

Company Driver Field Guide

Prepared by DOT Consulting Solutions

This guide is designed to assist company drivers in understanding and applying key federal regulations under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). It is presented in a simplified format for ease of reference and is not intended to replace official regulatory texts or professional legal counsel.

All drivers are expected to maintain familiarity with the full FMCSRs and follow their company's policies and procedures at all times.

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INTRODUCTION

Driver Field Manual – FMCSR-Based Compliance Guide

This manual was created to give you—the professional driver—the tools and knowledge needed to operate legally, safely, and confidently under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs).

It doesn't replace the full rulebook. But it breaks down the parts that matter most to you, in the cab and on the road.

Inside, you'll find:

- Plain-language explanations of the rules
- Quick reference checklists
- Real-world advice on inspections, accidents, and daily operations
- The federal codes that back it all up

Whether you're starting your day, dealing with a roadside inspection, or recovering from a stressful accident, this booklet is meant to keep you informed, covered, and in control.

Keep it close. Refer to it often.

Your professionalism starts with knowing the rules—and following them like your career depends on it. Because it does.

Let's get to work.

SECTION 1: DAILY DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

(Based on 49 CFR Parts 392 & 396)

Everyday rules to keep you compliant, safe, and off the DOT's radar.

✓ 1. Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist

FMCSR Ref: §396.13, §392.7

Before you put the key in the ignition, it's your legal obligation to make sure the vehicle is safe. You are personally responsible for catching any obvious defects that could put lives at risk—or put you out of service.

Checklist:

- Do a full walkaround of the truck and trailer.
- Check key components: brakes, steering, tires, lights, wipers, horn.
- Confirm coupling devices are secure.
- Ensure cargo is properly secured or sealed.
- Inspect emergency equipment (fire extinguisher, triangles, spare fuses).
- Mirrors should be clean and adjusted.
- Review last post-trip DVIR if you're using the same vehicle.

If anything's off, report it and don't drive until it's fixed. The feds don't mess around with safety.

✓ 2. Post-Trip Inspection Procedure

FMCSR Ref: §396.11

At the end of your day, a post-trip inspection is just as important. It helps catch wear-and-tear before it becomes a problem for the next driver—or for you tomorrow.

Checklist:

- Walk around the unit and look for obvious issues.
- Check tires, lights, brakes, hoses, and body damage.
- Note and report any safety-affecting defects.
- Fill out and sign a DVIR (even if “No defects discovered”).
- Submit it to dispatch or maintenance as required.

This report becomes part of the record. If you found something, maintenance needs to sign off on the fix before the unit rolls again.

3. Reporting Defects

FMCSR Ref: §396.11(c), §396.12

If it's broken, report it. If it's dangerous, **don't drive it**. You're required by law to report any defect that affects safe operation—and the company can't legally force you to drive a truck that's unsafe.

A written report is required for defects found post-trip. Mechanics must sign off repairs before the vehicle is cleared. If you're stopped for inspection and can't show that defects were fixed, that's on you, too.

4. Handling Out-of-Service Conditions

FMCSR Ref: §396.9(c), §396.7

If you—or a DOT inspector—determine the vehicle is in an unsafe condition, it's officially **Out of Service**. This means no movement until repairs are complete.

You cannot “limp it home” or drive it to a shop unless the repair location is specified on the inspection form. Violating an out-of-service order is a serious offense—for both you and the company.

If your truck gets red-tagged:

- Don't move it.

- Call dispatch or safety.
 - Document everything.
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✓ 5. Seat Belts Are Mandatory

FMCSR Ref: §392.16

This one's simple: If the truck is moving, your seat belt better be on. No exceptions.

DOT will write you up—and the company may write you up, too—if you're caught unbuckled, even for a short move in the yard.

Buckle up every time. You're a professional driver. Act like it.

✓ 6. No Cell Phones While Driving

FMCSR Ref: §392.80, §392.82

No handheld devices while driving. Period.

You **can't hold** your phone to talk, text, or even dial. The only legal use is **hands-free**, and even then, it must be:

- Mounted within reach
- Activated with one button or voice

Violations come with steep fines and possible license disqualification for multiple offenses.

Tip: Set your GPS and music before you move. Stay focused.

