



Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC Factsheet



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Controlled Substances/Alcohol Overview

What is the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC? The Controlled Substances/Alcohol Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) is one of seven categories that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program uses to determine how a motor carrier ranks relative to other carriers with a similar number of safety events (i.e., inspections, violations, or crashes). The Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC specifically addresses the requirements in Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) Parts 382 and 392. The Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC deals with the operation of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) by drivers who are impaired due to alcohol, illegal drugs, and the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medications. Some example roadside violations that may cause a motor carrier to rank poorly in this BASIC include a driver(s) failing an alcohol test, which indicates an alcohol level of .02 or greater, and operating under the influence of illegal drugs.

How do motor carriers and drivers know where they stand? CSA's Safety Measurement System (SMS) assigns to motor carriers a percentile rank for each BASIC based on roadside inspections and reviews, which they can see by logging into the SMS Website. Once logged into the SMS Website, motor carriers with safety compliance problems in the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC will see a warning symbol in that BASIC. They can also view the records of their companies' roadside inspections and request a review of any records they feel are inaccurate. Violations of the regulations related to the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC raise the percentile rank, which indicates lower safety compliance and may lead to safety interventions such as warning letters or investigations.

What documents associated with this BASIC should motor carriers keep? If an investigation is conducted, Safety Investigators (SIs) may request from motor carriers these types of documents: records of verified positive controlled substances test results, documentation of refusals to take required alcohol and/or controlled substances tests, and driver evaluations and referrals. Motor carriers should keep these documents as required by the FMCSRs and know that SIs may use them to help determine whether the motor carrier has any safety performance issues.

How can motor carriers and drivers improve their safety performance in the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC? Motor carriers and drivers should know that controlled substances and alcohol requirements, in the context of CSA, have a specific meaning as related to road safety. The Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC is based on the regulations that require motor carriers to implement a controlled substance/alcohol testing program in accordance with 49 CFR Part 382. Drivers should understand the regulations related to the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC and how to comply with them. Employers should ensure that drivers understand that staying drug-free and alcohol-free while driving for their motor carriers is not just important for safety – it's the law.

Motor carriers should educate their drivers about how to comply with the FMCSRs and how it impacts the carrier's CSA percentile rank in the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC. Motor carriers should know they are accountable for the safety performance of their drivers and are responsible for educating their drivers about the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC.

Motor carriers should know that violations of the regulations related to the Controlled Substances/Alcohol BASIC negatively impact their SMS data for 24 months; time and clean inspections are needed to improve their percentile ranks. Also, they should check out the "What can a motor carrier do to improve?" section of the SMS Information Center for answers to commonly asked questions about safety performance under CSA.



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CSA is FMCSA's enforcement program to improve large truck and bus safety and ultimately reduce CMV-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities. For more information about CSA, visit <http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov>

