

# The CSA Dispatch

## Letter from the Administrator

It has been one year since the nationwide launch of Compliance, Safety, Accountability's (CSA) new Safety Measurement System (SMS) and the first set of new interventions. It's an appropriate time to look back and assess the program's progress, and to look forward to the opportunities and challenges on the horizon.

To begin, I am delighted with the professionalism and enthusiasm with which you, our Federal and State field enforcement personnel, have approached this major transition. In addition, I am pleased with the response to CSA from industry stakeholders, including motor carriers, drivers, insurers, and shippers.

Earlier this year, the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) released its evaluation, which showed that the CSA Operational Model significantly improves the enforcement of safety regulations and ensures a higher rate of motor carrier compliance. This translates into fewer crashes, injuries, and fatalities, and safer highways for all.

Some noteworthy highlights from last year include a 9% decrease in safety-based violations found at roadside inspections from the previous year, illustrating that CSA is already meeting its objective to improve safety through increased compliance. In addition, a recent assessment showed that of the more than 500,000 active motor carriers in the industry, CSA's SMS has performance data on the roughly 200,000 that are involved in 93% of crashes. These are impressive results.

Industry interest in safety is at an all-time high. In the past year, the CSA SMS website has

recorded 27 million visits since the system's launch.

Our new CSA interventions are also proving to be effective. We are reaching more carriers through the use of Focused Onsite Investigations, and we have delivered more than 40,000 warning letters to motor carriers with early signs of safety performance problems.

In addition, throughout the past year the CSA training team educated all of our Federal and State Partner field staff across the country on the new CSA investigative process. We are now well-positioned to take CSA to the next level. Using your input and experiences gathered through bi-weekly field listening forums, training classes, webinars, and last summer's survey, we will continue to refine and improve CSA even further.

We have big plans for 2012. We will improve the SMS based on the UMTRI evaluation findings and enforcement and other safety stakeholders' input. We will introduce a process that will allow motor carriers and drivers to request a review of their crash data for an accountability determination by independent analysts. We also plan to publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for a new Safety Fitness Determination process.

The American people have entrusted us with the responsibility to keep their roads safe. That is one challenge we can and must meet together. Thank you for all you do and I look forward to our continued work in 2012. Best wishes in the New Year.



Administrator Anne S. Ferro

## SMS Improvements

In response to the UMTRI results and enforcement and other safety stakeholder input, FMCSA will make improvements to SMS in 2012 and will provide a preview of changes to enforcement staff and motor carriers before

they are public. We expect the improvements to include:

1. Making changes to the Cargo-Related Behavior Analysis *(continued on page 2)*

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## SMS Improvements *(continued from page 1)*

- and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) that enable the SMS to better identify and address safety problems related to Hazardous Materials (HM)
2. Strengthening the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC by incorporating the load securement violations that today are included in the Cargo-Related BASIC
  3. Better aligning SMS with Intermodal Equipment Provider regulations
  4. Aligning violations that are included in SMS with Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) inspection levels by eliminating vehicle violations that are derived from driver-only inspections and driver violations from vehicle-only inspections
  5. More accurately identifying motor carriers that are involved in transporting people or HM so that FMCSA can hold those carriers to a higher safety standard

## Training Update

FMCSA recently provided training to more than 1,000 Federal and State Partner employees on the improved CSA investigative process. The Safety Management Cycle (SMC) is a key tool for the new process. Comprised of six clearly defined business practices, the SMC enables investigators and motor carriers to better identify and correct problem areas. The SMC allows investigators and motor carriers together to move beyond identifying “**what**” the safety violation is to “**why**” the safety performance issue is occurring so that motor carriers can develop or refine policies, practices, and operations to improve their safety performance.

Additional CSA training planned for 2012 includes a course on Intervention Manager responsibilities and a two-day Crash BASIC Investigation course. Once FMCSA completes and releases the SENTRI software, it will also train enforcement employees on the remaining new interventions: the Offsite Investigation and the Cooperative Safety Plan.

## Operating-While-Suspended License Violations

FMCSA and CVSA are currently discussing how to more effectively address operating-while-suspended license violations when the underlying violation is not safety based (e.g. child support, excise tax, parking fines). At present, the software used by roadside inspectors does not differentiate between safety- and non-safety-based license suspensions. All suspensions are uploaded to MCMIS and ultimately they affect the Driver Fitness BASIC in SMS and the Red Flag Violation process in the carrier investigation process. Feedback from both enforcement and industry stakeholders indicate that differentiating safety from non-safety license suspension violations would facilitate better identification of the right motor carriers for intervention and more efficient enforcement processes. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

## Crash Accountability

The ultimate goal of FMCSA's Crash Accountability program will be to code every interstate motor carrier crash as either “accountable” or “not accountable” to the motor carrier and the driver. However, FMCSA will take one step at a time in this direction because this is a very large task. The agency is developing a short-term approach that will continue to consider all crashes as accountable initially, but will provide motor carriers with a process, through the DataQs Website, for requesting reviews of crashes for possible “not accountable” determinations. The short-term program is projected to begin in the first half of 2012 and it may be in effect for several years.

FMCSA contractors will code the crashes for accountability almost exclusively on the basis of Police Accident Reports (PARs). However, the contractors will not code any crash as “not accountable” where a post-crash inspection finds a driver out-of-service (OOS) violation or a pre-crash vehicle OOS violation.

The field staff will have important roles in two areas. First, they will need to disseminate information about the program to State trucking associations and other motor carrier organizations. Second, high-quality PARs and post-crash inspections will be more important to FMCSA than ever. The number and quality of post-crash inspections will need to be increased.

The Crash Accountability program will, in the end, allow the agency to focus its resources on carriers that are accountable for crashes.

## ISS Changes

In an ongoing effort to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of roadside inspections, FMCSA, as part of the CSA program, will improve the methodology used in the Inspection Selection System (ISS) in the spring of 2012. ISS is used to identify and prioritize motor carriers for inspections and serves as the foundation for by-pass recommendations in e-screening applications. FMCSA is implementing the enhancements to the ISS algorithm based on feedback from roadside inspectors.

The changes will result in better targeting of motor carriers with demonstrated safety problems that can be addressed during a roadside inspection. The modifications will also ensure that carriers with insufficient data do not fly under the radar and will help roadside inspectors to more easily identify OOS carriers by assigning them a score of 100.

Stay tuned for further updates as they become available by subscribing to the CSA RSS feed or email list at [http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/stay\\_connected.aspx](http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/stay_connected.aspx).

## Did You Know?

The CSA Outreach Website is staffed by technical analysts who can answer stakeholders' questions that are submitted online at [http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/CSA\\_Feedback.aspx](http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/CSA_Feedback.aspx) or by phone at **1-877-254-5365**. You are encouraged to take advantage of this valuable service!