

RUAN



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration



CSA GIVES SHIPPERS AND CARRIERS SOMETHING TO CONSIDER.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has introduced a new safety program designed to improve large truck and bus safety and, ultimately, reduce crashes. Compliance Safety Accountability (CSA), formerly Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010, launched in mid-April 2010 and will continue to be implemented into 2011.

CSA introduces significant changes to how a transporter's Fitness for Service rating is determined. Instead of judging carriers and individual drivers based on the number of out-of-service violations committed by its vehicles and drivers, carriers will now be judged on every single violation. Roadside stops, collision reports, inspections by Department of Transportation (DOT) officers — all will be incorporated into a computer-calculated safety rating assigned to the operating authority on a rolling year basis.

"In the past, a carrier might be placed out of service because of a flat tire or because a truck's brakes were out of adjustment — major violations," said Ron Hanson, Ruan's vice president of human resources and safety. "Now, points will be given based on situations that happen in the normal wear and tear of operation: a marker light being out, a reflector broken off or any of a hundred other possibilities.

"Consequently, you could be fit to operate one month," Hanson said, "and the next month, if one area of the company falls out of compliance severely enough, you could be forbidden to operate."

CURBING THE RISK

Companies with in-house transportation departments must also meet the requirements of CSA and will be subject to more stringent reporting. For private fleet owners, being placed out of service could mean a manufacturing interruption, lost contracts or worse. Rather than risk a shutdown by the DOT, companies should consider a solution such as Ruan's Dedicated Contract Carriage (DCC).

"Ruan has been preparing its terminal staff and drivers for CSA for months," said Director of Safety Lisa Gonnerman, who supervises Ruan's seven regional safety managers. "CSA continues to change and evolve. You have to stay on top of those changes and understand their impact on your fleet — whether private or for-hire. Because we've been proactive, Ruan is ready for CSA implementation, which will fundamentally rearrange the safety compliance field."

In addition to removing the need to monitor and track each tractor and trailer for potential violations, customers that use Ruan's DCC service can free up capital, reduce their risk and liability and, in some cases, improve their tax position.

Ruan also works hard to hire the right drivers, ensuring the company has the best people transporting its customers' cargo — going beyond the requirements. Ruan proactively requires two years of verifiable driving experience in like equipment before it will qualify a driver. Ruan works with the DOT's Driver Information Resource to identify those drivers with the highest safety ratings. And, the company treats drivers well, providing predictable, family-friendly schedules that have led to excellent driver loyalty and a retention rate five times the industry average.

CSA will require a number of changes by transporters. However, by using a dedicated contract carriage service, companies can avoid the regulatory headaches and concentrate on their core business.

"Frankly, I would be concerned if my primary business was not trucking," Hanson said. "Especially in light of CSA, a good partnership between two organizations is the best transportation solution."

