



TRUCKER

Focus

2018 | VOLUME 9 ISSUE 2



BASIC TRAINING

MAINTENANCE **BASIC** &

ITS EFFECT
ON YOUR
BUSINESS

Owners and managers are well aware they are under increased scrutiny by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The FMCSA's CSA program is now capable of looking much closer at an individual motor carrier's safety and operational performance than in years past. Using the Safety Measurement System (SMS), the program analyzes data collected from inspections, crash reports, and violations to highlight and monitor specific safety problems of each motor carrier assigned a DOT number. This data is then organized into seven categories called Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICs).

A BASIC percentile is what FMCSA uses to identify motor carriers with safety performance problems. It affects their Inspection Selection System (ISS) score, which is a decision-aid for commercial vehicle roadside driver/vehicle safety inspections, guiding safety inspectors in selecting vehicles for inspection. These results also prioritize motor carriers for interventions, such as warning letters, request of motor carrier documentation, or on-site investigations.

The Maintenance BASIC can cause motor carriers particular difficulty. Operators who have serious issues with their Maintenance BASIC tend to share two key characteristics:

- 1. Unfamiliarity of how the SMS works and affects their business.**
- 2. Lack of a formalized maintenance program, especially when motor carriers have grown from a few to many trucks. This formalized maintenance program can include:**
 - a. Written maintenance procedures including routine, preventative, and for when safety defects are found;
 - b. Employee training in procedures to follow for routine maintenance or when safety defects are identified;
 - c. Periodically auditing a maintenance program to verify employees are successfully trained and have the tools, resources, and accountability to execute the program effectively for the business.

Sometimes, owners believe their maintenance program is working well and blame their high Maintenance BASIC on overzealous enforcement officers. However, several safety defects that should have been caught during the Driver Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR) can be found. The reason is often a lack of auditing that drivers are completing their DVIRs properly or even turning them in. This points to the importance of having an effective maintenance program that requires people are trained in the program and that it is audited periodically.

A second common area of defect is that many maintenance shops have no formalized procedures on what to inspect when a truck enters the shop and, more important, how to repair a safety defect and return the equipment back into service promptly. The low-hanging fruit often falls within the "BLT maintenance sandwich" of Brakes, Lights, and Tire violations. Address these three items from routinely occurring, and many motor carriers will dramatically improve their Maintenance BASIC. Of course, your maintenance procedures are going to vary depending upon your operation and commodities hauled. For example, trucks hauling a perishable load of ice cream need to be managed much differently than those hauling a load of class 5 gravel.

It is important to regularly review your FMCSA profile and your SMS BASIC scores. Understand where you rate in each BASIC. Be brutally honest with yourself as to the good and the bad of why you are there. Look for ways to improve the maintenance program rather than who can be blamed for poor results. A maintenance and inspection program is critical in reducing your costs and in meeting the expectations of your customers, drivers, the motoring public, the FMCSA, and your own bottom line profitability goals.

Acuity offers customers a sample maintenance program to help create or improve your own program. There are also several effective third-party electronic maintenance programs offered to the trucking industry. Contact your Acuity agent for more details.

THE BLT MAINTENANCE SANDWICH



BRAKES



LIGHTS



TIRES

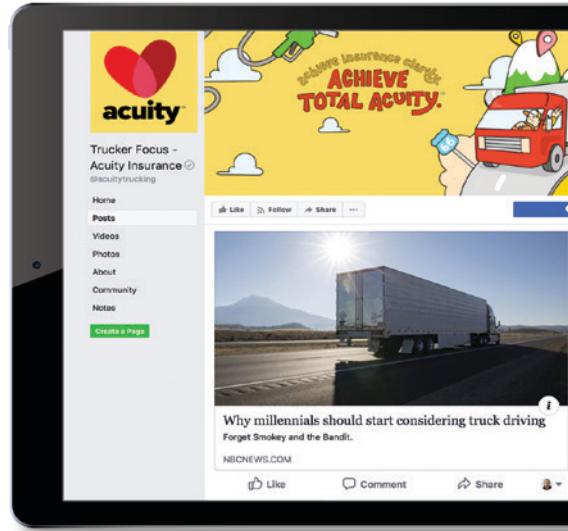
Address these three items from routinely occurring, and many motor carriers will dramatically improve their Maintenance BASIC.



WORD OF MOUTH

Are Millennials the secret to solving the driver shortage? Read about this and other great topics and join in the discussion at facebook.com/acuteitytrucking.

In addition to all the great online resources for truckers Acuity makes available at acuteity.com, we also feature the latest news, trucking trends, and lively discussions on our Trucker Focus Facebook page.



