
PRISM News

Volume 2 Issue 3

December 2002

Hot Topic -- New Entrant Rule

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published an interim final rule (IFR) on May 13, 2002, establishing minimum requirements for all new entrant motor carriers, both private and for-hire, domiciled in the United States or Canada. The new entrant application process expands the current FMCSA requirements to require all applicants, on or after January 1, 2003, to submit a new Safety Certification (form MCS-150A), in addition to the current MCS-150 form. For-hire motor carriers must also obtain operating authority from FMCSA, if applicable.

The new safety certification requires a new entrant motor carrier to certify that it understands the critical motor carrier safety regulations before beginning interstate operations. Registrants applying for a USDOT number for registration purposes only through the PRISM program are not required to complete the MCS-150A. States must ensure that this new requirement is added to their processes for the issuance of USDOT Numbers.



Questions about the new entrant process may be directed to Susan Alonzi, FMCSA Office of Enforcement and Compliance, at Susan.Alonzi@fhwa.dot.gov.

New States on Board

We are pleased to announce that the State of Alabama has submitted a Letter of Intent to implement the PRISM program.

As of December 31, 2002, twenty-five States have signed grants to participate in the Performance and Registration Information Systems Management (PRISM) program. Five additional States, including Alabama, have also submitted a Letter of Intent to implement the program.

Safety Status Check: A Significant PRISM Enforcement Function

One of the most important PRISM functions for State IRP offices is checking during the renewal process to make sure the vehicle is not linked to a motor carrier that has been ordered to discontinue interstate operations by the FMCSA. There are two distinct elements to this check – the “carrier check” and the “vehicle check.” Both checks are made against the Safer/PRISM database, which identifies all motor carriers prohibited from operating by the FMCSA plus all the vehicles under their control.

Carrier Check

The “carrier check” is accomplished by checking the “MCSIP STEP” associated with the USDOT of the motor carrier responsible for safety on the registration record. The MCSIP steps were recently modified to provide more descriptive information and reflect expanded FMCSA shut down authorities. The

2

new steps enable registration staff and others to know “why” the motor carrier is prohibited from operating by the FMCSA and further delineates if the carrier’s plates are already under suspension.

If not already in production, State registration systems should be programmed to “red flag” registration staff based upon the following MCSIP Steps.

Step 54: OOSO-Imminent Hazard

Step 55: OOSO-Unsat-Unfit

Step 57: OOSO- Failure to Pay

Step 59: State Registration Suspension/Revocation Only

Step 60: OOSO & State Registration Sanctions – Imminent Hazard

Step 61: OOSO & State Registration Sanctions – UNSAT/UNFIT

Step 62: OOSO & State Registration Sanctions – Failure to Pay

Vehicle Check

The “vehicle check” is accomplished by bouncing each vehicle identification number (VIN) against the Safer/PRISM database to make sure it is not linked to a USDOT number that is prohibited from operating by the FMCSA.

The “vehicle check” is significant because it goes a long way toward addressing a long-standing problem in State and Federal enforcement efforts. That is, motor carriers that merely change names and obtain new USDOT numbers to avoid sanctions.

For example:

- ABC Trucking (USDOT 123456) is issued an order by FMCSA to cease interstate operations.
- The FMCSA division office enters a MCSIP step number

into MCMIS to reflect that ABC Trucking is prohibited from interstate operations.

- ABC Trucking and all their vehicles are now identified as out-of-service on the Safer/PRISM database
- In an attempt to avoid sanctions, ABC Trucking merely changes its name to DEF Express and obtains a new USDOT number (654321)

With just a “carrier check”, DEF Express would look good to go during the IRP registration renewal process. But with the PRISM “vehicle check”, the VIN numbers of the DEF vehicles would still be linked to ABC Trucking on the Safer/PRISM database.

At that point, registration staff would be “red flagged” and would need to ask for some type of evidence (e.g. transfer of title, lease agreement) to demonstrate DEF Express was not the same company as ABC Trucking.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Bryan Price at (412) 395-4816 or PRISM technical support, PRISMTechnicalSupport@volpe.dot.gov.

Safer 4.1 Release

SAFER 4.1 is currently undergoing final testing prior to being placed in production in early February. Important changes for PRISM States and PRISM/CVISN States will be put into practice with the implementation of Safer 4.1:

- File Transfers using the Volpe Secure FTP Site will be possible as an alternative to using the IE Mailbox for all PRISM files. PRISM States using CVIEW and providing

daily IRP vehicle registration updates to Safer will no longer have to submit a PRISM Vehicle File nightly to the PRISM Central Site.

