

**Remarks Prepared for Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
American Moving and Storage Association
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Introduction

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for the invitation to come and speak today.

I'm glad to be here to share the FMCSA agenda and lay out a few ideas where we see opportunities to work together so that safety and protecting the consumer each receives the attention they deserve.

I don't need to tell you that Americans move for many reasons – job change, bigger or better place to call home, etc.,. No matter what the reason, at some point in our careers or as our families grow; Americans will be calling on you to help bring them to a place to call home.

Our agency has just turned a corner by entering our 11th year.

With the new decade ahead, we have an opportunity to examine programs and policies in new ways in order to move to the next level.

Core Priorities

We have many initiatives and programs underway that focus on three key priorities for our agency.

As I see it, our mission at FMCSA is driven by these priorities:

1. Raise the safety bar to enter the industry;
2. Maintain high safety standards to remain in the industry; and
3. Remove high-risk operators from our roads and highways.

These priorities frame our critical safety responsibilities. All three of them speak directly to the interstate household goods moving industry. Let me review them quickly.

Raising the Safety Bar to Entry: Vetting Process

FMCSA has taken steps to continually strengthen the review process of applications for new companies seeking USDOT Operating Authority. We are thoroughly investigating all applicants that have connections to other carriers with a history of safety violations or those against whom we have taken punitive actions.

The screening process is thorough and intentionally looks to see if the applicant is a “reincarnated” company.

We are continuing to enhance computer screening software to help spot problematic carriers that warrant a closer inspection. Most often, we will request additional information – and interestingly, in many instances, the carrier will withdraw their application, or we never hear from them again.

Going forward, we anticipate hiring several new staff positions in our headquarters office in Washington, D.C. to make the screening process more responsive, efficient and effective.

Maintain High Standards to Stay in the Industry and Remove High Risk Carriers: Top 100 Carrier List

We have also begun compiling a top 100 carrier list to identify high risk carriers.

The list is generated monthly and is used to help our field staff identify the worst of the high risk carriers – and to visit them for an investigation to assess their safety management practices.

Of the current top 100, our visits have resulted in comprehensive compliance reviews and enforcement cases against 39 of them.

Strike Forces

We continue to execute strategically planned household goods “strike forces” that take place randomly across the nation.

These locations are selected based on the volume of consumer complaints.

During previous strike forces, several hundred carriers were investigated, and of these investigations, approximately one-third resulted in enforcement cases.

Grow Our Partnership

I know many of you are familiar with a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that expressed concerns about how well consumers are informed of their rights and responsibilities during interstate moves.

GAO noted that while progress had been made, more needs to be done. I know AMSA is committed to protecting consumers during their moves. We need to continue to work together in this area.

I am pleased that AMSA is a member of a working group that meets quarterly on a range of household goods concerns and issues. We appreciate your participation and input in this process.

Your perspective is invaluable to us.

Finally, there's been a lot going on at the Department of Transportation and I'd like to take a few minutes to update you on some of the major activities.

Distracted Driving

Many of you – no doubt – are aware of Secretary LaHood’s strong emphasis on safety and in particular of his mission to eliminate distracted driving as an all too common behavior.

Several weeks ago, we took a big step forward by announcing that existing federal regulations may be enforced against most interstate truck and bus drivers who text while driving.

Our guidance makes it crystal clear that texting while driving is an unsafe activity that these basic safety regulations are intended to prohibit.

We will also be launching a notice and comment rulemaking proceeding to request public comments on the subject. And, we will consider disqualification penalties for drivers convicted of texting while driving.

These are important safety steps and we will be taking more to eliminate the threat of distracted driving – which has become an epidemic in this country.

Our research shows that drivers who send and receive text messages take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds while texting.

At 55 miles per hour, this means that the driver is traveling the length of a football field, including the end zones, without looking at the road.

The facts don't lie - drivers who text while behind the wheel are more than 23 times more likely to get in a crash or near-crash event than drivers who focus their full attention to driving.

There is no question that one of the hardest parts of the texting ban will be effective enforcement.

I recall it wasn't long ago that we heard doubts about how to enforce laws requiring seat belts or enact laws prohibiting drinking and driving.

But, raising awareness of the safety risk for each unsafe behavior has helped get more people to use seat belts and not drink and drive.