FIND THE FLAGPOLE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN \$100



Acuity's headquarters in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, is known for hosting the World's Tallest Symbol of Freedom: a 400-foot flagpole that flies a 70- by 140-foot American flag.

In each issue of the *Trucker Focus*, we'll hide a miniature version of our flag: . Find the flag hidden elsewhere in this issue, then send an email with its location to flagcontest@acuteity.com by August 1, 2018. We'll choose a winner of \$100 at random from among the correct entries received.



This contest is not open to employees of Acuity or their immediate family members. For a complete list of rules, visit www.acuity.com/flagcontestrules.

EXPERT INSIGHT



Acuity's Cliff Johnson, Trucking Specialist, sat down with Ellen Voie, founder, President, and CEO of the Women In Trucking Association. Women In Trucking is a non-profit organization with the mission of encouraging the employment of women in the trucking industry, promoting their accomplishments, and minimizing the obstacles they face. Here are some highlights of their conversation.

Women In Trucking is a great association. What prompted you to start it?

Ten years ago, I was working for a large motor carrier as manager of recruiting and retention programs, and I was tasked with figuring out how to retain nontraditional groups in trucking, such as women. I started doing research on what would bring women into the industry and realized the industry wasn't focused on bringing this demographic in. Here we are, ten years later, celebrating 4,000 members all over the world, moving the mission forward to simply increase the percentage of women involved in the trucking industry.

What are some of the largest challenges to women considering a career in the industry?

The number one challenge is image. When I talk to women about a career as a driver or anywhere inside the industry, they say, "I'm not big and burly," or "I'm not mechanically minded." They have a misconception about what the job entails. Our job is to help them understand that with the use of technology and with better work-life balance today, the industry is much more driver friendly than it was 15-20 years ago.

What are some of the things Women In Trucking is doing to help welcome women to the industry?

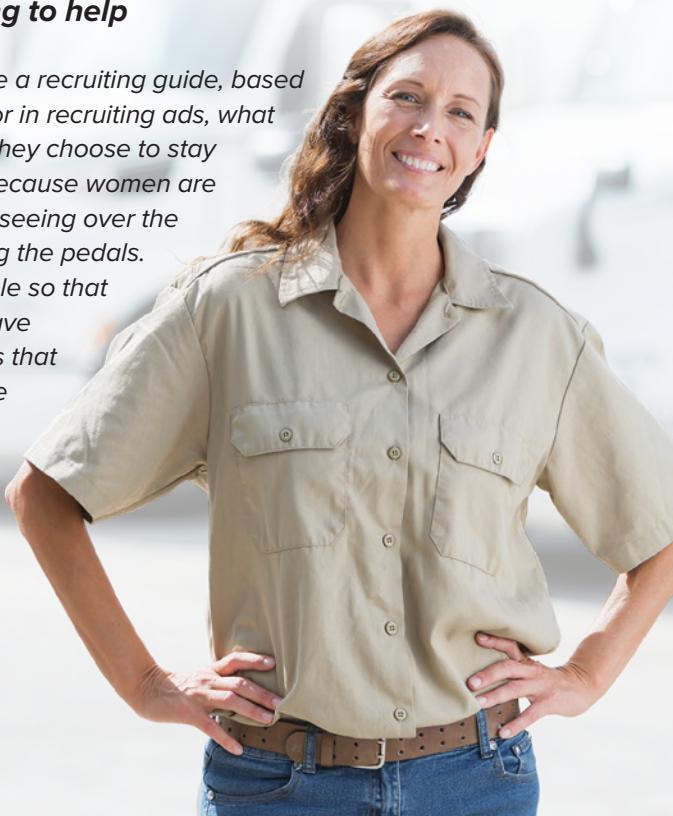
We have anti-harassment employment guide for employers. We have a recruiting guide, based on research with the University of Wisconsin, on what women look for in recruiting ads, what they look for in the industry, what they look for in a carrier, and why they choose to stay or leave. We work closely with truck cab designers on ergonomics because women are typically shorter with wider hips, so it's more of a challenge for them seeing over the dash, getting into and out of the cab or the sleeper berth, or reaching the pedals.

We're working to help manufacturers design trucks that are adaptable so that women can feel just as comfortable as their teammate who might have longer arms and legs. We're working to have designers create trucks that are pet friendly, and to put in security alarm systems for when people are sleeping. We have to stop thinking about the cab of the truck as just a cab—these trucks are their homes.

What's the most important message you would give to women about pursuing a career in trucking?

This industry wants them, and they can do the job.

To watch the entire interview, visit acuity.com/ellen-voie-interview.



BEST OF THE BLOG

UCR VS URS: Understanding Their Purpose!

