

What Is the Safety Management Cycle (SMC)?

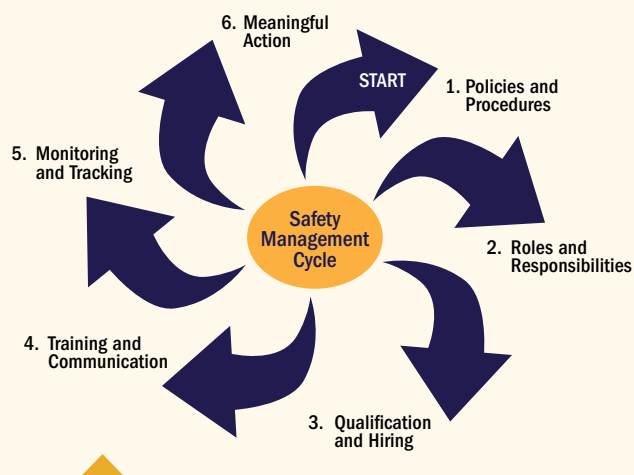
The SMC is a tool used by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to help identify and address motor carrier safety and compliance issues. Motor carriers can also use the SMC within their own businesses to determine which of the Safety Management Processes (SMPs) that they may need to improve by looking at the processes, management and controls associated with each SMP.

This document identifies tools motor carriers can use to establish and improve appropriate safety management controls, thereby reducing or eliminating violations. Motor carriers and drivers are reminded, however, that they are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable regulations. For information about the regulations related to the Unsafe Driving Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC), see the Unsafe Driving BASIC factsheet at http://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/Documents/FMC_CSA_12_008_BASICs_UnsafeDriving.pdf.

The SMC is used to systematically assess SMPs in six areas:

1. Policies and Procedures, 2. Roles and Responsibilities, 3. Qualification and Hiring, 4. Training and Communication, 5. Monitoring and Tracking, and 6. Meaningful Action. By periodically reviewing each process, there is an opportunity to identify and correct breakdowns in SMPs before safety and compliance issues are identified or crashes occur. The SMC can also be used after safety and compliance issues or crashes have taken place to assist in determining which SMPs need attention.

The SMCs for each BASIC can be found in the Information Center on the SMS Website at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms>.



The Safety Management Cycle, or SMC, consists of the six Safety Management Processes outlined in the graphic above.

Policies and Procedures

- Develop a policy stating that drivers are responsible for adhering to all safe-driving-related Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances, including the prohibition against using radar detectors and the wearing of seatbelts.
- Develop a policy requiring drivers to submit copies of all roadside inspections and citations for moving violations to carrier management within 24 hours.
- Develop a policy penalizing drivers for speeding even if a Federal or State citation is not issued on the road.
- Establish a policy that prohibits dispatchers from assigning drivers a load that cannot be completed without speeding.

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- Develop a policy that prohibits passengers from being on-board non-passenger vehicles without management approval.
- Develop a written and progressive disciplinary policy focused on taking corrective action to ensure drivers comply with regulations and policies. A progressive disciplinary policy could include, among other things, written warnings, suspensions, or work restrictions, monetary penalties, and termination. This policy should also specify consequences for any carrier official who knowingly and willfully allows unsafe driving violations.

HAZMAT Carrier Only:

- Adopt standards for safely operating a vehicle in accordance with specific load and equipment requirements, roadway and weather conditions, and State and local regulations concerning HAZMAT-restricted routes.
- Develop a policy that prohibits employees from smoking within 25 feet of the vehicle in accordance with 49 CFR Part 397.

Passenger Carrier Only:

- Develop a policy that requires drivers to notify management when customers make changes to the approved itinerary.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Managers are responsible for making certain that employees receive safe driving training in accordance with State or Federal regulations and company policy, including safe driving procedures while carrying HAZMAT (if applicable) — for example, counteracting sloshing in cargo tanks and no smoking.
- Define and document roles and responsibilities of managers and supervisors for implementing safe driving policies and monitoring compliance with them.
- Ensure that dispatchers and operation managers are responsible for analyzing trips to ascertain that drivers can complete them without speeding.
- Define and document driver roles and responsibilities associated with compliance with Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances related to unsafe driving.

Passenger Carrier Only:

- Designate a manager to collect and evaluate all unsafe driving customer complaints and their safety implications.

Qualification and Hiring

- Ensure that Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs) from States issuing Commercial Driver's Licenses are reviewed for unsafe driving violations of all prospective drivers for the last three years.
- Ensure that prospective drivers will drive safely by querying applicants, checking with previous employers and references, and obtaining necessary documents regarding drivers' safety performance going back three years. Create a detailed written record of each inquiry.
- Ensure that enough drivers are hired so that the carrier can meet deadlines within Hours-of-Service restrictions without speeding.
- Ensure that the employment application captures all information required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, such as that pertaining to moving violations, prior convictions, and denied employment based on unsafe driving.

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- Enhance the recruitment process to identify and attract qualified applicants for the position of safety director and driver, using outside resources such as industry affiliations, recruiters, and consultants for employee searches and referrals.

HAZMAT Carrier Only:

- When questioning applicants and previous employers for HAZMAT-handling positions, check if any physical or stress demands have led to reckless driving violations.

