

HOW SERIOUSLY DO YOU WEIGH SAFETY IN YOUR CARRIER SELECTION?

MARKET UPDATE

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Shippers often prioritize costs, capacity, and on-time performance, but they frequently overlook a crucial factor: carrier safety. In the rush to cut expenses and secure dependable partners, safety data can fall by the wayside. However, recent discussions and reports highlight the importance of incorporating safety metrics as a fundamental element of your transportation strategy.



SAFETY METRICS TO WATCH: EXPERT INSIGHTS

In a recent panel discussion, *The End of a Cycle*, featuring industry leaders Matthew Leffler, Jason Miller, and Ken Adamo, Jason Miller delivered a striking statement about the state of carrier safety:



“ If a carrier's **Hours-of-Service (HOS) compliance score is greater than 1**, you should **stop using that carrier today** and never use them again. That number really shouldn't be above 0.5. If the **Unsafe Driving number is above 4**, you should **stop using that entity today** and never use them again until things improve. ”⁽¹⁾

- Jason Miller, Interim Chairperson
Department of Supply Chain Management
Michigan State University

Miller emphasized that we have substantial data confirming the correlation between unsafe carriers and accident rates. For example:



UNSAFE DRIVING

associated with a 30% increase in fatal crash rates



VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

contribute to an 8% increase in fatal crash rates



HOURS-OF-SERVICE COMPLIANCE

contribute to an 8% increase in fatal crash rates

(2)

These alarming statistics illustrate the tangible risks unsafe carriers pose—not just to their drivers, but to everyone on the road.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR SHIPPERS: ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Many shippers don't know how to find or evaluate safety data beyond a carrier's FMCSA safety rating. While "Satisfactory" is the highest rating available, it's not enough to ensure a carrier's day-to-day compliance with safety standards. Carriers with high Unsafe Driving or HOS Compliance BASIC scores can still legally operate, but they pose significant risks.

**"SATISFACTORY"
ISN'T
SATISFACTORY!**

PROTECT YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN AND REPUTATION



LEARN TO ACCESS SAFETY METRICS

Use the FMCSA's CSA Safety Measurement System (SMS) to check a carrier's Unsafe Driving, HOS Compliance, and Vehicle Maintenance BASIC scores:

<https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/>



INCLUDE SAFETY IN RFI/RFP DOCUMENTATION

Request safety metrics directly from carriers, such as their BASIC scores and any recent DOT audits. Use thresholds (e.g., HOS score <0.5, Unsafe Driving score <4) to eliminate unsafe carriers.



EVALUATE FLEET COMPOSITION

According to the National Academies Report (2), carriers whose fleets are entirely leased owner-operators have 32% more HOS violations and 27% more vehicle maintenance violations than carriers with employee drivers. Understanding a carrier's operational model can provide additional context about their risk profile.



ACT ON THE DATA

Establish clear safety standards for carrier selection and hold your partners accountable. When carriers exceed risk thresholds, reevaluate your partnerships.

(1) Leffler, M., Miller, J., & Adamo, K. (2024, November 8). The End of a Cycle. The Armchair Attorney® Podcast. LinkedIn event. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/events/7258853259518386176/>

(2) National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2024. Pay and Working Conditions in the Long-Distance Truck and Bus Industries: Assessing for Effects on Driver Safety and Retention. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/27892>.

STAY SAFE, STAY RESPONSIBLE, STAY COMPETITIVE.

Start by ensuring your procurement and logistics teams understand how to access and interpret safety metrics. By prioritizing safety, you not only protect your supply chain but also demonstrate a commitment to corporate responsibility and public safety.



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