✓ 7. Rules on Idling, Parking, and Load Securement

FMCSR Ref: §392.30, §392.22, Part 393 Subpart I

- **Idling:** There's no federal regulation limiting idling time—but many **states and localities** have anti-idling laws. Know where you are and shut it down if required.

- **Parking:** Always set your brakes and use warning devices if you stop on or near the road. If you're on the shoulder or within 10 feet of the roadway, federal rules say you need:
 - Flashers on immediately
 - Triangles out within 10 minutes (one 10 ft behind, one 100 ft in front, and one 100 ft behind)
 - **Load Securement:** If you haul flatbed or open-deck cargo, you must follow Part 393 for tie-downs. Make sure your load won't shift or spill. Enclosed trailers still require that cargo is properly blocked and braced.
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8. PPE and Personal Safety Gear

FMCSR Ref: Company policy often applies, but §392.8 mandates safe driving practices

While not all PPE is federally required in the cab, you're still expected to maintain a safe work environment. At minimum, you should always carry:

- High-visibility vest or jacket
- Safety glasses for drop yards or maintenance areas
- Gloves for fueling, chaining, or coupling trailers
- Hard hat (if required by customer site)

It's your body—protect it. Don't rely on someone else to care more about your safety than you do.

SECTION 2: HOURS OF SERVICE (HOS)

(Based on 49 CFR Part 395)

This section keeps you legal behind the wheel. Know your clocks, track your time, and don't fudge the logs.

✓ 1. Daily Driving Limits (11-Hour Rule)

FMCSR Ref: §395.3(a)(3)

You can drive up to **11 hours** in a single day—but only *after* you've had **10 consecutive hours off duty**.

Once you hit that 11th hour of driving, you're done driving for the day. Even if you feel fine, it's the law. Violating this rule is one of the top causes of out-of-service orders and HOS fines.

✓ 2. On-Duty Limits (14-Hour Rule)

FMCSR Ref: §395.3(a)(2)

The 14-hour clock is your *daily window* to drive, and it starts as soon as you come on duty—even if you're not driving right away.

Once that 14 hours runs out, you **can't drive**, even if you haven't used all 11 of your driving hours. The only way to reset it is 10 consecutive hours off duty.

Important: Breaks, meals, or fuel stops do *not* pause the 14-hour clock. Once it starts, it ticks down to zero without stopping.

✓ 3. Required Breaks (30-Minute Rule)

FMCSR Ref: §395.3(a)(3)(ii)

If you've driven **8 cumulative hours** without at least a 30-minute **off-duty** or **non-driving** break, you're out of compliance.

To reset the 8-hour clock, you must:

- Go **off duty**, or

- Be in **sleeper berth**, or
- Be **on duty not driving** (such as fueling or inspecting)

Once the break is complete, you can resume driving.

Tip: Plan your break before hour 8 hits. Don't gamble on a rest area having parking.

✓ 4. 60/70-Hour Rule (Recap Guidance)

FMCSR Ref: §395.3(b)

This is your **weekly on-duty limit**:

- **60 hours** in **7 consecutive days** (if your company doesn't run 7 days/week)
- **70 hours** in **8 consecutive days** (if your company operates daily)

Once you hit the cap, **no driving** until you get enough hours back through a reset or recap.

You can:

- Do a **34-hour reset** (off-duty or sleeper for 34+ consecutive hours), OR
- Use **recap hours**, which roll back in daily from 7 or 8 days ago

Know your rolling total. Even with perfect logs, you can get nailed for driving over 70 hours in 8 days.

✓ 5. Split Sleeper Berth & Team Driving Tips

FMCSR Ref: §395.1(g)

You can split your 10-hour break into **two segments** if you're using the **sleeper berth provision**.

Here's how it works:

- One segment must be **at least 7 consecutive hours** in the sleeper.

- The other must be **at least 2 hours** (off-duty, sleeper, or combo).
- The two segments must total **at least 10 hours**.

Neither segment counts against your 14-hour clock **as long as** you follow these rules. This is handy for team drivers or those who need flexibility on the road.

Warning: If you mess up the split, your logs will look off and you could be cited. Use your ELD's split function carefully.