- A PRISM Query Facility will also be implemented. This Internet Website will provide for query by USDOT Number, VIN, or Plate/State. Regardless of the type of inquiry, if the Carrier is in MCSIP – Carrier Responses will clearly indicate IN MCSIP and vehicle responses will clearly indicate TARGETED VEHICLES.
- Both of these sites will require an increased layer of security. State IRP and Law Enforcement personnel desiring access to the PRISM Query Facility or to do File Transfers using the Secure FTP Site should contact PRISMTechnicalSupport@volpe.dot.gov for user IDs, passwords, and connection information.

New Tools for Targeting Vehicles on the Roadside

Roadside targeting of vehicles operated by motor carriers in the MCSIP process is a key objective of the PRISM program. Toward that end, the PRISM program requires States to provide enforcement officers with the ability to “query the Safer/PRISM database by VIN, Plate Number/State or USDOT number.”

Two new web-based applications are available to assist States in meeting this objective: The PRISM Website and Query Central. Both provide users with the ability to determine if a vehicle is being

operated by a motor carrier in the MCSIP, and thus recommended for inspection, by entering queries based on the vehicle plate number, VIN number or USDOT number.

These are great new tools, particularly for fixed locations, to assist roadside enforcement.

If your State is interested in using either of these tools, or you would like additional information, please contact PRISM Technical Support, PRISMTechnicalSupport@volpe.dot.gov.

PRISM Implementation Committee

The PRISM Implementation Committee met in October in Washington, DC to address topics including the following:

- New Entrant Interim Final Rule
- Need for Subcommittees
- New MCSIP Steps
- New “Notice to Registrants and Owners” Letters for Unsat/Unfit and Failure to Pay Shut Down Rules
- Potential use of Query Central to meet certain PRISM Requirements
- MCMIS Census Information Updates: Encouraging Carriers to update on-line.
- Distribution of PRISM Newsletter
- Wireless Internet Connectivity

For further information contact: Susan.Alonzi@fhwa.dot.gov.

Quarterly Conference Call

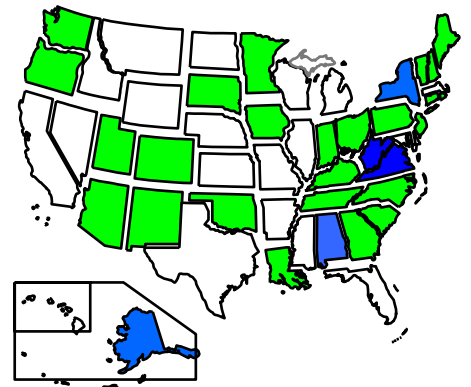
The PRISM quarterly conference call was held on December 12, 2002. Topics discussed included:

- **Designation of State PRISM Contacts:** FMCSA headquarters requested submission of the contact names for PRISM states if not already completed by the division offices. Only a few are outstanding.
- **New Entrant Safety Assurance Process:** New entrants must answer additional questions in order to receive a USDOT Number. (See Hot Topic)
- **PRISM Implementation Committee Meeting in October:** The committee met in Washington, D.C. on October 15th and discussed a variety of topics. (See Implementation Committee article)
- **FMCSA PRISM Brochure:** The new brochure, which is broad based in nature, is available from FMCSA. It is a glossy paper edition that answers most questions about the program for most people. Copies of the brochure are being distributed to the Division Offices for use in their State activities. The brochure is also available on the FMCSA website at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/, keyword – PRISM.
- **PRISM System Specifications:** The Volpe Center is updating the PRISM system specifications to include the hybrid architecture, CVISN capabilities, new MCSIP steps, and the replacement of the old VIP program with the CR vehicle process.
- **PRISM Suspension Procedures:** There was

discussion on whether the program should expand the PRISM safety status check to include a check for proper federal operating authority and financial responsibility coverage. Would States agree that this would be a positive addition to the PRISM program and what legislative changes might be necessary? There was a general discussion and FMCSA requested individuals think about this matter.

- **OMC Census file:** This file, used for the renewal MCS-150 fields, should now be requested from the PRISM Technical Support Group at Volpe: PRISMTechnicalSupport@volpe.dot.gov
- **New MCMIS connection:** There are a few States still having problems with connecting to MCMIS. Volpe will contact these states to assist in correcting the problems.
- **Safer 4.1:** Testing is going well and implementation is scheduled for February 2003. (See Safer article)

For a copy of the conference call minutes, contact Susan.Alonzi@fhwa.dot.gov



PRISM State
PRISM - Letter of Intent State

Training Schedule

Early 2003:

.....Anticipated Implementation Guideline training:

- Alabama
- Virginia
- West Virginia

Other States' News

Alabama recently submitted a letter of intent to implement PRISM.

