

Docket Management Facility
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room PL-401
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Docket No. FMCSA-2001-11060

Comments on use of certified non-government employees to conduct safety audits

We are a consulting company, specializing in compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. One of the services we perform is a "safety review" of motor carrier's records. Our goal in performing this service is to educate carriers on the required documentation and to advise them of gaps in compliance. We also conduct training seminars for motor carriers to get into compliance in order to obtain a satisfactory safety rating as a result of a FMCSA compliance review.

We have heard numerous carriers comment that they wish that someone would have informed them of the FMCSR. All are frustrated because their education comes from enforcement either through a roadside inspection or a compliance review. Many of these carriers are willing to comply; they just need education.

For this reason, we feel the FMCSA's safety audit will help many new carriers ease into compliance.

Our understanding of history is that the old safety review was abandoned due in part to a lack of manpower. Therefore, the proposal to allow certified non-government employees to conduct safety review makes sense. There are already many consulting companies, ours included, who do "mock DOT audits" as a way to help carriers get and maintain compliance. These private business transactions hold no weight in determining a carrier's safety status. By allowing non-government employees to continue performing the duties they have already been doing and giving it merit in terms of a carrier's safety status makes sense.

Training and certification are certainly necessary to ensure the integrity of the safety audit program. This is true whether the personnel conducting safety audits are government or non-government employees. The same training and certification that is required of personnel conducting compliance reviews should be required of those conducting safety audits.

The goal of the FMCSR is to reduce CMV accidents. Educating carriers is key for them to operate safely. Enforcement is also a vital component. By balancing the two through all available resources , FMCSA will get closer to meeting its goal.

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