The Vehicle Maintenance BASIC

The Vehicle Maintenance Compliance Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) is one of seven categories that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) uses to determine how a motor carrier ranks relative to other carriers in its Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) initiative. As a driver, your performance directly affects your carrier’s CSA ranking.

This BASIC includes violations related to properly maintaining a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) and to prevent shifting loads, spilled or dropped cargo and overloading of a CMV.

Proper maintenance includes, among other things, ensuring that lamps and reflectors are working and tires are not worn. Examples of roadside safety violations that may cause a motor carrier to rank poorly in this BASIC include operating an out-of-service (OOS) vehicle or operating a vehicle with inoperative brakes, lights and/or other mechanical defects and failure to make required repairs. Improper load securement and cargo retention violations are also examples of roadside violations included in this BASIC.

Keep your CSA scores low.

There are major benefits to keeping your Vehicle Maintenance BASIC scores low. Not only does it help keep your rig in service and on the road as much as possible, lower scores mean fewer accidents and safer roads, as well as lower insurance costs. Here are some tips to keep those scores as low as possible:

- Know the nine components that need to be inspected daily in order to drive a CMV:
  - Service brakes, including trailer brakes
  - Parking (hand) brake
  - Steering mechanism
  - Tires
  - Lighting devices and reflectors
  - Horn
  - Windshield wiper(s)
  - Rear-vision mirror(s)

Example of Vehicle Maintenance BASIC Violations and Severity Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>Violation Severity Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No pre-trip inspection</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to inspect/use emergency equipment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inoperative head lamps</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-compliance with headlamp requirements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improper battery installation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient drum/rotor thickness</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstructed windshield</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat tire or fabric exposed</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coil spring cracked and/or broken</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating an OOS vehicle</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be prepared!

All safety-based roadside inspections count, not just out-of-service violations. Roadside inspections are more likely to occur after an officer observes a traffic violation, so be prepared!

How Do You Measure Up?
Under the CSA, individual CMV drivers are not assigned safety ratings or Safety Fitness Determinations (SFDs). You can check your motor carrier’s scores by visiting the Safety Measurement System (SMS) website (https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms/).

You can check your crash and inspection history on the FMCSA’s Pre-Employment Screening Program website at www.psp.fmcsa.dot.gov/Pages/default.aspx.

For more information on how CSA affects drivers, contact The Buckner Company today.

Coupling devices
You may not leave without inspecting these parts first!

• Inspect your seat belt, fire extinguisher, mud flaps, tiedowns, fluid levels, etc. Everything counts!

• Immediately report any maintenance problems to dispatch or the proper supervisor. Never assume a truck will “be just fine” if there is a maintenance issue.

• Pay close attention during maintenance meetings. There are a lot of moving parts on your rig and you should be able to recognize and diagnose many maintenance issues.

• Store extra components in the truck, including bulbs, fuses, reflective tape, wiper blades, etc.

• NEVER operate a CMV that has been placed OOS.

• If there is an erroneous violation on your record, appeal it! If you have a good basis for the appeal (GPS records proving your speed at the time of a violation, for example), there is a good chance it can be expunged from the record.

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