Alaska has submitted a letter of intent.

Arizona's revised PRISM Implementation Plan was recently approved by FMCSA.

Arkansas has expressed interest in PRISM. FMCSA is planning to conduct a briefing with the State during early 2003.

Colorado, a pilot state, continues to participate in the program.

Connecticut recently submitted revisions to their PRISM Implementation Plan that were approved by FMCSA.

Georgia continues to participate in the PRISM program and recently added the new entrant procedures to their registration process

Indiana, a pilot State, made revisions to their PRISM Implementation approach in 2002. These changes were approved by FMCSA and are being implemented.

Iowa, a pilot state, continues to participate in the PRISM program.

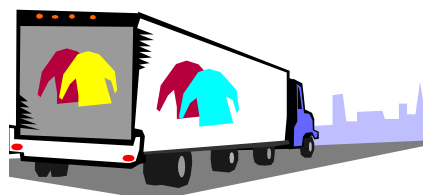
Kentucky continues to participate in the PRISM program and is evaluating the possibility of beginning to barcode the motor carrier information on their cab cards during 2003. On the enforcement side, the State is evaluating the possibility of implementing a civil enforcement program for intrastate motor carriers. Discussions are in the initial stages, but will ultimately lead to a briefing before the Governor.

Louisiana is getting ready to kick things off later this year. FMCSA notification letters were recently sent to all LA based carriers to remind them that under PRISM carriers are required to provide their US DOT number to register vehicles.

Maine continues to strive toward full PRISM implementation and is expected to begin the transfer of targeted vehicle data to the Safer/PRISM database in the near future. In addition, law enforcement has just completed training on new laptops and will deploy the laptops in the vehicles in February.

Minnesota's Implementation Plan was approved by FMCSA in September. MN will also use CVIEW.

Nebraska received a briefing from the PRISM Team in June.



New Mexico is updating its Implementation Plan and is

expected to resubmit it to FMCSA for approval in the near future.

New Hampshire's

Implementation Plan was approved by FMCSA in September.

New Jersey is finalizing its Implementation Plan and is expected to submit it to FMCSA for approval in the near future.

New York is revising its PRISM Implementation Plan and is expected to forward it to FMCSA for approval in the near future.

North Carolina's PRISM Implementation Plan was approved in July and the State plans to use CVIEW. The North Carolina House Judiciary Committee also recently passed a bill giving the NC DMV the authority to participate in PRISM. The bill requires the DMV to refuse to issue a certificate of title for, and to refuse or cancel the registration of, a motor vehicle owned by a motor carrier that has been ordered by either the FMCSA or NCDMV to cease all operations if the continued operation of the carrier is found to pose an "imminent hazard". Furthermore, the bill also authorizes the DMV to prohibit the intrastate operation of a motor carrier that is determined to be an "imminent hazard" by the FMCSA.

Ohio's Implementation Plan has been approved by FMCSA. Ohio plans to implement in 2003.

Oklahoma's PRISM

Implementation Plan was approved by FMCSA in 2002.

Pennsylvania continues to participate in PRISM and is pursuing the transfer of targeted vehicle data to the Safer/PRISM database.

5

Rhode Island's PRISM

Implementation Plan was approved by the FMCSA in 2002. The State has also passed legislation to enable suspension of registration based on a Federal order to cease operations and has done at least one suspension in conjunction with a FMCSA shut-down.

South Carolina has modified the IRP schedules to capture the USDOT numbers. Conversion to RL Polk has also been completed. Final "debugging" is taking place now. SC plans to begin capturing the USDOT numbers in the system in January 2003. Printing the MCS-150 information on the renewal package is scheduled for February.

South Dakota's legal authority to suspend vehicle registrations in conjunction with a FMCSA order to cease operations became effective on July 1, 2002. SD also plans to use CVIEW.

Tennessee continues to issue USDOT Numbers as part of their registration process and is making final revisions to their plan for approval.

Utah is working closely with their IRP contractor to begin implementing changes to fulfill the PRISM requirements.

Vermont is working to finalize its Implementation Plan to submit to FMCSA soon.

Virginia submitted a Letter of Intent to implement PRISM and has requested Implementation Guidelines training for 2003.

Washington's PRISM Implementation Plan was approved in 2002 and the State is working toward implementation.

West Virginia received a briefing from the PRISM Team during July and submitted a Letter of Intent to FMCSA to implement the program. WV has requested Implementation Guidelines training for the early part of 2003.