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\$3.97 USD

Friday Safety Brief®



Warning letters are often the first step in the intervention process. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) sends warning letters to motor carriers whose safety performance data indicates they are not complying with applicable FMCSA safety regulations. One of the tips that a motor carrier can follow after logging in to check their data on the Safety Measurement System (SMS) is to understand what that data means.



Understand your safety assessment: *Percentiles & Alerts*

Percentiles: The SMS calculates a measure for each BASIC as described in the SMS Methodology on the CSA website, (<http://csa2010.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/smsmethodology.pdf>). The measure is then used to assign a ranking or percentile that allows the safety behavior of a motor carrier to be compared with the safety behavior of motor carriers with similar operations and numbers of safety events.

The percentile is computed on a 0-100 scale. A *lower percentile indicates better compliance* with safety regulations than a higher percentile. For example, if a carrier has a BASIC in the 10th percentile, it means that only 10 percent of similarly sized and inspected carriers demonstrated better compliance in that BASIC. On the other hand, a carrier with a BASIC in the 90th percentile is one that demonstrated lower safety compliance than 90 percent of carriers in that BASIC. FMCSA established percentile thresholds to indicate when safety compliance problems require intervention. If a carrier does not have a percentile, it generally means the carrier has not had enough inspections to allow for an analysis of its records. More information is available in the SMS Information Center. Current intervention thresholds are as follows:

Unsafe Driving, Fatigued Driving, Crash Indicator: General-65%; HAZMAT-60%; Passenger-50%

Driver Fitness, Controlled Sub./Alcohol, Vehicle Maint., Cargo: General-80%; HAZMAT-75%; Passenger-65%

Alerts: A motor carrier can receive an alert in a BASIC in one of two ways. The On-Road column lists the motor carrier's percentile for each BASIC. If the percentile is over the established intervention threshold, the percentile is presented with an orange outline around the percentile. The Investigation column displays the "Serious Violation Found" icon for a BASIC if a serious violation was cited during an investigation within 12 months of the SMS results date. The icon will remain present for 12 months following an investigation regardless of whether corrective actions have occurred.

More useful tips for motor carriers who receive a warning letter can be found at <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/Documents/WarningLetterTipsheet.pdf>.

Useful Links

- **CSA FAQs:** <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/FAQs.aspx> — Search by keyword, such as "warning letter," "intervention," and "SMS"
- **Safety Measurement System (SMS):** <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms/> — View motor carrier safety performance data
- **U.S. DOT PIN request:** https://li-public.fmcsa.dot.gov/LIVIEW/PKG_REGISTRATION.prc_option — Request a U.S. DOT PIN in order to log in to SMS
- **DataQs:** <https://datags.fmcsa.dot.gov/> — File concerns about Federal and State data
- **SMS Information Center:** <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms/InfoCenter/Default.aspx> — Find useful information relevant to SMS, such as what motor carriers can do to improve
- **FMCSA Portal:** <https://portal.fmcsa.dot.gov/> — Access multiple FMCSA resources and information through a single login

FMCSA Enhances Pre-Employment Screening Program's Driver Data

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has enhanced its Pre-Employment Screening Program (PSP) by adding data for co-driver safety and post-crash violations to the roadside inspection and crash records previously available. The PSP report also now shows the date drivers' safety records are updated. Launched in March 2010, PSP is an essential safety tool that allows commercial truck and bus companies to electronically obtain drivers' safety records as part of the hiring process. To access PSP, go to www.psp.fmcsa.dot.gov.

