



PRISM

Performance & Registration
Information Systems Management

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Department of Transportation

What is PRISM ?

Performance and Registration Information Systems Management (PRISM) is a cooperative Federal-State safety program developed to reduce commercial vehicle accidents. PRISM utilizes the commercial vehicle registration process of the States to improve motor carrier safety in two ways:

- By determining the safety fitness of the motor carrier prior to issuing license plates; and
- By motivating the carrier to improve its safety performance either through an improvement process or the application of registration sanctions.

The PRISM program encompasses two major processes, Registration and Enforcement, which are integrated to identify motor carriers and hold them responsible for the safety of their operations. The performance of unsafe carriers is improved through a comprehensive system of identification, education, data gathering, safety monitoring and treatment.

Registration

Within the State commercial vehicle registration process, the International Registration Plan (IRP) provides the framework for the PRISM program by facilitating two vital functions. First, it establishes a system of accountability by ensuring that no vehicle is plated without identifying the responsible carrier for vehicle safety during the registration year. Second, the use of registration sanctions provides a powerful incentive for unsafe carriers to improve their safety performance.



The vehicle registration process ensures that all carriers engaged in interstate commerce are identified through a unique USDOT Number during vehicle registration. The safety fitness of each carrier can then be audited prior to issuing vehicle registrations. Those motor carriers that have been prohibited from operating in interstate commerce by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration may be denied registration by the State.

Enforcement

The Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Process (MCSIP) is a data-driven process that systematically uses current safety event information such as accidents, inspections, driver violations, compliance review data and other information to assess and monitor motor carrier safety performance. Safety events are assigned to the motor carrier responsible for the safety of the vehicle and are weighted according to severity, frequency and time since the occurrence.



MCSIP is designed to improve the safety performance of motor carriers through accurate identification, performance monitoring and treatment. Once the carrier exceeds the bounds of the established safety threshold, the motor carrier enters MCSIP. MCSIP provides opportunities for carriers to improve operations and return to a safe condition. Within MCSIP, carriers with potential safety problems are identified and prioritized for an on-site review using the Motor Carrier Safety Status (SafeStat) system developed for the PRISM program. If there is no improvement in the carrier's safety fitness record, a Federal operations out-of-service order and concurrent State registration suspension or revocation is the ultimate penalty.

“The performance of unsafe carriers is improved through a comprehensive system of identification, education, data gathering, safety monitoring and treatment.”

Table A IRP account registrant and motor carrier responsible for safety of the vehicles are the same entity.

| | REGISTRANT LEVEL | INDIVIDUAL VEHICLE LEVEL |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| USDOT NUMBER REQUIREMENT | USDOT Number of the Registrant | Same |
| MCS-150 REQUIREMENT | Updated MCS-150 for the IRP registrant required unless one has been submitted within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period. | No Additional Requirement |
| ACTION | Record the USDOT Number in Section C of the IRP Schedule A and write "same" in the appropriate column of the individual vehicle section of Schedule A. | |

How does PRISM affect IRP registration?

As noted earlier, the IRP serves as the framework for the PRISM program and is affected through USDOT registration and MCS-150 updates.

- The motor carrier responsible for the safety of every vehicle and the registrant must identify their USDOT Number during the registration process.
- An updated MCS-150 form must be submitted for each registrant and carrier responsible for safety on an IRP account unless the carrier and the registrant have each submitted a form within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period, or the motor carrier and the registrant have updated the information directly on the FMCSA web page (<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>).



For many IRP accounts, the registrant that maintains the IRP account and the carrier that is responsible for safety are the same entity. Table A outlines USDOT Number and MCS-150 update requirements associated with PRISM and IRP registration in these instances.

In some cases, the IRP account registrant and the carrier responsible for the safety of individual vehicles on the

account may be different. The following examples, in addition to the information in Table B, outline USDOT Number and MCS-150 update requirements associated with PRISM and IRP registration in common instances.

Rental/leasing companies registering in their own name

Rental/leasing companies that register in their own name must provide the USDOT Numbers and copies of updated MCS-150 forms to the registration office for their company and for all lessees that are responsible for vehicle safety. The USDOT number for the rental/leasing company should be recorded in Section C of the IRP Schedule A and the USDOT Number of the motor carrier responsible for safety should be recorded in the appropriate column of the individual vehicle section.



Owner/operators registering in their own name, but leasing to motor carriers

Owner/operators who register in their own names must obtain a USDOT Number for themselves. This number is for registration purposes only and does not provide the owner/operator with his/her own operating authority. In addition, the owner/operator must provide the USDOT Number for the company to whom he/she leases. Updated copies of the MCS-150 must be submitted for the owner/operator and all companies responsible for safety (the lessees). The companies must complete the MCS-150 forms. The owner/operator must record his/her USDOT Number in Section C of the IRP Schedule A. The USDOT number of the motor carrier responsible for safety should be entered in the appropriate column at the individual vehicle level of the Schedule A.

