

## ***What is PRISM ?***

The Performance and Registration Information Systems Management (PRISM) program links the commercial vehicle registration process to motor carrier safety to achieve two purposes:

- Determine the safety fitness of the motor carrier prior to issuing license plates.
- Influence the carrier to improve its safety performance through an improvement process and, where necessary, the application of registration sanctions.

The PRISM program includes two major processes - the Commercial Vehicle Registration Process (Registration) and Enforcement, which work in parallel to identify motor carriers and hold them responsible for the safety of their operation. The performance of unsafe carriers is improved through a comprehensive system of identification, education, awareness, data gathering, safety monitoring and treatment.

### ***Registration***

The International Registration Plan (IRP) commercial vehicle registration process of the states provides the framework for the PRISM program. It serves two vital functions. First, it establishes a system of accountability by ensuring that no vehicle is plated without identifying the carrier responsible for the safety of the vehicle during the registration year. Second, the use of registration sanctions provides powerful incentive for unsafe carriers to improve their safety performance.

The vehicle registration process ensures that all carriers engaged in interstate commerce are uniquely identified through a USDOT number when they register their vehicles. The safety fitness of each carrier can then be checked prior to issuing vehicle registrations. Those motor carriers that have been prohibited from operating in interstate commerce by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration may have their ability to register vehicles denied by the State.

### ***Enforcement***

The Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Process (MCSIP) is the means by which carrier safety is systematically tracked and improved. MCSIP is a data-driven process that uses current safety event information such as crashes, inspections, driver violations, compliance review data and other data to assess and monitor motor carrier safety performance. Safety events are assigned to the motor carrier responsible for the safety of the motor vehicle and are weighted according to severity, frequency and time since the occurrence.

The process is designed to improve the safety performance of carriers with demonstrated poor safety performance through accurate identification, performance monitoring and treatment. Once the carrier exceeds the bounds of the established safety threshold, the motor carrier enters MCSIP. MCSIP provides opportunities for the motor carriers to improve operations and return to a safe condition. Within MCSIP, carriers with potential safety problems are identified and prioritized for an on-site review using the Motor Carrier Safety Status (SafeStat) prioritization methodology developed for the PRISM program. A federal operations out-of-service order and concurrent state registration suspension or revocation is the ultimate penalty if there is no improvement in the motor carriers' safety fitness record.

## ***PRISM Benefits***

PRISM demonstrates the following safety, economic and productivity benefits:

**Accountability** - Identification of the carrier (via their USDOT number) responsible for the safe operation of the vehicles being registered has clearly produced a major safety benefit.

Accountability means that safety events (e.g. inspection, accident, driver moving violations) affecting a PRISM registered vehicle can be more accurately tied back to the responsible motor carrier.

**A Performance-Based Approach to Safety Management** - The primary means for identifying potentially poor performing carriers is through an accumulation of carrier, vehicle and driver-specific safety events that is then linked to the carrier through the carrier's USDOT number. Carriers are identified, treated and released from a safety improvement program based upon demonstrated highway performance after safety treatments have been applied.

**SafeStat** - SafeStat is a data-driven, performance-based tool used to identify potentially high-risk carriers for inclusion in the PRISM improvement process (MCSIP). Under SafeStat a carrier's safety performance is assessed based on all available data (roadside inspection, compliance reviews (CRs), crashes, enforcement history, etc). New safety information is added to this data source on a continuous basis, and SafeStat uses this information to provide current safety indicators for all carriers for which there is sufficient data.

**Improved Productivity** - The PRISM program was developed to meet the challenge of reducing the number of commercial vehicle crashes of a rapidly expanding interstate carrier population. It has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of federal and state safety efforts through:

- A more accurate process for targeting the highest-risk carriers, which allows for a more efficient allocation of scarce resources for compliance reviews and roadside inspections.
- The use of a warning letter as an effective, yet inexpensive, alternative to a compliance review for carriers with less severe safety performance problems.

