

FMCSA's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse: **Motor Carrier Responsibilities and Resources.**



Before hiring a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) driver, motor carriers are required to verify the commercial driver's license (CDL) holder has not been declared ineligible to drive due to a drug or alcohol violation. To make this easier, and to make it more difficult for drivers to hide these violations, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has developed the CDL Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse is a database of disqualifying events, like a drug or alcohol test failure, refusal to test, or if a qualified person has actual knowledge of a violation. Motor carriers are required to query the database before allowing a newly hired driver to operate a CMV requiring a CDL and annually thereafter.

The database is populated by reports from motor carriers (or their agents), medical review officers, and substance abuse professionals. These violations are available in the clearinghouse for five years from the date of violation or until the driver completes the return-to-duty process, whichever is longer.

Below is an overview of the various motor carrier responsibilities and resources developed by the FMCSA designed to walk carriers through the process.

Registration: Registration is required for every motor carrier that employs CDL drivers and must be renewed every five years. Drivers that are applying for CDL jobs must also register. The resources below resources will help with the registration process.

- [Motor carrier registration](#)
- [Driver registration](#)
- [Establishing a Pay.gov Account](#)
- [How to designate a consortium or third-party administrator](#)

Querying: There are two types of required queries. Full queries are used when hiring a CDL driver and provides a detailed report of what, if any, information the Clearinghouse is storing on the driver. Limited queries fulfil the carrier's annual query requirement and indicate only if information on the driver exists in the database. If there is information, the carrier must then obtain full query to verify the driver is not disqualified from operating a CMV. Queries can be performed one at a time or through a bulk request. Driver consent is required for all queries, though how you obtain it is different. See the below resources to aid in this process.

- [Queries and consent fact sheet](#)
- [Sample limited consent request form](#)
- [How to respond to a consent request \(drivers\)](#)
- [Purchasing a query plan](#)
- [How to conduct a full query](#)
- [How to conduct a limited query](#)

Reporting violations: Carriers (or their agents) are required to report drug or alcohol violations as well as certain refusals to test, negative return to duty tests, and completion of a driver's follow-up testing plan. They must do so within three business days of the qualifying event. Below are resources on how to perform these functions.

- [How to report a violation](#)
- [How to report return to duty information](#)

Though these resources will help guide motor carriers through the process, errors and technical challenges may persist. Below is contact information to help resolve some problems.

- Clearinghouse help desk: (844) 955-0207
- FMCSA Portal help desk: (800) 724-2811