The Crash Indicator BASIC

Tips to keep your CSA scores low

The Crash Indicator 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.

The Crash Indicator BASIC Basics
The major difference between this and the other six BASICs is how it is scored. While the other BASICs are judged and scored based on behaviors discovered during inspections, the Crash Indicator BASIC relies on information from state-reported crashes that meet reportable crash standards from the past three years. If you are involved in a crash, it will show up on the FMCSA’s records, whether you were at fault or not.

Keeping Scores Low
Here are some tips on how to keep your scores for this BASIC as low as possible:

- Be a defensive driver. Always anticipate what other drivers around you might do and be prepared to act quickly. Your rig takes a lot longer to stop than a regular passenger car, so give vehicles ahead of you plenty of space.
- Always follow the posted speed limit. Keep an eye out for speed limit changes. Pay special attention to your speed during bad weather.
- Pay close attention during driver safety meetings. These meetings are not just a formality—they are designed to help keep you and the other drivers on the road safe, a win-win situation for everyone.
- Daily inspections should be thorough and cover all the truck’s safety equipment, including seat belts, turn signals, brake system, brake lights, headlights and taillights. Minimize the chance for equipment malfunction and you decrease the chance of an accident.
- If you drive all across the country, be aware of local and state driving regulations, as they may differ from location to location. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for not knowing the laws. If you are unsure of a particular location’s driving laws, ask your fleet manager.
- Stay alert by eating healthy and avoiding medications that cause drowsiness. Smoking, turning up the radio and drinking coffee are not real cures for fatigue.
- Should you get into an accident, know how to handle the situation. Make sure you have all the required truck paperwork to make the process go as smoothly as possible.

It Doesn’t Matter Who is at Fault
In the Crash Indicator BASIC, crashes are reported to state agencies no matter who is at fault, and all crashes negatively affect your carrier’s CSA scores.

The FMCSA has received a lot of criticism on this topic, as defensive drivers that are involved in a crash when another driver is at fault are penalized for essentially doing nothing wrong.

Your best defense? Be a defensive driver and follow all safety regulations.