Training and Communication

- Convey expectations to all applicable staff for adhering to safe driving regulations and company policies and procedures, and for expecting responsibilities by providing new-hire and refresher training, and establish communication channels such as newsletters and/or meetings focused on conflicts between on-time delivery and speeding.
- Provide seminars on topics relevant to safe driving, such as when to use flashers; how to handle road rage; the importance of keeping one's eyes on the road ahead and scanning it, with no manual dialing or texting and no use of in-vehicle devices that draw attention away from the road; how to use maps; and no use of radar detectors.
- Communicate the carrier's Unsafe Driving percentile rank to all staff, and explain to them individually what they can do to help the carrier improve its percentile rank.
- Ensure that managers and supervisors regularly communicate and demonstrate their commitment to safe driving.
- Inform drivers that their driving history is a factor in determining whether the carrier will be chosen for a roadside inspection as a way to motivate them to drive safely.
- Ensure that all drivers and other employees receive new-hire and refresher training in safe driving as required by regulations and company policy.
- Ensure that drivers are trained in driver Out-of-Service (OOS) rules, their responsibility in adhering to them, and the carrier's procedures for reporting OOS violations and communicating appropriately with other personnel.
- Train the safety director and dispatchers on how to schedule routes that can be completed without speeding.
- Train all staff who are required to monitor and track unsafe driving behaviors on appropriate company policies, including those related to discipline and incentives.
- Train the hiring manager about issues associated with hiring "high-risk" drivers, such as the impact of drivers with road rage on insurance rates and how to identify these drivers.
- Provide hiring officials with guidance on how best to attract, screen, and qualify applicants who are most likely to adhere to unsafe driving regulations and company policies and procedures.
- Reinforce training about safe driving policies, procedures, and responsibilities to drivers, dispatchers, and other employees, using job aids, post-training testing, and/or refresher training. Encourage informal feedback among them so that they can help each other to improve.

HAZMAT Carrier Only:

- Ensure that drivers of HAZMAT loads are trained in special vehicle-handling characteristics, including high center of gravity; fluid load subject to surge and the effects of the surge on braking; differences in stability among baffled, unbaffled, and multicompartment tanks; and the effects of partial loads on vehicle stability.

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- Ensure that trucks carrying HAZMAT stop at all railroad crossings in accordance with 392.10.
- Ensure that whoever is responsible for generating the HAZMAT route communicates route-specific instructions to the driver to make sure they are clear.

Passenger Carrier Only:

- Provide training on intersection and lane-change safety and on pedestrian awareness for bus drivers in inner cities.
- Ensure that buses and motorcoaches stop at all railroad crossings.
- Provide drivers with passenger-specific training — for example, on customer communications related to conflict management for unruly passengers, breakdown procedures, evacuation, and route diversion.

Monitoring and Tracking

- Ensure that the safety director/dispatchers ascertain that all routes can be completed within speed limits.
- Maintain roadside inspection reports, moving violation records, and “How am I driving?” complaints to help evaluate the performance of all staff (drivers and managers) involved in safe driving and the effectiveness of the policies and procedures.
- Review and retain each driver’s MVR at least annually to ensure compliance with company policies, Federal regulations, and State and local laws and ordinances related to safe driving. If a driver seems to have license-related problems, the MVR should be reviewed more often. Random MVR checks in addition to annual checks are also effective. File the MVR in each driver’s driver qualification file after review.
- Ensure that dispatchers and/or the safety manager monitor drivers’ speed for violations with use of an electronic or manual movement record — that is, that they track driver movements via driver reports, global positioning systems, and travel receipts.
- Evaluate personnel who are monitoring drivers’ safety performance by making sure that they are using inspections and other data; applying performance standards fairly, consistently, and equitably; and documenting evaluations.
- Place a “How am I driving?” sticker on every truck to get feedback from the public on drivers exhibiting unsafe behaviors on the road. Assess feedback for safety implications.
- Regularly evaluate the company’s unsafe-driving-related inspection results via FMCSA’s Website at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/SMS>. Assess violations for process breakdowns and how to remedy them. Use data to help implement an effective process beyond self-reporting to monitor, document, and evaluate compliance with unsafe driving regulations and company policies.
- Implement a system for keeping accurate records of employee driving-safety training needs and completed training, via software, a checklist in the driver’s file, and/or another appropriate method.
- When monitoring and tracking any unsafe-driving-related issues, always assess whether an issue is individual or represents a systemic breakdown in one of the SMPs (Policies and Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities, etc.).

Passenger Carrier Only:

- Monitor and track unsafe driving passenger complaints and assess safety implications.

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Meaningful Action

- Design and implement incentives and/or recognition programs in order to reward and encourage safe driving behavior — for example, including bonuses, gift certificates, and/or verbal recognition for clean inspections, no crashes, and/or fuel efficiency.
- Reward dispatchers, terminal managers, and safety directors for having a low percentage of runs without unsafe driving violations. Do not use on-time delivery incentives, which could encourage speeding.
- Consider paying drivers by the hour instead of by the load or mileage to encourage them not to speed.
- Give employees immediate feedback and require corrective action as soon as the company is aware that responsibilities related to unsafe driving issues are not being fulfilled.
- Provide required remedial training to employees with unsafe driving performance issues that can be addressed by enhancing their knowledge and skills.
- Implement a disciplinary policy where potential disciplinary measures correspond to risk posed, with violations associated with high-consequence accidents or incidents being punished more severely.
- Discipline carrier officials for knowingly and willfully allowing violations of unsafe driving regulations — for example, for encouraging drivers to speed.
- If a problem related to unsafe driving is systemic, make adjustments to one or more of the SMPs (Policies and Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities, etc.).