Companies using only leased vehicles registered in the name of the lessors.

Companies who use all leased vehicles registered in the name of the lessors (rental/leasing or owner/operators) must provide the lessor with an updated copy of the MCS-150. The lessor will submit the MCS-150 to the state registration office in order to have the vehicle's registration renewed.



How does PRISM affect roadside inspections?

Motor carriers in the PRISM MCSIP process are recommended for roadside inspection. Once a motor carrier sufficiently improves its safety status to exit the MCSIP, they will no longer be recommended for inspection.

How does a State join the PRISM program?

Twenty-three states currently participate in the PRISM program. Federal grant funds are available to States that have received PRISM training and submit an acceptable PRISM Implementation Plan. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) provides 100 percent grants and a State match is not required. States that are interested in participating in the program should request a briefing by FMCSA staff. If, after the introductory briefing, the State wants to join, a

Letter of Intent must be submitted to FMCSA and a subsequent training session will be scheduled to assist the State in developing an Implementation Plan. Upon approval of the plan by the FMCSA, a Federal grant agreement must be signed by the FMCSA Division Administrator and the appropriate official from the State agency that receives the grant. Interested States should contact the FMCSA Division Administrator in their state.

“PRISM is a Federal and State partnership to improve motor carrier safety by making safe performance a requirement for obtaining and keeping commercial vehicle license plates. I am proud of this program and see it as a strong, yet necessary enforcement tool that will continue to improve safety on our roadways as we implement nationally.”

*– Joseph M. Clapp
Administrator, FMCSA*

Table B IRP account registrant and motor carrier responsible for safety of all or some of the vehicles at the time of registration are different.

| | REGISTRANT LEVEL | INDIVIDUAL VEHICLE LEVEL |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| USDOT NUMBER REQUIREMENT | USDOT Number of the Registrant | Two General Situations Apply: 1. USDOT Number of the motor carrier responsible for safety if known and expected to stay the same for at least 30 days from the renewal. 2. USDOT Number of the Registrant as a default if the motor carrier responsible for safety is unknown, or expected to change within 30 days of renewal. |
| MCS-150 REQUIREMENT | Updated MCS-150 for the IRP registrant required unless one has been submitted within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period. | An Updated MCS-150 associated with each USDOT Number on the IRP account is required unless one has been submitted within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period. |
| ACTION | Record the USDOT Number in Section C of the IRP Schedule A and the USDOT Number of the motor carrier responsible for safety in the appropriate column of the individual vehicle section. Indicate if the lease is for the full registration year in the appropriate column. | |

PRISM Benefits

PRISM demonstrates the following safety, economic and productivity benefits:

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is achieved by accurately linking safety events (e.g. inspection, accident, driver moving violations) affecting a PRISM registered vehicle to the responsible carrier.

PERFORMANCE-BASED APPROACH TO SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Carriers are identified, treated and released from a safety improvement program based upon a demonstrated improvement in highway performance after safety treatments have been completed.



SAFESTAT

SafeStat is a data-driven, performance-based tool used to identify potentially high-risk carriers for inclusion in the PRISM motor carrier safety improvement process (MCSIP). Under SafeStat, a carrier's safety performance is assessed based on all available data from roadside inspection, compliance reviews (CRs), accidents, enforcement history, etc. New safety information is added to this data source on a continuous basis, and SafeStat uses this information to provide current safety indicators for all carriers for which there is sufficient data.

IMPROVED MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY

The PRISM program has proven to be an effective means of getting motor carriers to improve their compliance and performance deficiencies. Motor carriers must improve their safety deficiencies or face progressively more stringent penalties up to a Federal out-of-service order and concurrent State registration sanctions.

IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

PRISM has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of Federal and State safety efforts through:

- A more accurate process for targeting the highest-risk carriers, which allows for a more efficient allocation of scarce resources for compliance reviews and roadside inspections, and
- The use of a warning letter as an effective, yet inexpensive, alternative to a compliance review for those carriers with less severe safety performance problems.

IMPROVED DATA QUALITY

The PRISM program has shown that an improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of data will result in better resource allocation and heightened efficiencies in the administration of major Federal and State safety programs. The data improvement initiatives in this project have already had a significant impact on the accuracy and timeliness of critical accident and inspection data that is collected and uploaded by State motor carrier personnel. Several of the most notable data improvement initiatives are listed below.

- A procedure for obtaining current census and operational data on interstate motor carriers as part of the State's annual vehicle registration renewal process.
- A procedure for using plate numbers as a means to more effectively assign inspection and accident data to the responsible motor carrier.
- The use of automated procedures such as bar coding, to automatically populate critical roadside inspection fields like USDOT Number and plate number.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

PRISM provides a "one-stop shopping" opportunity for carriers to simultaneously obtain a USDOT Number, meet updating requirements, and obtain their IRP license plates. Through the PRISM program, the State registration offices issue USDOT Numbers on behalf of the Federal government.



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