

## What Is the Safety Management Cycle (SMC)?

The SMC is a tool used by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to help identify and address motor carrier safety and compliance issues. Motor carriers can also use the SMC within their own businesses to determine which of the Safety Management Processes (SMPs) that they may need to improve by looking at the processes, management and controls associated with each SMP.

This document identifies tools motor carriers can use to establish and improve appropriate safety management controls, thereby reducing or eliminating violations. Motor carriers and drivers are reminded, however, that they are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable regulations. For information about the regulations related to the Crash Indicator Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC), see the Crash Indicator BASIC factsheet at [http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/Documents/FMC\\_CSA\\_12\\_005\\_BASICs\\_Crash\\_Indicator.pdf](http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/Documents/FMC_CSA_12_005_BASICs_Crash_Indicator.pdf).

The SMC is used to systematically assess SMPs in six areas:

1. Policies and Procedures, 2. Roles and Responsibilities,
3. Qualification and Hiring, 4. Training and Communication,
5. Monitoring and Tracking, and 6. Meaningful Action.

By periodically reviewing each process, there is an opportunity to identify and correct breakdowns in SMPs before safety and compliance issues are identified or crashes occur. The SMC can also be used after safety and compliance issues or crashes have taken place to assist in determining which SMPs need attention.

The SMCs for each BASIC can be found in the Information Center on the SMS Website at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms>.



The Safety Management Cycle, or SMC, consists of the six Safety Management Processes outlined in the graphic above.

## Policies and Procedures

- Develop a policy stating that drivers are responsible for adhering to all safe-driving-related Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances, including the wearing of seatbelts.
- Develop a policy requiring drivers to report and submit copies of all roadside inspections, moving violation citations, and crash involvements to carrier management within 24 hours.
- Develop policies and procedures that ensure drivers practice and apply safe, defensive driving techniques and skills.
- Develop a policy that prohibits passengers from being onboard non-passenger vehicles without management approval.
- Develop a procedure ensuring that vehicle defects that impact safety and/or compliance are reported, repaired, and certified before the vehicle is operated.
- Develop a written and progressive disciplinary policy focused on taking corrective action to ensure drivers comply with regulations and policies. A progressive disciplinary policy could include, among other things, written warnings, suspensions or work restrictions, monetary penalties, and termination.

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## HAZMAT Carrier Only:

- Establish a policy and procedure to ensure that drivers examine each tire on the motor vehicle at the beginning of each trip and each time the vehicle is parked, and that they take immediate corrective measures as needed before continuing with the route.
- Adopt standards for safely operating a vehicle in accordance with specific load and equipment requirements, roadway and weather conditions, and State and local regulations concerning HAZMAT-restricted routes.

## Passenger Carrier Only:

- Develop systematic procedures for inspecting maintenance items critical to fire safety and emergency evacuation—for example, checking wheel-hub lubrication levels according to the manufacturer's recommended inspection intervals, checking wheels for signs of excess heat every time the motorcoach is parked, regularly inspecting wiring and electrical systems for short circuits, and inspecting emergency-exit operation and markings.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- Ensure manager's role includes being responsible for making certain that employees receive safe driving training in accordance with State or Federal regulations and company policy, including safe driving procedures while carrying HAZMAT (if applicable)—for example, counteracting sloshing in cargo tanks.
- Identify, clearly define, and document roles and responsibilities of drivers, managers, and supervisors with respect to the carrier's policies and procedures on safe driving and the timely reporting of inspection violations, citations and crash involvement.
- Establish roles and responsibilities for managers and experienced drivers to provide oversight and instruction to newer drivers.
- Identify, clearly define, and document role of managers and supervisors for implementing safe driving policies and practices, and monitoring compliance in accordance with regulatory reporting and company policies and procedures.
- Define and document driver roles and responsibilities associated with compliance with Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances related to unsafe driving.

## Qualification and Hiring

- Ensure that Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs) from States issuing Commercial Driver's Licenses are reviewed for unsafe driving violations of all prospective drivers for the last three years.
- Ensure that prospective drivers will drive safely by querying applicants, checking with previous employers and references, and obtaining necessary documents regarding drivers' medical conditions, safety performance, qualifications, and training going back three years.
- Review and evaluate gaps in employment, frequent job changes, incomplete applications, operational limitations, physical impairments, and controlled substances and alcohol involvement.
- Ensure that the employment application captures all information required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, pertaining to moving violations, prior convictions, and denied employment based on unsafe driving.

## Training and Communication

- Communicate expectations for adhering to safe driving regulations and company policies and procedures to all staff, and provide new hire and refresher training and company communication channels to support meeting those expectations.

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- Implement a training/testing program that includes hands-on demonstrations of safe driving with a focus on defensive driving skills and techniques and crash avoidance. Create opportunities for individual instruction and coaching as appropriate.
- Reinforce training by developing job aids and/or establishing communication channels for all staff.
- Ensure that managers and supervisors regularly communicate with their drivers and demonstrate their commitment to the management of safety and safe driving, in particular.

### **HAZMAT Carrier Only:**

- Ensure that drivers of HAZMAT loads are trained in special vehicle-handling characteristics, including the high center of gravity; fluid load subject to surge and the effects of the surge on braking; differences in stability among baffled, unbaffled, and multicompartament tanks; and the effects of partial loads on vehicle stability.

### **Passenger Carrier Only:**

- Provide training on intersection and lane-change safety and on pedestrian awareness for bus drivers in inner cities.

## **Monitoring and Tracking**

- Maintain roadside inspection reports, moving violation records, crash reports, and “How am I driving?” complaints to help evaluate the performance of all staff (drivers and managers) involved in the effectiveness of company safety management policies and procedures.
- Review and retain each driver’s MVR at least annually to ensure compliance with company policies, Federal regulations, and State and local laws and ordinances related to safe driving. File the MVR in each driver’s driver qualification file after review.
- Maintain and record crash accident details and evaluate the company’s crash experience over time to identify potential patterns/trends.
- Ensure all training needs and training received are documented and monitored.
- Implement a system for keeping accurate records of employee driving-safety training needs and completed training, via software, a checklist in the driver’s file, and/or another appropriate method.

## **Meaningful Action**

- Design and implement incentives and/or recognition programs to reward and encourage safe driving behavior — for example, including bonuses, gift certificates, and/or verbal recognition for clean inspections, no crashes, and/or no moving citations.
- Examine monitoring and tracking data to see if a problem is an individual issue or a systematic breakdown in the SMC (i.e., Policies and Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities, etc.)
- Give employees immediate feedback and require corrective action as soon as the company is aware that responsibilities related to unsafe driving issues are not being fulfilled.
- Provide remedial training to employees with unsafe driving performance issues that can be addressed by enhancing their knowledge and skills.
- Implement a disciplinary policy where potential disciplinary measures correspond to risk posed, with violations associated with high-consequence accidents or incidents being punished more severely.
- Give feedback to employee as soon as the company is aware that an employee is not fulfilling his/her safety management responsibilities.