We can and will do the same for distracted driving – with your help.

Hours of Service

Another issue of great interest throughout the country is the status of the hours-of-service rules. The hours-of-service rules were put in place to help prevent fatigue-related crashes, injuries and fatalities that involve commercial trucks and ultimately, to improve safety for everyone.

Last month, FMCSA held four listening sessions on the hours-of-service rules in preparation for a rulemaking proposal on this critical safety issue.

These listening sessions are one way we are fulfilling President Obama's pledge for an open government. We know that too much time can be spent in Washington, D.C. without understanding what the rest of the country is doing or thinking.

The feedback we've received during the listening sessions will allow us a better perspective when looking at the research and developing a proposal for a new HOS rule.

Each listening session was well attended and we got a number of great questions. Participants shared their thoughts and ideas by attending in person, dialing in by phone or submitting comments and questions via the internet.

We are hearing from every corner of the trucking community – drivers, owner – operators, carriers, safety enforcement, safety advocates and labor.

If you couldn't get to a listening session, opportunities are still available. You can continue to send in comments by mail, email or fax.

Instructions are on the FMCSA web site. Go to www.fmcsa.dot.gov for more information.

A fifth listening session will be held in late March at the Mid-America Truck Show in Louisville, Kentucky. Please visit the FMCSA website for updates or more information.

CSA 2010

Another program designed to maintain high safety standards by helping us reach larger numbers of carriers is the Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 – known as CSA 2010.

I'm pleased that CSA 2010 has gained attention as we prepare for its roll out later this year. By now, many of you know that CSA 2010 will raise the bar for commercial carriers by looking at seven key factors:

1. Unsafe Driving
2. Fatigued Driving
3. Driver Fitness
4. Crash History
5. Vehicle Maintenance
6. Improper Loading and Cargo
7. Controlled Substances – Drugs and Alcohol

Over time, I think all of us – in the safety enforcement community and in the transportation industry – have come to recognize the inefficiency of the current one-size-fits-all compliance review model.

CSA 2010 will not only improve safety, it will help **all of us** become more effective.

It is built on the foundation of a new safety measurement system with seven evaluation factors rather than the current system that includes only four evaluation factors.

CSA 2010 will give state and federal enforcement personnel the information we need to determine the most appropriate level of intervention to use to bring about improvements in a carrier's safety management practices and provide a streamlined, data-driven approach for making safety fitness determinations.

CSA 2010 will give carriers highly focused safety performance information to identify potential problems and take action to correct those performance issues before they result in an enforcement intervention by FMCSA.

Also, we will implement a range of interventions, ranging from warning letters to comprehensive, on-site compliance reviews.

Most of these interactions can be done by email, fax, or phone – so it will not be as disruptive to your business operations as a full blown compliance review.

Starting in 2008, we have had four states [*Georgia, Colorado, New Jersey and Missouri*] take part in a test of CSA2010 and have had added another five states [*Minnesota, Montana, Kansas, Maryland and Delaware*] last year.

We have drafted a notice of proposed rulemaking to change how our safety fitness determinations will be made under CSA 2010, and the notice is currently under Departmental review. We anticipate publishing this proposal and receiving public comments later this year.

Implementing CSA 2010 will ultimately expand our reach and make our roads safer.

Right now, we and our state partners undertake approximately 17,000 on-site, comprehensive compliance reviews each year. Without a compliance review, it is not possible to generate a safety rating or update a previously issued safety rating.

Under the CSA 2010 model, we will touch more carriers and achieve the ability to evaluate the safety performance of 175,000 to 200,000 carriers on a **continual basis** using roadside inspection data, crash data and investigation data.

It is important to identify safety performance problems more effectively than our current process and provide carriers with information they need to correct performance problems **before** they result in a poor safety rating – CSA 2010 is the tool to help us achieve that.

Conclusion

The British philosopher George Edward Moore once said, “A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.”

The moving and storage industry plays an important part in how people return home after long or short journeys.

Thank you for what you do to help make the process of coming home smoother and less stressful and making it possible for consumers to receive the professional services they need and deserve.

We look forward to our partnership growing and developing to meet the needs of the dynamic public we both serve.

Thank you.