



# What are the differences between a BASIC percentile, a safety rating, and a “score”?

A **Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) percentile** is what the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) uses to identify motor carriers with safety performance problems to prioritize them for interventions, such as warning letters or investigations. BASIC percentiles do not affect a carrier’s safety rating.

A **safety rating** may be issued to a motor carrier after an Onsite Investigation.

“**Scores**” are not generated or endorsed by FMCSA. Third-party companies issue them to drivers and motor carriers, including owner-operators.

## Prioritization: How it works

FMCSA’s Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program uses the Safety Measurement System (SMS) to analyze data from roadside inspections, including driver and vehicle violations; crash reports from the last two years; and investigation results. The data is updated once a month and organized into seven BASICs:



**Unsafe Driving**  
Speeding, reckless driving, improper lane change, inattention, no seatbelts



**Crash Indicator**  
Histories of crash involvement (Not Public)



**Hours-of-Service Compliance**  
Noncompliance with HOS regulations, including logbooks



**Vehicle Maintenance**  
Brakes, lights, defects, failure to make required repairs



**Controlled Substances/Alcohol**  
Use/possession of controlled substances/alcohol



**Hazardous Materials Compliance**  
Leaking containers, improper packaging and/or placarding (Not Public)



**Driver Fitness**  
Invalid license, medically unfit to operate a CMV

The SMS groups carriers by BASIC with other carriers that have a similar number of safety events (e.g., crashes, inspections, or violations) and then ranks carriers and assigns a percentile from 0 to 100 (the higher the percentile, the worse the performance) to prioritize them for interventions.

## Get Road Smart about safety ratings

Safety ratings *may* be issued after an Onsite Investigation, pursuant to 49 CFR Part 385. Unlike a BASIC percentile, which is updated monthly, a safety rating reflects the date of the investigation. The safety ratings are listed below.

<b>Satisfactory</b>	The carrier received an Onsite Comprehensive Investigation indicating that safety controls are sufficient to ensure compliance with the safety fitness standard. Only an Onsite Comprehensive Investigation may result in a Satisfactory rating.
<b>Conditional</b>	The carrier received an Onsite Comprehensive or Focused Investigation indicating that safety controls are inadequate but have not yet resulted in violations of the safety fitness standard.
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	The carrier received an Onsite Comprehensive or Focused Investigation indicating that safety controls are inadequate and have resulted in violations of the safety fitness standard, pursuant to 49 CFR 385.3. A motor carrier with a final rating of Unsatisfactory is prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce, pursuant to 49 CFR 385.13(a).

**Join FMCSA and our State Partners in a nationwide commitment to safety.**

**Lives depend on it.**