



© Fuse/Getty Images

## Vehicle Maintenance Overview

**What is the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC?** The Vehicle Maintenance 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 Vehicle Maintenance BASIC specifically addresses the requirements within the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) Parts 393 and 396 to properly maintain a commercial motor vehicle (CMV). Proper maintenance

includes, for example, ensuring that lamps or reflectors are working and tires are not worn. Some example roadside safety violations that may cause a motor carrier to rank poorly in this BASIC include operating an out-of-service vehicle or a vehicle with inoperative brakes, lights, and/or other mechanical defects, and failure to make required repairs.

**How do motor carriers know where they stand?** CSA's Safety Measurement System (SMS) assigns to motor carriers a percentile rank for each BASIC based on violations cited during roadside inspections and reviews, which they can see by logging into the SMS Website. Once logged into the SMS Website, motor carriers with safety compliance problems in the Vehicle Maintenance 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 Vehicle Maintenance BASIC raise the percentile rank, which indicates lower safety compliance and may lead to safety interventions such as warning letters or investigations.

**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: roadside inspection reports, vehicle maintenance files, annual vehicle inspection reports, Driver Vehicle Inspection Reports (DVIRs), equipment repair receipts, and accident reports. 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 Vehicle Maintenance BASIC?**

Drivers should know how to properly maintain their CMVs, for their safety and the safety of others. Employers should ensure that their drivers know that any vehicle malfunction or maintenance problem must be addressed proactively to prevent crashes.

Motor carriers should educate their drivers about how to properly conduct pre- and post-trip inspections, record vehicle defects on DVIRs, and ensure that any defects which would hinder safe operation of the vehicle are repaired prior to operating the vehicle. Motor carriers should answer drivers' questions and direct them to the information they need, including FMCSA's Website and the CSA Website.

Motor carriers should know that violations of the regulations related to the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC negatively affect 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.



This is an official U.S. government publication, produced and disseminated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

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>

