



# SMS Display Key Terms Glossary

**The Safety Measurement System (SMS) Display Key Terms** are intended to provide user-friendly descriptions of SMS Website display elements and are not intended to, and do not, modify or replace applicable Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations or substantive standards.

**BASICS:** The SMS categorizes data into seven Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS)—Unsafe Driving, Crash Indicator, Hours-of-Service (HOS) Compliance, Vehicle Maintenance, Controlled Substances/Alcohol, Hazardous Materials (HM) Compliance, and Driver Fitness.


**BASIC Status:** Shows whether a carrier has any BASICS with a  symbol. A carrier that has one or more BASICS with a  symbol is prioritized for interventions or further monitoring. The symbol is present when a carrier is at or above the threshold in a BASIC or has one or more Acute/Critical Violations in a BASIC.

**Carrier Registration Information:** Summary of the registration information (based on the most recent SMS data snapshot) the carrier has provided to FMCSA in the Motor Carrier Identification Report (MCS-150).

**Compliance Review:** Onsite examination of a carrier's operations to determine compliance with the safety fitness standard (49 CFR 385.5).

**Docket Number:** Carrier's identification number indicating operating authority in the Licensing and Insurance online database.

**Driver Inspections:** Level 1, 2, 3, or 6 inspections including those that uncover violations of the regulations related to the Unsafe Driving, HOS Compliance, Controlled Substances/Alcohol, and Driver Fitness BASICS.

**How does SMS relate to crashes? (Link):** Provides information on the BASICS with a  symbol and their relationship to future crash rate based on results from an SMS Effectiveness Test by FMCSA.

**Inspection:** Conducted at fixed or roadside facility of carrier commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) and/or drivers to determine compliance with federal safety regulations.

**Investigation:** Conducted offsite or onsite to evaluate a carrier's safety and compliance problems.

**Licensing and Insurance:** Public, online database that provides authorized for-hire motor carrier, freight forwarder, and property broker licensing and insurance information.

**MCS-150:** Motor Carrier Identification Report (MCS-150) required to apply for a U.S. DOT Number, and must be updated at least every two years (49 CFR 390.19).

**Measure:** Carrier violations or crashes are weighted by time and severity to produce a measure for

that carrier in each BASIC. The measure only considers individual performance, with a measure of 0 indicating best performance.

**Notice of Claim:** Formal notice that FMCSA issues to commence a civil penalty proceeding for failure to comply with applicable statutes and regulations (49 CFR 386.11).

**On-Road Performance:** Performance by BASIC based on 24 months of inspection and crash data.

**Operating Authority:** Determined by Docket Number; dictates type of operation, cargo, and insurance and financial responsibilities.

**Out-of-Service Rates:** Carrier and driver out-of-service (OOS) rates and national averages, based on data from FMCSA's Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (SAFER) System Website.

**Penalties History:** Type/status of all penalties a carrier has received; includes case number, date cases were closed, violations, relevant safety regulations, and fines.

**Percentile:** The SMS calculates a percentile (based on the measure) for each carrier with sufficient information to be compared against carriers with similar safety events (inspections, inspections with violations, crashes). Percentiles are calculated on a 0–100 scale, with 100 indicating worst performance and 0 indicating best performance.

**Power Units:** Power Units (PUs) are the number of vehicles a carrier owns, trip-leases, or term-leases. The SMS uses PUs and Vehicle Miles Traveled to calculate a carrier's measure for the Unsafe Driving and Crash Indicator BASICs.

**Reportable Crashes:** A reportable crash is an accident as defined by 49 CFR 390.5 involving a CMV that:

- Has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross combination weight rating, or gross vehicle weight or gross combination weight, of 4,536 kg (10,001 pounds) or more, whichever is greater; or
- Is designed or used to transport more than 8 passengers (including the driver) for compensation; or
- Is designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers (including the driver) and is not used to transport passengers for compensation; or
- Is used in transporting material found to be hazardous under 49 U.S.C. 5103 and transported in a quantity requiring placarding under 49 CFR, subtitle B, chapter I, subchapter C; and
- Is involved in a crash while operating on a public roadway, which results in a fatality, an injury, and/or a tow-away.

All FMCSA-reportable crashes, without any determination as to responsibility, are included in the SMS.

**Safety Event Group:** Group of carriers with similar safety events (inspections, inspections with violations, crashes) in a BASIC. Safety event groups allow the SMS to account for differences in the motor carrier population and ensure similar carriers are held to the same standards.

**Safety Measurement System:** The Safety Measurement System (SMS) categorizes motor carrier on-road safety performance into seven BASICs. Used to identify unsafe carriers, prioritize them for interventions, and monitor changes in compliance.

**Safety Rating:** FMCSA issues a Satisfactory, Conditional, or Unsatisfactory rating to a carrier following a compliance review to indicate compliance with the safety fitness standard (49 CFR 385.5) of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

**Acute and Critical Violations:** Violations recorded during an investigation that indicate a carrier is not complying with federal safety regulations and the carrier must take corrective action. Select this link to download a list of Acute and Critical Violations by BASIC: [https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/Documents/SMS\\_AppendixA\\_ViolationsList.xlsx](https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/Documents/SMS_AppendixA_ViolationsList.xlsx)

**Subject to General Intervention Threshold:** Applies to most carriers, except for those meeting the passenger carrier or placardable HM thresholds. Intervention Thresholds for carriers are organized by BASIC and are set based on a given BASIC's relationship to crash risk.

**Subject to Passenger Carrier Threshold:** Applies to carriers that meet the following criteria:

- For-hire carriers with 9–15 passenger capacity vehicles and private carriers with 16-plus passenger capacity vehicles.
- Carriers with more than 1–8 capacity vehicles and private carriers with more than 1–15 passenger capacity vehicles.
- Carriers with passenger vehicles representing more than 2% of their respective fleets.

**Subject to Placardable HM Threshold:** Applies to carriers that meet the following criteria:

- At least two HM placardable vehicle inspections within the past 24 months, with one inspection occurring within the past 12 months;
- At least 5% of vehicle inspections as HM placardable vehicle inspections;

OR

- HM safety permit condition.

**Summary of Activities:** All of the roadside inspections and crashes a carrier has had over past 24 months with information on up to the five most recent investigations. Includes:

**Total Inspection Count:** Shows all of the roadside inspections a carrier has had over the past 24 months.

**Driver Inspection Count:** Shows all of the Level 1, 2, 3, and 6 inspections that a carrier has had over the past 24 months.

**Vehicle Inspection Count:** Shows all of the Level 1, 2, 5, and 6 inspections a carrier has had over the past 24 months.



**Placardable HM Inspection Count:** Shows all of a carrier's vehicle inspections over the past 24 months where placardable quantities of HM have been present.

**Total Crashes Count:** Shows all of the reportable crashes that a carrier has been involved in over the past 24 months.

**Vehicle Inspections:** Level 1, 2, 5, or 6 inspections including those that uncover violations of the regulations related to the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC.

**Vehicle Miles Traveled:** Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) are the total number of miles driven in the last two years. The SMS uses PUs and VMT to calculate carrier measures for the Unsafe Driving and Crash Indicator BASICS.

**Violations:** Indicate noncompliance with federal safety regulations. Recorded during inspections and are entered into the Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS), which feeds into the SMS.

 This symbol appears when a carrier is at or above the threshold in a BASIC or has one or more Acute/Critical Violations in a BASIC. Carriers with a  symbol may be prioritized for interventions or further monitoring.

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to safety.**

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