✓ 6. Logbook / ELD Cheat Sheet

FMCSR Ref: §395.8, §395.22

Whether you use paper or an ELD, your logs need to be:

- **Accurate**
- **Up-to-date**
- **Available at roadside**

Here's what you need:

- A current log showing your last 7 (or 8) days
- Instructions for operating your ELD (if applicable)
- A backup method in case of ELD failure (extra logs)
- Supporting documents (fuel receipts, tolls, dispatches)

Tip: If your ELD goes down, switch to paper and notify your carrier **within 8 days** (unless granted an extension by FMCSA).

Don't ever falsify logs. It's not worth the fine—or the license hit.

✓ 7. Common HOS Violations to Avoid

FMCSR Ref: §395.8(e), §395.13

These are the most common mistakes that cost drivers money or get trucks parked on the roadside:

- Driving after the 11th hour
- Driving after the 14-hour window
- Not taking the required 30-minute break
- Exceeding 70 hours in 8 days
- Failing to have current logs available
- Falsifying logs to extend driving time

Any one of these can result in a **driver Out-of-Service (OOS)** violation—no warning, no discussion. You'll be parked for 10 hours and possibly fined.

Stay sharp. If you're unsure about a rule, ask Safety **before** DOT asks you.

SECTION 3: VEHICLE CONDITION & MAINTENANCE

(Based on 49 CFR Parts 393 & 396)

If it rolls, lights up, steers, or stops—it better meet federal standards. Here's what you're responsible for.

✓ 1. Minimum Parts & Accessories (Lights, Tires, Brakes, etc.)

FMCSR Ref: 49 CFR Part 393 (Subparts B–H)

You don't have to be a mechanic, but you do need to know what must be working before hitting the road. These aren't "nice-to-haves"—they're **required by law**.

Your truck must have:

- Operational service brakes (foot pedal)
- Functional parking brake
- All required exterior lamps (headlights, turn signals, tail, marker, ID, clearance)
- Tires free of major cuts, exposed belts, or low tread (minimum **4/32" steer / 2/32" drive**)
- Windshield wipers in working order
- Horn loud enough to alert traffic
- Properly functioning steering components
- Mirrors with a clear, unobstructed view to the rear

If you spot a defect in any of these, you are not legally allowed to drive until it's fixed. No load is worth the fine—or the lawsuit.

✓ 2. Emergency Equipment Requirements

FMCSR Ref: §393.95

You are required to carry these **at all times**:

- One **fire extinguisher**, rated 5 B:C or more, fully charged and secured
- At least **three reflective triangles**
- A **spare electrical fuse** for each type used (unless circuit breakers are used)

Don't bury this stuff under your duffel bag or dirty laundry. DOT inspectors will check that:

- It's present
- It's accessible
- It's not damaged or expired (fire extinguisher especially)

Keep it ready—you never know when you'll need it.

3. Securement Rules

FMCSR Ref: 49 CFR Part 393 Subpart I

If you're hauling **flatbed or open-deck** cargo, this section is your bible.

Basic rules:

- Cargo must be secured **to prevent movement** in any direction (forward, backward, sideways, or up)
- Use a **minimum of two tie-downs** for any load over 5 feet
- Use **at least four tie-downs** if the load is over 10 feet
- Tie-downs must have **working load limits** that match or exceed the load
- Securement devices must be in good shape—**no cuts, frays, or deformities**

Enclosed trailers still require cargo to be **blocked, braced, or secured** to prevent shifting. Don't assume the walls will do the job.

Poor securement is one of the top causes of cargo damage, injuries, and DOT citations.

✓ 4. Vehicle File Expectations (Driver Responsibility)

FMCSR Ref: §396.3(b), §396.11

Most of the vehicle's inspection, maintenance, and repair history is handled by your carrier—but **you're still responsible** for keeping certain items **in the cab** and up to date:

You should have access to:

- The last **8 days** of DVIRs or ELD records
- Any open repair orders or pending defect reports
- Your **current annual inspection decal** (on vehicle)
- Trailer inspection documentation (if applicable)

Tip: If you drop and hook frequently, don't assume the trailer's good to go. Do your own inspection and check for expired inspections or hidden defects.

