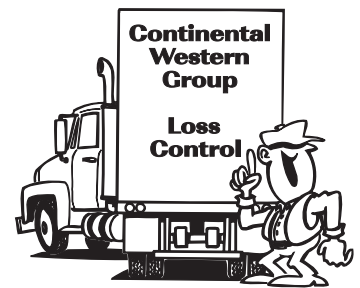


# TRUCK TALK

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## Crash Indicator

The Crash Indicator is one of the 7 Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS) in the new FMCSA initiative referred to now as CSA, which stands for Compliance, Safety, and Accountability. In simple terms, here is how this works:

In this BASIC, the number of crashes a motor carrier has is compared to other carriers of roughly the same size. If every carrier in a carrier's peer group has a crash rate per power unit of roughly .10, except for some carriers that have a crash rate per power unit of roughly .20, it is the carriers that have the .20 rate that will be getting the attention of the enforcement officials. So, while the number of crashes a carrier has is indeed important, what is also important is how the number of accidents a carrier has been involved in compares to other carriers of roughly the same size.

In the Crash Indicator BASIC, crash accountability (also known as preventability or chargeability) is not a consideration as a carrier's score is determined. The logic is that every carrier is subjected to non-preventable crashes, and the peer-grouping and comparison process equalizes them out. So, the key to keep your score low in this BASIC is eliminating the kind of crashes that you can control, the preventable crashes. By eliminating preventable crashes you are likely to not be involved in more crashes per power unit than your peers.

Sounds easy. But, how do you prevent crashes? Here are a few things that will help:

- Make sure all drivers are trained on defensive driving.
- Make sure the drivers know that it is your first priority and expectation that they drive defensively and safely at all times.

- Have a simple and solid policy covering the operation of commercial motor vehicles. Not having a strong policy relating to operating the vehicles may create a culture of acceptance when it comes to crashes.
- Put mechanisms in place that makes sure drivers are following the company policy, such as downloading data from the vehicle, using a driver complaint system, tracking fuel mileage, looking for abnormal vehicle wear and tear and excessive maintenance costs, and using a road patrol program.
- Track and investigate all crashes, not just the DOT-reportable ones. Look at the root causes of the accident; any time a common thread is found, corrections within your company need to be made.
- If a crash is deemed preventable, all parties that could have in some way prevented the crash should be corrected and/or disciplined. If dispatch or maintenance actions contributed to the crash, they should be included.

To avoid problems in this BASIC, the carrier must establish a culture that leads drivers to operate defensively and safely at all times. You can take it to the bank that the carriers with the highest scores in this BASIC will have a few things in common:

- A) They do not have a policy addressing the operation of vehicles, B) They do not investigate accidents, C) They do not take action on the preventable crashes, D) They will be pulled over for inspections more frequently, and E) the next phone call may be the Safety Investigator from the DOT wanting to talk to them . . .

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