There is often confusion about the Unified Registration System (URS) and the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR).

Unified Registration System (URS) is a new online registration system from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) that will streamline and simplify the FMCSA registration process and serve as a clearinghouse and depository of information on all entities regulated by the administration. These entities include motor carriers, brokers, freight forwarders, intermodal equipment providers (IEPs), hazardous materials safety permit (HMSP) applicants/holders, and cargo tank manufacturing and repair facilities. The FMCSA has extended the implementation date for URS beyond its original 2017 timeline.

Primarily, the URS will combine multiple registration processes and unify registration data housed in multiple FMCSA systems into one authoritative database, thus reducing the possibility for conflicting registration data between FMCSA systems. The URS will streamline manual processes and combine several forms into one unified online registration form. This will save time and administrative costs for motor carriers, the industry, and FMCSA.

In addition, the URS will improve FMCSA's ability to locate small- and medium-sized private and exempt for-hire motor carriers when further contact is necessary. New carriers must complete process agent filings, Form BOC-3, before safety registration and an active USDOT number will be granted.

If you are a new motor carrier applying for your own authority, there was previously no fee to get a USDOT number; however, the application to get a MC number was \$300. Now that the URS is combining the two forms, and because MC numbers will eventually be eliminated,

a \$300 fee will be charged to file the new MCSA-1 to obtain your authority.

Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) replaced the Single State Registration System (SSRS), and revenues generated are used for the funding of motor carrier enforcement safety programs. It applies to all operators of commercial motor vehicles crossing state lines. This includes freight forwarders, brokers, and both for-hire and private motor carriers carrying their own goods and products across state lines. Of note, it also includes carriers transporting interstate goods, even if vehicles do not leave the state but the product does. For example, if you haul product into a concentration yard and the product is eventually transferred to another truck or placed on rail that delivers it across state lines, the system applies to you.

State enforcement of the UCR registration requirements commonly began January 1. Since the 2018 registration was delayed several months, the UCR Board requested states not to enforce requirements until 90 days after the fees went into effect—that is, until April 5. The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, the association of motor carrier enforcement agencies, also adopted this position.

UCR renewal rates depend on your business classification. Brokers, freight forwarders, and leasing companies pay the lowest registration fee tier. If you're a carrier, your renewal fee is based off how many trucks you have listed on your USDOT, starting around \$69 for 2018.

You can process and pay for your annual UCR filing by going online to www.ucr.in.gov. For more information, visit www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/unified-registration-system.



ASK THE SPECIALIST

Cliff Johnson
is Acuity's
Trucking Specialist.
Contact him at
trucking.news@acuity.com.



Ask Cliff

Cliff, what's your take on the future of autonomous vehicles in trucking?

Technology has shaped transportation throughout human history, and autonomous vehicles will be no exception. How much of an impact will those vehicles have? Well, consider how far transportation has already come and the degree to which the pace of change has increased over time.

It took millennia for transportation to evolve from human power to animal power using carts, wagons, and waterways. It took thousands more years to harness steam power to move tractors and ships, then many more years for the internal combustion engine to transform transportation yet again. Just during my own career in trucking, we've gone from gas power twin screw trucks, to the smoking 450-horsepower diesels, to today's low-emission trucks that feature many types of advanced technology.

Yet all these modes of transportation throughout history still required human control. That, I believe, is undergoing change as well. Automation is now used throughout the transportation sector to assist human operators, whether it's robots assisting with material handling in warehouses, GPS-based navigation, electronic logging devices, crash avoidance systems, or large autonomous dump trucks operating in mines. But until now, digital technologies have had a rather limited impact on how trucks are actually controlled on the road—by a human driver.

Now, we are approaching a point where our transportation machinery is becoming technologically capable of automating the task of piloting freight on roadways. But, what is the timetable for that change, and how will it impact our industry?