✓ 5. When to Refuse a Load for Safety

FMCSR Ref: §396.7

You have the legal right—and obligation—to refuse to drive a vehicle that is “**likely to cause an accident or breakdown**”.

That means:

- Faulty brakes? Don't roll.
- Bald tires? Shut it down.
- Defective lighting at night? Park it.
- Anything that could get you pulled over or cause a crash? Refuse it until repaired.

If you're pressured to move an unsafe unit, **document the defect**, notify Safety, and **don't drive it** until it's cleared.

Driving a known unsafe truck makes **you** liable if anything goes wrong—not just the company.

SECTION 4: DRUG & ALCOHOL COMPLIANCE

(Based on 49 CFR Part 382)

You're part of a federally mandated drug & alcohol program. One mistake here can cost you your job—or your license. This section lays it out clearly.

✓ 1. When Testing Happens

FMCSR Ref: §382.301–§382.307

You can be tested for drugs and/or alcohol under the following circumstances:

- **Pre-Employment** (Drug only)
Must test negative before you operate a CMV.
- **Random Testing**
Selected at random. Testing is unannounced and must be done immediately once notified.
- **Post-Accident Testing**
Required if there's a fatality OR if there's an injury or vehicle towed *and* you're cited.
- **Reasonable Suspicion**
Based on a trained supervisor observing things like slurred speech, smell of alcohol, erratic behavior, etc.
- **Return-to-Duty Testing**
After a violation, if cleared by a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP).
- **Follow-Up Testing**
Mandated as part of your return-to-duty agreement. Can last 12–60 months.

Note: Tests can occur whether you're driving or not—if you're on duty, you're eligible.

✓ 2. Prohibited Behavior

FMCSR Ref: §382.201–§382.215

Certain actions are strictly prohibited—and there's zero tolerance:

- No **alcohol** within **4 hours** of going on duty or driving.
- No **driving** with a **BAC of 0.04 or higher** (lower than for passenger vehicles).
- No **controlled substances** unless prescribed by a doctor who knows you're a CDL holder and has confirmed it won't impair your ability to drive safely.
- No **refusing a test**—that's treated the same as failing.

Refusal includes:

- Not showing up for the test
- Leaving the testing site
- Failing to provide a specimen
- Tampering or adulterating a sample

One strike here, and you're immediately pulled from safety-sensitive functions (like driving) and entered into the return-to-duty process.

3. Refusal-to-Test Consequences

FMCSR Ref: §382.211, §382.501

Refusing a required drug or alcohol test is treated exactly the same as a **positive** result.

Consequences include:

- Immediate removal from driving or any safety-sensitive job
- Required evaluation by a DOT-qualified **Substance Abuse Professional (SAP)**
- A mandatory **Return-to-Duty** test (once cleared by SAP)
- **Minimum 6 follow-up tests** over 12 months (often more)
- Possible termination by your employer

You **cannot** return to driving for any carrier until you've completed this process.

✓ 4. Reporting Prescription Medications

FMCSR Ref: §382.213(b)

Taking a prescribed medication? It's **your responsibility** to know whether it's DOT-legal.

You may take controlled substances **only if**:

- They're prescribed by a licensed medical professional, and
- That provider confirms they will not interfere with safe driving

Action step: If you're prescribed any medication that may affect alertness, coordination, or decision-making, report it to your employer or Medical Examiner before driving.

Don't assume "it's from a doctor" makes it legal. If it shows up on a test and wasn't cleared, it can still cost you your job.

✓ 5. What to Do If You're Contacted by a Collector

FMCSR Ref: §382.305(i), §382.307(a)

If a collection site or tester contacts you for a random or post-accident test:

- Stop what you're doing and **report immediately** to the designated testing site.
- You are **not allowed** to delay or go later.
- Do **not** drink fluids excessively—diluted samples can be flagged.
- Follow all instructions—bring ID, don't leave the site without permission.

Failure to show up, stalling, or leaving the site = **refusal**.

If you're unsure whether the request is legitimate, contact dispatch or Safety immediately—but don't delay the process.

