



"How to Prepare for a DOT Safety Audit"

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DOT has just informed you that you are about to have a safety audit. Are you prepared? Do you know what records will be reviewed?

Who can be audited?

The U.S. Department of Transportation regularly audits motor carriers to ensure they comply with regulations. Attention to detail and thorough record keeping are the keys to making sure that your business passes each and every safety audit by the DOT.



Types of DOT Audits: (Typically occur with no advance notice.)

1. **Compliance Review** - An on-site examination to determine a motor carrier's safety fitness. Covers the full spectrum of compliance areas.
2. **Security Review** - The Security Review includes the security plan, training and other security-related measures. Often goes hand-in-hand with a Hazardous Materials Review if the company transports hazardous materials.
3. **Hazardous Materials Review** - A very thorough review of requirements associated with transporting hazardous materials, such as, policies, training, shipping papers, placards, markings and labeling of containers.
4. **New Entrant** - Safety Audits usually occur within the first three to six months after a new entrant begins operating under its USDOT number.

Check your performance by completing the DOT compliance checklist listed below and view the chart for required documentation needed for each type of audit.

DOT Compliance Checklist

1. Can the company produce a current copy of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR)?
2. Can the company produce a current copy of the Hazardous Material Regulations?
3. Can the company produce a current MCS-90 with the required limit of insurance coverage noted?
4. Can the company produce a current accident register?
5. Does the company have a progressive disciplinary action system for drivers?
6. Does the company have written hiring policies (criteria) that are followed on all new hires and re-hires?
7. Have all commercial motor vehicles (power units) been marked with company name and U.S. DOT Number?
8. Is there a system that will ensure drivers' medical certificates (physicals) are current?
9. Is there a system to ensure all CDL licenses remain current and valid?
10. Does the company require all drivers to report violations in a timely manner, and do driver qualification files reflect documentation of these moving violations?
11. Do driver qualification files reflect a valid documented review of the driver's certificate of violations annually?
12. Do driver qualification files reflect record of a valid road test or documentation of the equivalent of a road test?
13. Can the company produce complete and accurate driver qualification files?
14. Do driver qualification files show a complete and accurate investigation of past employment history of drivers?
15. Are Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs) obtained on all new and re-hired drivers?
16. Does the company have a written program and policy in place for drugs and alcohol testing?
17. Can the company produce the past calendar year summary of all tests, with disposition of the driver that tested positive?
18. Are all supervisors, who may be required to have a driver tested under reasonable suspicion, given the one hour each of training for drug and alcohol recognition?

19. Does the company provide drug and alcohol training materials and information with a signed receipt from the driver in the qualification file?
20. Do all drivers hold valid CDL licenses with the proper endorsements based on the vehicle size and commodity transported?
21. Can the company produce a copy of a pre-employment drug test for all drivers that possess a CDL?
22. Can the company produce copies of the past calendar year random drug and alcohol test results?
23. Does the driver qualification file reflect instruction to drivers regarding their notification of convictions for moving violations within 30 days to the employer?
24. Does the company have a system to recognize drivers that should be disqualified, which results in the drivers' removal from service and subsequent reinstatement?
25. Can the company produce six months of completed driver logs on all drivers?
26. Are drivers' logs checked for accuracy by using independent documents or software system?
27. Does the company have a system in place to effectively control hours of service?
28. Does the company have a written disciplinary action policy addressing non-compliance with hours of service?
29. Does the company require new drivers to provide their past seven days of on-duty time?
30. Can the company produce 14 months of valid annual inspections for all operating commercial motor vehicle equipment, both tractors and trailers?
31. Can the company produce 90 days of valid copies of post-trip inspection reports for each commercial motor vehicle equipment?
32. Can the company produce maintenance records for all equipment?
33. Can the company produce a current DOT security plan?
34. Can the company produce a current copy of the Hazardous Material Registration?
35. Are all employees that affect the safe transportation of a hazardous material trained on Hazardous Materials with documentation maintained on-file?
36. Are Hazardous Materials shipping papers properly prepared and retained for the specified period of 375 days?

Types of DOT Audits & Required Documentation

	Compliance Review	Security	Hazardous Materials	New Entrant
Shipping Documents	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Driver Qualifications	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Hours of Service	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Accident Register	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Placarding	X¹		X¹	X²
HazMat Registration	X¹		X¹	X²
Drug Testing Program	X¹			X²
Security Plan	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Financial Responsibility	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²
Review of Motor Carrier Operations	X¹	X¹	X¹	X²

¹ - Full audit verifying historical, current and systematic compliance.

² - Small sample to demonstrate understanding of compliance.