



## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. What is COMPASS?

The COMPASS program is an FMCSA-wide initiative that is leveraging new technology to transform the way FMCSA does business. The ultimate goal is to implement an information technology (IT) solution that optimizes FMCSA's business processes and improves the Agency's ability to save lives. Key objectives include:

- Creating a single source for crucial safety data via single sign-on access
- Improving data quality to ensure better, more informed decision-making
- Providing actionable information as well as data

COMPASS is now leveraging a service-oriented architecture and leading technologies to develop a solution that can adapt easily to a changing environment. The FMCSA Portal provides single sign-on access to MCMIS, EMIS, L&I, DataQs, Query Central, A&I, SAFER, EDMS, HMPPI, InfoSys, and the National Consumer Complaint Database (NCCDB) via a single password and user ID.

## 2. Why is COMPASS important?

Today's environment is rapidly changing, with more regulations, policies and procedures continuously being developed and the number of trucks and buses on the nation's highways increasing every year. FMCSA's patchwork of more than 20 safety systems, meanwhile, has become increasingly complex and difficult to modify. COMPASS addresses the business and technology challenges fueled by this dynamic environment by leveraging new technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our safety activities. Integrating the existing standalone safety systems and providing access via one Portal will eliminate the need for multiple user IDs and passwords, improve data quality, reduce costs, and provide enforcement personnel with more timely, actionable information.

Working closely with the Comprehensive Safety Analysis (CSA) 2010 program will further ensure access to improved data and more relevant information. As a result, the Office of Enforcement will be better positioned to identify high-risk carriers and drivers and apply a wider range of interventions to correct high-risk behavior sooner.

## 3. How does COMPASS relate to the Comprehensive Safety Analysis (CSA) 2010 program?

COMPASS is closely aligned with the CSA (Comprehensive Safety Analysis) 2010 program, FMCSA's agency-wide initiative on safety activities and processes. CSA 2010 requirements that will be integrated into upcoming releases of COMPASS include:

- Creation of a central, authoritative data source
- Incorporation of technical features that will allow the system to adapt to regulatory changes and improvements in business processes, with a minimum of programming and operational delay
- Incremental rollout of CSA 2010-specified business processes through future COMPASS releases

## 4. What is a portal?

A portal is a gateway on the Internet that provides access to other Web sites. Portals are widely used by both public and private sector organizations to streamline users' access to important information.

## 5. What is included in the FMCSA Portal?

The FMCSA Portal (<https://portal.fmcsa.dot.gov>) provides single sign-on access to MCMIS, EMIS, L&I, DataQs, Query Central, A&I, SAFER, EDMS, HMPPI, InfoSys, and the National Consumer Complaint Database (NCCDB) via a single password and user ID.

The FMCSA Portal also provides:

- *Direct access via the Web* – Anyone who can access the Web can access the FMCSA Portal. Because VPN is no longer required to access MCMIS, EMIS, L&I, DataQs, Query Central, A&I, SAFER, EDMS, HMPPI, InfoSys, or the NCCDB, users can access crucial data during roadside inspections and when working from other remote locations.
- *Ability to make assignments directly from the FMCSA Portal* – Users can make assignments such as Compliance Reviews and Safety Audits without exiting the FMCSA Portal. All of the user's customized prioritization lists are available in one location and can be exported into an Excel spreadsheet for additional customization.
- *Accounts management* – Users can request FMCSA Portal accounts and modify requests directly from the FMCSA Portal. Users were previously required to submit paper-based forms to the Technical Support Hotline in order to request and modify accounts.
- *Managing user access* – Administrative users can run advanced user searches, disable or enable users, and transfer administrative roles.
- *Managing individual accounts* – Individual users can request a forgotten User ID, unlock a locked account, and receive automatic notifications when their passwords are getting ready to expire.
- *Presentation of motor carrier safety data on a single screen* – Enforcement users have access to all company data in the same format as that seen by companies.
- *Carrier access to their own information* – Carriers now have a single location to view their data. Carriers can also generate their own safety profiles from within the FMCSA Portal at no cost and designate third-party entities as having online access to their safety and operational data.

## 6. What determines the order in which additional enhancements are made to COMPASS?

For COMPASS to succeed, we must meet users' needs and build a solid, cost-effective foundation that ensures future performance, reliability, availability, and scalability. Users in the Field told us that reducing the number of user IDs and passwords is crucial. They also identified MCMIS, EMIS, L&I, and DataQs as the four most widely used systems that should be integrated into the FMCSA Portal first.

Development of the FMCSA Portal has involved extensive "behind the scenes" work that has built a strong foundation for the future. This work has included:

- Building new production, testing, and training environments.

- Designing a service-oriented architecture (SOA) that ensures performance, reliability, availability, and scalability. SOA is used by many organizations to change their business processes quickly, gain better access to their data, re-use their existing assets, and reduce costs.
- Implementing new technologies such as additional servers, the Oracle database, and numerous tools for performance monitoring, analysis, load balancing, failover protection, and security.

## 7. What are the future plans for COMPASS?

Additional functionality will be provided to ensure that users have the tools, information and decision-making capabilities needed to improve the safety of commercial motor vehicles and save lives.

The Compliance Monitoring Release will improve monitoring of carriers and drivers and introduce workflow and rule engine capabilities. It will streamline and integrate the monitoring and processing of a number of key activities, including:

- New entrant safety audits
- Mexican commercial zone applications
- Hazardous materials safety permits
- Insurance cancellation monitoring
- Compliance review ratings
- Processing of out-of-service orders and orders to cease operations
- Commercial compliance

Future releases will integrate additional changes in such areas as registration, reviews and audits, inspections, crashes, and enforcement.

## 8. What are the plans for FMCSA's existing systems such as MCMIS and ASPEN?

All of the existing systems, as well as many of the business processes that interact with those systems, will gradually be retired as their functionality is integrated into the FMCSA Portal. Until the systems are fully integrated into the FMCSA Portal, they will remain accessible in their current form. As this process rolls out, FMCSA staff, Federal and State partners, and companies will be informed of upcoming changes before they occur.

## 9. Who is responsible for delivering COMPASS?

COMPASS is overseen by Terry Shelton, FMCSA Associate Administrator for Research and Information Technology and Chief Information Officer. The Office of Enforcement and Program Delivery, Field and

Enforcement staff, field working groups such as the Field IT Steering Group, and the carrier community are also actively involved, providing insight into their needs and the business processes required to operate effectively.

## 10. How can I get involved?

Ensuring the involvement of FMCSA staff, Enforcement, and the carrier community is vital to the success of COMPASS. Opportunities to participate include:

- Testing new functionality in upcoming releases
- Participating in committees, discussion groups and interviews customers
- Contributing comments and suggestions

If you or your colleagues would like to become involved in the COMPASS program, please contact the COMPASS team at [compass@dot.gov](mailto:compass@dot.gov). If you work at an FMCSA division, please contact your Division Administrator.