✓ 6. Resources: SAP Contacts & Program Overview

FMCSR Ref: §382 Subpart F

If you ever test positive or refuse a test, you will enter the DOT's Return-to-Duty process. This includes:

- A mandatory evaluation with a **Substance Abuse Professional (SAP)**
- A required treatment or education plan (at your own expense)
- A negative **Return-to-Duty test** before resuming driving
- **Follow-up testing** for at least 12 months

The SAP's word is final. If they say you're not ready to return, you don't return.

Every company must provide info on:

- Your rights under DOT testing rules
- How to contact a SAP
- The steps required for reinstatement

If you need this information, ask your Safety or HR department. They are required to give it to you upon request.

SECTION 5: ACCIDENT RESPONSE CHECKLIST

(Based on 49 CFR §390.15 and §382.303)

Accidents happen—even to pros. What you do next can protect your job, your license, and the company. This section walks you through it.

✓ 1. Immediate Steps at the Scene

FMCSR Ref: §392.40, §390.5 (accident definition)

If you're involved in a crash, follow this sequence. Stay calm. You're now on the record.

Checklist:

- Stop immediately and secure the vehicle.
- Activate hazard lights and place warning triangles (if safe to do so).
- Check for injuries—yourself and others.
- Call 911. Be clear, factual, and calm.
- Call your company dispatch or safety contact.
- Don't move the vehicle unless it's a hazard or instructed by police.
- Cooperate with first responders and law enforcement.

Important: Anything you say can end up in a report or courtroom. Speak with clarity but caution.

✓ 2. When and How to Notify the Company

FMCSR Ref: §390.15(b), §382.303(b)

You are required to report an accident to your company **immediately**—even if it seems minor.

Your report should include:

- Location, time, and nature of the crash

- Other vehicles involved (license plates if possible)
- Injuries or fatalities
- Whether police responded
- Whether you were cited
- Whether there was a tow-away

Your company will begin an **internal accident register** and determine if you're subject to **post-accident drug and alcohol testing**.

3. What Not to Say to Police or Insurance

FMCSR Ref: General legal best practice

(Not specific to FMCSR, but critical to protecting yourself.)

You're expected to cooperate—but not to **speculate**, **admit fault**, or offer legal opinions.

Do NOT:

- Say “I didn’t see them,” “It was my fault,” or “I was in a hurry.”
- Apologize or guess what happened.
- Discuss company policies, insurance coverage, or settlement possibilities.

Stick to **facts only**:

- Direction of travel
- Traffic signals/signs
- What happened *before* the crash
- What actions you took

If asked for a written or recorded statement, ask to speak with Safety or legal first. That’s your right.

✓ 4. Post-Accident Testing Triggers

FMCSR Ref: §382.303

You are required to undergo **post-accident testing** under DOT rules if:

Drug & Alcohol Test Required If:

- There was a **fatality**, regardless of fault.
- Someone was **injured and required medical treatment away from the scene**, AND you received a **citation**.
- A vehicle had to be **towed**, AND you received a **citation**.

Time windows:

- **Alcohol:** Within **8 hours**
- **Drugs:** Within **32 hours**

If testing is required:

- You **must remain available** until tested.
- Do **not** consume alcohol for **8 hours** or until tested—whichever comes first.

Failure to comply = **refusal**, which = **positive test**.

✓ 5. Document Collection Checklist

FMCSR Ref: §390.15(b)

You may be asked to assist in collecting info for accident records. Gather these items **if safe to do so**:

Checklist:

- Photos of all vehicles and damage
- Photos of the crash scene (skid marks, signs, etc.)
- Name and badge number of responding officers
- Witness names and contact info
- Police report number
- Tow company name and contact
- Any citations issued (to you or others)

Send all documentation to your Safety department as soon as possible.

6. FMCSA Accident Recordkeeping Requirements

FMCSR Ref: §390.15(b), §390.5 (Accident Definition)

The FMCSA defines a **DOT-recordable accident** as one involving a **commercial motor vehicle** if it results in:

- A **fatality**
- An **injury requiring immediate treatment** away from the scene
- A **vehicle being towed from the scene** due to disabling damage

Your carrier is required to keep an **accident register** for at least **3 years** with the following:

- Date and location
- Driver's name
- Number of injuries/fatalities
- Hazardous materials involvement
- Citation info (if any)

What this means for you:

Even a minor crash may live in your file for years. How you respond—and whether you follow proper protocol—can determine if that record helps or haunts you.

