Crash Indicator BASIC Factsheet

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Crash Indicator Overview

What is the Crash Indicator BASIC? The Crash Indicator Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) is one of seven categories that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program uses to determine how a motor carrier ranks relative to other carriers with a similar number of safety events (i.e., inspections, violations, or crashes). At present, the Crash Indicator BASIC can only be seen by enforcement personnel or by a motor carrier that is logged into its own safety profile; it is not publically available. The CSA program defines the Crash Indicator BASIC as histories or patterns of high crash involvement, such as frequency and severity. It is based on information from State-reported crashes that meet reportable crash standards. The Crash Indicator BASIC uses crash history that is not specifically a behavior but instead the consequence of a behavior or set of behaviors. The consequence of a behavior(s) can point to a problem that needs attention. State-reported crashes raise the percentile rank of the Crash Indicator, which indicates lower safety compliance. CSA's Safety Measurement System (SMS) does not currently factor in crash accountability; the agency is researching how this may be incorporated in the future.

How do motor carriers and drivers know where they stand? SMS assigns to motor carriers a percentile rank for each BASIC, which they can see by logging into the SMS Website. Once logged into the Website, motor carriers with safety compliance problems in the Crash Indicator BASIC will see a warning symbol in that BASIC. They can also view the records of their companies' crashes and request a review of any records they feel are inaccurate.

What documents associated with this BASIC should motor carriers keep? If an investigation is conducted, Safety Investigators (SIs) may request from motor carriers these types of documents: carrier data from their Accident Register and accident reports required by State or other governmental entities/insurers (for example, Police Accident Reports). Motor carriers should keep documents required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) and know that SIs may use them to assess the nature and severity of a motor carrier's safety problems.

How can motor carriers and drivers improve their safety performance in the Crash Indicator BASIC? Motor carriers and drivers should know that under CSA their State-reported crash history matters. Their safety performance will be assessed based on how many crashes they've been involved in, when they happened, and how severe they were. Drivers need to understand how to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safely in order to avoid crashes.

Motor carriers should know how to comply with the FMCSRs and improve their percentile rank in the Crash Indicator BASIC. Carriers should provide up-to-date mileage figures on their MCS-150 biennial updates, which are used in the Crash Indicator calculation. They should also educate their drivers about safe driving practices, ensure their drivers know and understand safety regulations, and help them to understand what they can do to prevent crashes. Ultimately, more knowledgeable and law-abiding drivers will lead to fewer crashes and fewer crashes mean safer roads.

Motor carriers should know crashes negatively impact their SMS data for 24 months and that only not having crashes will improve their percentile ranks. Also, they should check out the "What can a motor carrier do to improve?" section of the SMS Information Center for answers to commonly asked questions about safety performance under CSA.