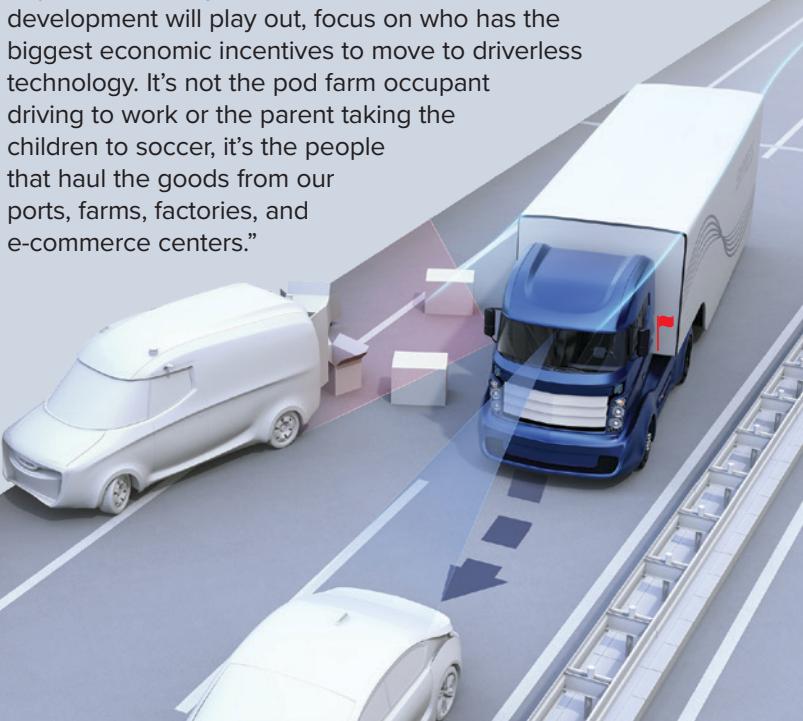
In a recent presentation to the automotive media, the Center for Automotive Research predicted the pace of change for this evolution will be slower than some have projected. The group projects that vehicles meeting level 4 or 5 in automation—meaning they can operate primarily or totally without human input—will account for less than 4% of new vehicle sales by 2030.

Still, the case for autonomous vehicle development in the trucking industry is strong. A recent article in trucks.com by Jerry Hirsch summarized the case very well, including the driver shortage, increased freight being hauled, fewer young people getting into the trucking industry, and increased government regulation limiting hours of service.

Also, autonomous technology has been successful in proof-of-concept exercises, such as an October 2016 delivery of beer by an autonomous truck on a two-hour, 120-mile journey across Colorado. Additionally, "platooning," where trucks are digitally linked to drive closely together to increase fuel economy through drafting, was demonstrated in September 2017 by the FMCSA, using technology based on cooperative adaptive cruise control (CACC) as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's efforts to improve the nation's freight transportation network efficiency.

In short, I believe drivers will still be needed to control at least part of the driving and freight transportation process for several generations. However, the eventual autonomous revolution will be just as transformational as previous revolutions, and the change will be spurred by trucking. To quote Hirsch:

"If you are looking for hints in how autonomous vehicle development will play out, focus on who has the biggest economic incentives to move to driverless technology. It's not the pod farm occupant driving to work or the parent taking the children to soccer, it's the people that haul the goods from our ports, farms, factories, and e-commerce centers."



YOUR LIFE ON THE ROAD



Michael Tully (pictured) and Gernert Ames, his uncle, haul pigs throughout the country for Ames' company, Two Bad Dudes, Inc. On a recent trip, Michael took a selfie with their cargo—one of which seems quite interested in the goings-on!

"Growing up with my mom and dad both out on the road trucking, I thought I never wanted to live that life. However, after the company I was working for closed, I got back into the family business," Tully says.

"I've got to say, this life grows on you," he adds. "Trucking has always been in my blood—I was just too stubborn to admit it! Now my uncle and I take these beauties all across the country to fill barns and pastures."

Send us a picture from your Life on the Road and you could win \$100!

Have you driven through some amazing locations, hauled some unbelievable loads, or handled some challenging situations and deliveries? Do you have an interesting story to tell and pictures to show? Then we just might feature you in the Trucker Focus!

Send us your photos along with a few words about why we should feature your Life on the Road. Photos should include you if at all possible. If we choose your story and photo, we'll publish it here—and you'll earn \$100.



This contest is not open to employees of Acuity or their immediate family members. For more information, including a complete list of rules, visit acuity.com/lifeontheroad

www.acuity.com/mctb

Motor Carrier Toolbox Designed for Truckers Like You!



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- And Much, Much More!



2018

**Truck Driver
Appreciation
Essay Contest**



Over
\$10,000
in Prizes

How is the truck driver in your family a hero to you and to others?

The second annual Truck Driver Appreciation Essay Contest is open to all elementary, middle, and high school students. Five winners will be chosen from each age group, with individual prizes up to \$2,500.

Entries must be postmarked or submitted electronically by July 21, 2018.

Winners will be notified on or before August 10, 2018.

Visit www.acuity.com/contest for official rules and information.

No purchase or payment necessary to enter or win. Winners will be solely responsible for any federal, state, or local taxes. A completed W-9 is required prior to all winners claiming a prize. Acuity, A Mutual Insurance Company, employees and their children are not eligible to enter.



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Acuity's on-site trucking specialist provides over 30 years of industry experience to your business.

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