



# "Safety & Compliance are Never a Compromise"

## Keep it moving!

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### CSA: Do you know the BASICS?

CSA stands for Compliance, Safety, Accountability, a Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) program aimed at reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities on the nation's highways.

Under the CSA program, drivers and motor carriers are assessed under seven critical safety areas called Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS). The seven BASICS are:

- Unsafe driving;
- Hours-of-service compliance;
- Driver fitness;
- Controlled substances and alcohol;
- Vehicle maintenance;
- Hazardous materials compliance; and
- Crash indicator.

The majority of CSA data is collected during roadside inspections. The rest of the data comes from crash reports and FMCSA investigations.

The goal for motor carriers and drivers is to maintain low scores in each of the seven BASICS, as the lower the score, the less chance of intervention. An intervention is a corrective action taken by FMCSA.

#### Unsafe driving

This BASIC addresses operation of commercial motor

vehicles (CMVs) by drivers in a careless or dangerous manner.

Examples of violations include:

- Speeding;
- Reckless driving;
- Improper lane changes; and
- Following too close.

#### Hours-of-service compliance

This BASIC covers operation of CMVs by drivers who are ill, fatigued, or in non-compliance with the hours-of-service regulations.

This BASIC includes violations of regulations surrounding the complete and accurate recording of records of duty status.

Examples of violations include:

- Operating a CMV while ill or fatigued;
- No record of duty status; and
- Violation of the hours-of-service limits.

#### Driver fitness

This BASIC addresses operation of CMVs by drivers who are unfit due to a lack of training, experience, or medical qualifications.

Violations tracked under this BASIC include:

- Failure to have an appropriate CDL;



*(continued on page 2)*

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## CSA: Do you know the BASICS? *(continued from page 1)*

- Driving a CMV while disqualified; and
- Failure to have a valid medical certificate.

### Controlled substances and alcohol

This BASIC covers operation of CMVs by drivers who are impaired due to alcohol, illegal drugs, and misuse of over-the-counter medications.

Violations tracked under this BASIC include:

- Use or possession of drugs or alcohol; and
- Being under the influence of alcohol within four hours prior to duty.



### Vehicle maintenance

The vehicle maintenance BASIC addresses failure to properly maintain a commercial motor vehicle and failure to prevent shifting loads.

Violations tracked under this BASIC include:

- Defective brakes, lights, and other mechanical components;
- Failure to make repairs;
- Failure to inspect the vehicle (or prepare required inspection reports); and
- Improper load securement.

### Hazardous materials compliance

This BASIC addresses the unsafe handling of hazardous materials in a CMV.

Examples of violations include:

- Leaking containers;
- Improper placarding; and
- Failure to have proper hazmat documentation.

### Crash indicator

The crash indicator BASIC covers histories or patterns of high crash involvement, including frequency and severity. This is done via state-generated crash reports.

### Roadside inspections

As previously mentioned, the roadside inspection is where the majority of safety performance data is gathered. It is important to have as many good inspections as possible.

A driver needs to remember, that as well as representing himself/ herself, he/she is representing his/ her company during a roadside inspection.

A driver should be prepared and act professionally. Unprofessional behavior and poor manners can cause unnecessary issues during an inspection. The vehicle should be neat, clean, and well-maintained.

All paperwork should be complete and up-to-date.

### Safety measurement system (SMS)

Every month, CSA's safety measurement system (SMS) measures the data collected from the previous 24 months for motor carriers and the previous 36 months for drivers and calculates a score in each of the seven BASICS.

Violations are given a value of 1 to 10 with the higher value indicating a more severe violation.

An example of a low risk violation is a form and manner violation on a log book. An example of a high risk violation is operating a commercial motor vehicle while ill or fatigued.

As well as being given a value, the violations are time-weighted. Recent violations count more than those in the past.

Scores generated in the SMS are then entered into a database and compared to the scores of other motor carriers and drivers. This allows FMCSA to identify candidates for interventions.

### DataQs

DataQs is a system that allows carriers and drivers to challenge data FMCSA has on file about them and lists on its websites. DataQs is commonly used by motor carriers to request copies



of roadside inspection reports and/ or ask for corrections to the data found on the reports. DataQs is often used by drivers to dispute or ask for correction to data listed on their PSP records.

A motor carrier or driver must register in order to use DataQs. Once registered, a motor carrier or driver must provide the appropriate information for the request to be processed. DataQs then forwards the request and all of the information provided to the agency that entered the data being challenged by the motor carrier or driver.

At this point, an investigation is conducted. Once the investigation is completed, a decision is made. The motor carrier or driver is notified of the investigation's results via the DataQs system, and if necessary, changes/corrections will be sent to FMCSA.

The DataQs website is: [https:// dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov](https://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov).

# Safety focus: Sharing the road with snowplows

With snow starting to fall in portions of the country, now is a good time to review some basic snowplow safety guidelines to be sure that you are allowing snowplows to perform their job so you can perform yours more safely.



**Slow down.** If weather conditions are bad enough for snowplows to be out, it means that you need to reduce your speed and increase your following distance.



