



I got a warning letter— what do I do?

A warning letter is your chance to improve your safety performance and compliance without further intervention from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Read the letter carefully because it identifies your company’s specific safety performance and compliance problems based on Safety Measurement System (SMS) data, explains how to access your safety record, and outlines the consequences if your company’s safety performance and compliance do not improve.

What happens next?

You do not need to respond directly to the letter. FMCSA will continue to monitor your safety performance and compliance through its SMS at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms/>. It is also important for you, as a motor carrier, to regularly check your SMS data. If your safety performance and compliance do not improve, FMCSA may conduct additional interventions that could result in fines and/or suspension or revocation of your company’s operating authority. These interventions may include Offsite or Onsite Investigations.

Get Road Smart about the BASICS

Your company’s safety data appears online in FMCSA’s SMS. FMCSA updates the SMS once a month with data from roadside inspections, including driver and vehicle violations; crash reports from the last two years; and investigation results. FMCSA organizes the SMS data into seven Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS), which are used to prioritize motor carriers, including owner-operators, for warning letters and other interventions. The seven BASICS are:



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

Learn how to improve safety

You are encouraged to review FMCSA’s Safety Management Cycle (SMC), a diagnostic process that Safety Investigators use, and that you can adopt to identify—and correct—practices that can lead to noncompliance in each BASIC. To learn more about the SMC, visit: <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/getroadsmart/>.

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

Lives depend on it.