to create a level comparison with other carriers and other drivers. This is a peer comparison of the normalized data, which means that drivers and carriers are compared to their peers. (Large carriers are compared to each other, whereas companies with a limited number of trucks/drivers are compared to other small entities).

This peer comparison generates a “**percentile ranking**”, which is the actual monthly **BASIC Score**, i.e. a BASIC ranking of 85% means that the carrier – or the driver, as the case may be – is worse than 85% of its peers.

The BASIC Score is then compared to pre-determined thresholds in each of the seven BASICs. If a carrier is over the **intervention threshold** in any BASIC, one of several interventions will take place. Currently, the intervention thresholds for a Drive-Away/Tow-Away carrier are:

BASICS 1, 2 & 7	Unsafe Driving; Fatigued Driving (HoS); Crash Indicator.....	72%
BASICS 3, 4, 5 & 6	Driver Fitness; Controlled Substances and Alcohol; Vehicle Maintenance; Cargo Related.....	77%

- Do note that if a carrier is found to have **exceeded** the **failing threshold** in one of the two “stand-alone” BASICs, (Unsafe Driving and Fatigued Driving), the interventions will be the most severe available to the FMCSA!
- Also, if a carrier is over the failing threshold in any two of the other five BASICs, the carrier will be subject to the most severe interventions as well.

Under the program, carriers and drivers are subject to a variety of interventions depending on the carrier’s or driver’s safety measurement scores and enforcement history. These interventions include (driver interventions are underlined):

Early Contact	Warning Letters Targeted Roadside Inspections
Investigation	Offsite investigations On-site “focused” investigations (zeroing into identified weaknesses) On-site “comprehensive” investigations (full-fledged facility audit)
Follow-up	Demand for a Cooperative Safety Plan <u>Notice of Violations</u> <u>Notice of Claims (Fines/Penalties)</u> Operations “out-of-service” Order Unfit Suspension (DoT number revoked)

Important Note: *Driver Interventions will only occur as a result of a FMCSA Carrier Safety Investigation. A driver’s BASIC-Score (DSMS) is confidential, i.e. not available for viewing by your carrier or the public. Under CSA-2010, drivers will not be assigned Safety Ratings or Safety Determinations.*

Conclusion

The foregoing information makes it quite clear that the CSA BASIC Score you receive as a driver can have a serious impact on your carrier as well as your own driving career. Your CSA-2010 history will follow you for 36 months, across any employer with a DoT-Number.

As most of the driver data is collected during roadside inspections, **your first goal must be to have positive inspection results, i.e. “no violations detected”**. This means keeping yourself and the vehicle in good shape and operating in compliance at all times.

- Bypassing inspection stations is not an option. Invariably, local enforcement authorities will stop you for breaking a certain, undefined “Local Law” [§392.2], which will also result in a DoT inspection report.....and, subsequently 5 demerit points!

While avoiding all violations should be your goal that may not always be possible. And because scores are weighted to give certain violations more weight than others, **your strategy should also include avoiding ‘high value (or high point)’ violations at all costs.**

High-value violations for drivers include:

- ◆ Jumping an out-of-service order
- ◆ Driving while ill, fatigued, or under the influence
- ◆ Falsifying logs
- ◆ Operating over hours
- ◆ Driving a CMV vehicle while disqualified

High-value violations involving vehicles include:

- ◆ Defective tires
- ◆ Suspension defects
- ◆ Steering system defects
- ◆ No flags and/or lights on a projecting load
- ◆ Cargo not properly secured

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Will carriers and drivers “have a clean slate” when the CSA-2010 system begins measuring and evaluating drivers and carriers?

Answer: *No. Existing SafeStat data from the previous 24 months (carrier) and 36 months (driver) will be transferred to the CSA-2010 safety measurement system.*

Question: Can a driver lose his/her CDL or regular driver’s license if the CSA-2010 system “flags” the driver with poor safety performance?

Answer: *No. There are no regulatory provisions that would allow the FMCSA to ‘pull’ a driver’s CDL or regular license at this time. The FMCSA can initiate interventions against the driver, up to and including fining the driver, but they can not (yet) suspend a license.*

Question: Will violations and crashes stay with a driver who continually changes employers (i.e. job hops from carrier to carrier)?

Answer: *Yes. If a violation is determined to be one the driver was responsible for or could have prevented, it will be placed in his/her personal data as well as the carrier’s. This data stays with the driver for 36 months, no matter which carrier the driver is working for.*

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