**Stay behind a snowplow.** Maintain a following distance of at least five to six car lengths to avoid collisions with these slow-moving vehicles as well as damage to your vehicle from the salt, sand, and other road treatment materials being thrown onto the road.



**Never drive next to a snowplow.** A plow can shift sideways after hitting snowpacks, heavy slush, or drifts.



**Never crowd a snowplow.** If you must pass, only do it when a safe and legal passing area is available. This passing area must be clear of snow, ice, and slush. Also keep in mind that plows are wider than most vehicles and portions of the plow or blade may not be visible due to blowing snow.



**Know where the snowplow is.** On multi-lane roadways, the plow could be in a lane of traffic or on the shoulder.



**When a snowplow approaches, allow the plow room to operate.** Slow down and move to the right side of the road.



**Never drive through snow clouds.** These are often referred to as “white outs,” and are caused by snow swirling around the snowplow.



**As with any adverse conditions, turn on your vehicle's headlights.** This allows you to be seen by other traffic.

Keep in mind that the best snow conditions on the road are going to be...you guessed it, right behind the snowplow. So give snowplows plenty of space and let them clear your path so that it is safer to drive.

## Sand or salt?

The snowplow's blades push the snow off of roadways, but how is it determined if salt or sand is spread on the highway?

Salt added to ice or snow lowers the freezing temperature of water. However, when outside air temperature falls below 20 degrees, salt can't adequately lower the freezing temperature. On these colder days, snowplows will lay down sand instead. The advantage of sand is that traction is

improved. A disadvantage is that it can leave residue on the roadways that needs to be removed later.

Another alternative are chemical de-icers such as calcium chloride and calcium magnesium acetate. The surface temperature of a snow- or ice-covered road determines de-icing chemical amounts and melting rates. As temperatures go down, more de-icer is needed to melt snow or ice.

## Road surfaces

Even when the roadway surface is below freezing, it holds some heat and can help melt snow and ice. The type of road surface impacts its ability to hold heat.

Concrete surfaces cool more rapidly, so snow and ice melt slower on this type of surface. Asphalt surfaces absorb more solar radiation and stay warmer longer so they are better for melting ice or snow.

Regardless of whether snowplows are dispersing sand or salt or the type of road surface you may be on, give snowplows the space they need to keep the roadways clear. After all, we all want to travel as safely as possible.

## Driving and hazardous conditions

Furthermore, even if a snowplow is out on the road, never assume the road is completely clear of snow and ice. Always use extra caution during and right after a winter storm.

The following are a few guidelines to follow when on the road during hazardous conditions.

- Check on road conditions before you begin your day. Travel information may be accessed by phone or Internet.
- Turn on your vehicle's low beam headlights to increase your visibility. Don't use high beams as the light will disperse in thick snow or fog making visibility difficult for you and other drivers.
- Reduce your speed. Speed limits are based on dry pavement and good weather, not adverse winter weather conditions.
- Do not use cruise control. A short touch of your brakes to deactivate the cruise control feature can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- If you believe it's too dangerous to continue, pull off in a safe area (truck stop, rest stop, etc.) until it is safe to continue.





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## Neglecting emotional health harms mind, body

*"I've had a lot of worries in my life, most of which never happened."*

Mark Twain



**Exercise releases stress-reducing hormones.**

There's no scale for measuring the amount of weight on your shoulders, but it's worth taking time to consider the emotional load you're carrying.

Our emotional health impacts our physical and mental well-being. It makes a difference in the way we adapt to change and navigate challenges, influences our feelings toward ourselves and others, and helps us heal physically.

Chronic stress makes an impact on both mind and body. Prolonged stress can:

- Increase anxiety.
- Bring feelings of sadness.
- Cause a lack of motivation.
- Impair wound healing.
- Decrease response to vaccines.
- Increase upper respiratory infections, and make them more severe.
- Cause tension headaches or migraines.
- Cause backaches.
- Aggravate existing health problems, such as high blood pressure, ulcers, or irritable bowel problems.



To a degree, stress is good. It can keep us focused on a task that needs to be

accomplished, and activate the flight response that keeps us from getting hurt.

But problems occur when the body is exposed to stress hormones for a long period of time. Long-term stress weakens the immune system's ability to fight disease and affects mental health.

When concerns mount or tasks pile up, don't ignore the impact this makes on your well-being. Be aware of what this does to your mind and body, and take steps to buoy your emotional health.

To help keep your emotional health in balance:

**Do something peaceful.** Try yoga, prayer, music, reading, or art.

**Schedule your time.** Enjoy a sense of accomplishment when you cross tasks off your to-do list. Your mood improves when you make time for fun.

**Exercise.** Benefit from the stress-reducing hormones your body releases. If you're not used to exercise, start by walking regularly.

**Spend time with friends.** They're a great support system when problems arise.

**Nurture a hobby.** Find something that you enjoy, such as gardening, cooking, crafts, or photography.

**Get enough sleep.** Lack of sleep can bring irritability, weight gain, and memory problems.