

Driver Fitness Overview



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What is the Driver Fitness BASIC? The Driver Fitness 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). The Driver Fitness BASIC specifically addresses the requirements within the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) Parts 383 and 391 and refers to the operation of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) by drivers who are unfit to operate a CMV due to a lack of training, experience, or medical qualifications. Some example roadside safety violations of the regulations that may cause a motor carrier to rank poorly in this BASIC include failure to have a valid and appropriate commercial driver's license (CDL) and being medically unqualified to operate a CMV.

How do motor carriers and drivers know where they stand? CSA's Safety Measurement System (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 Driver Fitness BASIC will see a warning symbol in that BASIC. They can also view the records of their companies' roadside inspections and request a review of any records they feel are inaccurate. Violations of the regulations related to the Driver Fitness BASIC raise the percentile rank, which indicates lower safety compliance.

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: complete driver qualification files including medical certificates, State driving records, annual reviews of driving records, and employment applications. Motor carriers should keep these documents as required by the 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 Driver Fitness BASIC? Motor carriers and drivers should know that driver fitness, in the context of CSA, has a specific meaning as related to road safety. The Driver Fitness BASIC is based on the regulations that require CMV drivers to be physically and medically qualified to drive a CMV according to Subpart E of FMCSR Part 391. For example, if a driver is operating with an expired medical certificate, then he or she is not complying with the Driver Fitness BASIC.

Motor carriers should know that violations of the regulations related to the Driver Fitness BASIC negatively impact their SMS data for 24 months; time and clean inspections are needed to improve a motor carrier's 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.



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CSA is FMCSA's enforcement program to improve large truck and bus safety and ultimately reduce CMV-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities. For more information about CSA, visit <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov>

