New Entrant Safety Audit Checklist

The records FMCSA reviews in the New Entrant safety audit, the violations that fail it automatically, and a tick-box checklist to prepare before the auditor calls.

Last reviewed October 26, 2026. Free to print and share.

How the audit works

New interstate carriers are monitored for 18 months (49 CFR 385.307). The safety audit generally happens within the first 12 months of operation, on site or electronically, and FMCSA sends a written pass or fail result within 45 days.

Driver records

- [ ] A complete driver qualification file for every driver (use the DQ file checklist).
- [ ] Valid license and current medical certification for every driver.
- [ ] Annual driving record review completed and noted for each driver.

Drug and alcohol program

- [ ] Clearinghouse registration for the company (and the C/TPA designated, if you use one).
- [ ] Pre-employment negative drug test result for every CDL driver.
- [ ] Full pre-employment Clearinghouse query and annual queries.
- [ ] Random testing pool enrollment and selection records.
- [ ] Written drug and alcohol policy, with driver receipt signed.

Hours of service

- [ ] Registered ELD in each truck (unless exempt) and records for the last six months.
- [ ] Supporting documents (fuel receipts, bills of lading, dispatch records) for the last six months.

Vehicles

- [ ] Annual inspection report for every truck and trailer, done in the last 12 months.
- [ ] Maintenance and repair records for every vehicle.
- [ ] Driver vehicle inspection reports, with repairs signed off.
- [ ] Legal name and USDOT number marked on both sides of each power unit.

Insurance and other records

- [ ] Proof of required insurance on file with FMCSA (BMC-91/91X).

- [ ] Accident register, even if empty.
- [ ] Hazardous materials records, if you haul hazmat.

Violations that fail the audit by themselves

For example: no drug and alcohol testing program; using a driver who is unlicensed, disqualified or medically unqualified; using a driver who refused a required test; no required insurance; no hours-of-service records; operating a vehicle placed out of service; no annual inspection. Check FMCSA's New Entrant page for the full current list.

Resources

Read the full guide: New Entrant Safety Audit Checklist (guide) (https://opentruckingcompany.com/guides/new-entrant-safety-audit-checklist)

FREE DOWNLOADS

- Driver qualification file checklist (PDF) – One page per driver; tick items as they go in the file.
  https://opentruckingcompany.com/downloads/driver-qualification-file-checklist.pdf

OFFICIAL FORMS AND LOOKUPS

- FMCSA New Entrant program: safety audits – How the audit works and the automatic-failure violations.
  https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/NewEntrant/SafetyAudits.aspx
- eCFR: 49 CFR 385.307 – The new entrant monitoring rule.
  https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-385/section-385.307
- FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse – Run and record driver queries.
  https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/

FREE TOOLS

- SAFER company snapshot – Check your inspection history and registration status.
  https://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/CompanySnapshot.aspx

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