SECTION 6: ROADSIDE INSPECTION READINESS

(Based on 49 CFR §§ 392.7, 396.9, 395.8, 391.41, 390.15, etc.)

Inspections don't have to be stressful—if you're prepared. This section covers what to expect, what to carry, and how to keep yourself and your truck on the road.

✓ 1. What to Expect During a Level I–VI Inspection

FMCSR Ref: §396.9, CVSA/North American Standard Inspection Levels

There are **six types of roadside inspections**, with **Level I** being the most thorough:

- **Level I – Full Inspection:**
Driver + vehicle inspection (lights, brakes, tires, documentation, logs, credentials, etc.)
- **Level II – Walk-Around:**
Same as Level I, but without crawling under the truck.
- **Level III – Driver-Only:**
Focuses on credentials, logs, license, medical card, etc.
- **Level IV – Special Inspections:**
Targeted to a specific issue (e.g., brakes only, HAZMAT, etc.).
- **Level V – Vehicle-Only (Terminal):**
Full vehicle inspection without driver present.
- **Level VI – Enhanced HAZMAT:**
For radioactive/hazardous loads—strict protocols apply.

Tip: Level III (Driver-Only) is the most common. Be ready at any time with your documents clean, current, and accessible.

✓ 2. Required Paperwork to Carry

FMCSR Ref: §391.41, §390.21, §395.8, §393.51

Here's what must be **in the cab and ready** to show:

Checklist:

- **CDL license**
- **Medical Examiner's Certificate** (unless linked electronically)
- **Driver's daily logs** (last 7/8 days)
- **ELD user manual and malfunction instructions**
- **Shipping papers / Bill of Lading**
- **Vehicle registration**
- **Annual inspection decal/document**
- **Insurance info (may be required for certain states)**

Optional but helpful:

- Emergency contact card
- Maintenance records (if questioned on-site)

Missing any of these can lead to fines or out-of-service violations—even if your truck is perfect.

✓ 3. Driver Attitude & Communication Tips

FMCSR Ref: Not regulated, but crucial for real-world success

DOT inspectors have broad authority, but **you control your attitude**. Your behavior may influence whether they do a quick Level III or dig deeper.

Best practices:

- Stay polite, calm, and direct.
- Have documents organized and ready—don't fumble.
- Don't argue roadside. If you disagree, **sign "under protest"** and contact your company to appeal later.

- Don't joke, overshare, or offer opinions ("I hate this ELD" = red flag).
- Never refuse an inspection or walk away—that's a violation.

You're a professional. Handle it like one, and you may be back on the road faster than you think.

✓ 4. How to Politely Decline Unlawful Orders

FMCSR Ref: §392.2, §396.7

Sometimes, inspectors or officers may request something that seems questionable—like driving an unsafe vehicle, moving it before triangles are out, or skipping logs.

Here's how to handle it:

- **If asked to violate a regulation**, calmly state:
"I'm not comfortable doing that—it may be a violation of DOT safety regulations. Can we clarify with my Safety Department?"
- **Document the request**: Note time, place, officer's name or badge number, and the request itself.
- **Don't escalate**: Stay respectful and let your company handle it after the fact if needed.

Drivers are **legally protected** from retaliation for refusing to violate FMCSRs (§31105, Surface Transportation Assistance Act).

✓ 5. What Triggers an Out-of-Service Order

FMCSR Ref: §396.9(c), CVSA Out-of-Service Criteria

An **out-of-service (OOS) order** means you're grounded—you can't drive until the issue is **fixed**. Here's what commonly gets drivers or trucks put OOS:

Driver-related OOS Triggers:

- No CDL or expired license
- Missing or expired medical card

- Outdated or falsified logs
- Alcohol or drug use (on duty or recent)
- Driving over HOS limits with no break/rest

Vehicle-related OOS Triggers:

- Brake issues (20% or more inoperative)
- Flat tires or exposed cords
- Major lighting violations
- Steering or suspension failure
- Leaking fuel or defective emergency equipment

If you're placed OOS:

- Don't drive or move the vehicle.
- Notify dispatch immediately.
- Get the defect fixed and request a reinspection before resuming operation.

