



## WINNING IN THE CSA ENVIRONMENT

### Avoid Potential Hazards

As CSA continues to evolve and (hopefully) improve, basic fundamental relationship building tools can help produce positive results from on-highway inspection encounters. Most motor carriers and their drivers are seeking a positive image with enforcement authorities. Those working the scales and in the patrol cars are people doing their assigned jobs, as we all are. Human nature dictates that the majority of us would like to do the best job possible in our given circumstances. It would be unreasonable to think that authorities would be any different in their approach to the job at hand. So, what can all of us, as drivers and administrators, do to improve this relationship and our image as a result?



**Do the jobs that you are required to do.** Specifically, at the time you report for work, make sure you accomplish a couple of tasks that you are required to do by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. Inspect your vehicle by walking around it while checking lights, tires and all of the other items on your vehicle inspection report. If there is a problem, follow your company's policy on correcting the issue. Statistically, inoperative lights are a prime reason for authorities to stop commercial motor vehicles. In addition, before leaving your parking spot, initiate your log book with the required entries made at the beginning of the day. In addition, FMCSA regulations require that your log be up to date during the day with an accurate reflection of your activities. If these two items are in compliance, a driver is less likely to receive a written violation during an inspection.

**Obey the rules of the road, including speed limits.** In the CSA environment, the number one reason for stopping a truck is because that truck is going too fast. Many of the speeding violations that are recorded in the Unsafe Driving BASIC are the result of trucks failing to slow down when entering municipalities or other speed controlled areas. The excess speed provides a reason for the officer to check for further violations, and this process can go more smoothly if all parties express a positive and cooperative attitude. In this instance, obey the speed limit and reduce the probability of a stop.





**Look the part of a professional.** The opinion of a driver is substantially based on the initial, visual impression. Presenting a neat and clean appearance is neither expensive nor particularly time consuming, but the result can make a huge difference in how you are viewed by enforcement authorities. In addition, if your truck is well organized (not by using the windshield area as a filing cabinet) and the driver presents a good appearance, most authorities will be impressed with the fact that you seem to have it together. Certainly there are no free passes, but when you combine good appearance with a polite demeanor, it's likely that you will be treated as a professional. It never hurts to make a good impression.

The management of CSA scores is proof positive that the devil is in the details. Certainly, the fundamentals of this system score violations based on the severity of that violation. Because the overall scores are calculated on a percentile basis, not only are the individual inspections and carrier score numbers important, but also how these numbers compare to others in the carrier peer group. If a high number of peer group members are using electronic logs along with a thorough maintenance program, it will tend to raise the bar within that group. Manage your business to be one of the best!

In summary, all written violations are important and can have a lasting effect on both the scores of the carrier under SMS and the driver under PSP. Carriers and drivers should mentor and support all of their drivers and peers on the need for safety compliance and its necessity for all.

[ckovachevich@cwgins.com](mailto:ckovachevich@cwgins.com)

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