Driving while OOS is a **serious federal violation** that affects your CSA score, your carrier's safety rating, and could suspend your license after repeat offenses.

SECTION 7: QUICK REFERENCE + CONTACTS

(Mixed FMCSR References + Operational Best Practices)

A go-to section for fast answers, key contacts, and the critical rules drivers are expected to remember and follow daily.

1. Company Safety/Compliance Contacts

Note: You'll want to customize this later

Include a printed list or insert card with key numbers such as:

- **Safety Director or Department**
- **24/7 Dispatch Contact**
- **Drug Testing Coordinator**
- **Maintenance Emergency Line**
- **HR Contact (for CDL Med Card, Licenses, etc.)**

If you're ever unsure of a regulation, facing a roadside issue, or need to report an incident—call before you act.

2. Emergency Towing / Breakdown Procedures

FMCSR Ref: §392.7 (safe vehicle operation)

If you're disabled or stuck roadside:

- Pull as far off the road as safely possible.
- Activate hazard lights.
- Place your **reflective triangles** within 10 minutes.
 - 1 triangle 10 feet behind the truck

- 1 triangle 100 feet behind
- 1 triangle 100 feet in front (for divided highways: all 3 go to the rear)
- Call dispatch or maintenance immediately.
- Document time, location, and condition of the vehicle.

Never drive or tow a CMV in an unsafe condition—this includes dragging a damaged trailer, overheating, or compromised brakes.

✓ 3. Driver Disciplinary Triggers (Policy Highlights)

FMCSR Ref: Based on employer enforcement discretion—but linked to safety regs

While every company has different policies, common violations that can get a driver pulled from service or terminated include:

- Falsifying logs or ELD entries
- Refusing or failing a drug/alcohol test
- Unauthorized passengers or cargo
- Repeated HOS violations
- Major preventable accidents
- Moving violations in a CMV (speeding, reckless driving, etc.)
- Driving while out-of-service

Treat your CDL like it's irreplaceable—because it basically is. Rebuilding your record after violations is a long, expensive road.

✓ 4. Reportable Violations

FMCSR Ref: §383.31, §390.5, §383.33

You are required to notify your employer **within 30 days** if you are convicted of any **moving violation**, in any vehicle—not just a CMV.

Examples include:

- Speeding
- Reckless driving
- Following too closely
- DUI (even in a personal vehicle)
- Driving with a suspended license

Also, notify your employer **within 1 business day** if:

- Your CDL is suspended, revoked, or downgraded
- You're arrested or cited in a serious crash

Failure to self-report can be grounds for immediate termination—even if the company finds out from another source later.

5. Where to Find the Full FMCSRs

FMCSR Ref: §390.3(e), §390.21 (knowledge of regulations)

You're expected to be familiar with the rules—even if you're not carrying a 700-page regulation book in your sleeper.

Here's where to look when you need clarity:

Online:

- **Official FMCSA Regulations:**
<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations>
- **eCFR (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations):**
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49>

Mobile Apps (free):

- J.J. Keller FMCSA Pocketbook (available digitally)
- Trucker Tools
- KeepTruckin or other ELD apps with built-in regulation libraries

Printed copies (optional):

- Ask dispatch or Safety for a current FMCSR handbook
- Keep a laminated rules cheat sheet in your permit book

The DOT won't accept "I didn't know" as a defense—especially if it's in black-and-white on the FMCSA site.

FINAL NOTE TO THE DRIVER

You're the one behind the wheel. You're the one making the calls mile after mile.

This manual isn't just about regulations—it's about protecting your license, your livelihood, and the lives around you.

DOT inspectors, law enforcement, and the motoring public expect you to be the pro in every situation. That means knowing your limits, standing your ground when something's unsafe, and keeping yourself sharp and legal on the road.

Use this field manual as your quick reference. Keep it nearby. Update it when needed. And if something in here ever conflicts with what you're told to do—stop and ask questions.

You're not just hauling freight.

You're carrying your reputation, your future, and the trust of everyone who shares the road with you.

Stay safe. Drive smart. And roll on.