**Improved Data Quality** - The PRISM program has shown that an improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of data will result in better resource allocation and heightened efficiencies in the administration of major federal and state safety programs. The data improvement initiatives in this project have significantly improved the accuracy and timeliness of critical accident and inspection data collected and uploaded by state motor carrier personnel. Several of the most notable data improvement initiatives are listed below:

- The development of a procedure for obtaining current census and operational data on interstate motor carriers as part of the state's annual vehicle registration renewal process;
- The development of a procedure for using plate numbers as a means to more effectively assign inspection and accident data to the responsible motor carrier;
- The use of automated procedures such as bar codes, for data collection in the field to eliminate typing errors on critical fields like USDOT number, plate number and VIN

**Improved Motor Carrier Safety** - The PRISM program requires that motor carriers improve their identified safety deficiencies or face progressively more stringent sanctions up to a Federal out-of-service order and concurrent State registration suspensions. The PRISM program has proven to be an effective means of getting motor carriers to improve their compliance and performance deficiencies.

**Customer Service** - PRISM provides a one-stop shopping opportunity for carriers to obtain a USDOT Number, meet updating requirements, and obtain their IRP license plates simultaneously. Through the PRISM program, the state registration offices can issue these numbers for the federal government.

### ***How does PRISM affect IRP registration?***

IRP serves as the framework for the PRISM program. The USDOT number of the motor carrier responsible for the safety of every vehicle registered must be identified during the registration process as well as the USDOT Number of the registrant. Additionally, an updated MCS-150 form for each identified motor carrier responsible for safety on an IRP account and an updated MCS-150 form for the registrant is required unless the motor carrier and the registrant have each submitted one within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period or have updated the information directly on the FMCSA web page <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>.

In many of the IRP accounts, the registrant that maintains the IRP account and the motor carrier that is responsible for safety are the same. Table A outlines USDOT Number and MCS-150 update requirements associated with PRISM and IRP registration in these instances.

**Table A: IRP account registrant and motor carrier responsible for safety of the vehicles are the same.**

	<b>Registrant Level</b>	<b>Individual Vehicle Level</b>
<b>USDOT Number Requirement</b>	USDOT Number of the Registrant	same
<b>MCS-150 Requirement</b>	Updated MCS-150 for the IRP registrant required unless one has been submitted within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period.	No additional requirement
<b>Action</b>	Record USDOT Number in Section C of the IRP Schedule A and write 'same' in column 21 of the vehicle section of Schedule A.	

In some cases though, the IRP account registrant and the motor carrier responsible for the safety of individual vehicles on the account may be different. The following examples and Table B outline USDOT Number and MCS-150 update requirements associated with PRISM and IRP registration in common instances.

#### **Rental/leasing companies who register in the rental/leasing company name.**

Rental/leasing companies who register in their own name must provide the USDOT Numbers and copies of updated MCS-150 forms to the registration office for the rental/leasing company and also for all lessees who are responsible for safety for the vehicles. The USDOT Number for the rental/leasing company should be recorded in Section C of the IRP Schedule A and the appropriate USDOT number for the lessee's must be recorded in column 21. Column 22 must be recorded with an "n" if the terms of the lease cover the full registration year.

#### **Owner/Operators registering in their own name that lease to motor carriers**

Owner/operators who register in their own names must obtain a USDOT Number for themselves. This number is for registration purposes only and does not provide the owner/operator with his/her own operating authority. In addition, the owner/operator must provide the USDOT Number for the company to whom he/she leases. Updated copies of the MCS -150 must be submitted for the owner/operator and all

companies responsible for safety (the lessees). The MCS –150 forms for the companies must be completed by the companies. The owner/operator must record his/her USDOT Number in Section C of the IRP Schedule A. Column 21 should be completed with the USDOT Number of the motor carrier responsible for safety. Column 22 should indicate whether the term of the lease is as long as the registration year.

**Companies who use all leased vehicles registered in the name of the lessors.**

Companies who use all leased vehicles registered in the name of the lessors (rental/leasing or owner/operators) must provide the lessor with an updated copy of the MCS-150. The lessor will submit it to the state registration office in order to have the vehicle’s registration renewed.

**Table B: IRP account registrant and motor carrier responsible for safety of all or some of the vehicles at the time of registration are different.**

	<b>Registrant Level</b>	<b>Individual Vehicle Level</b>
<b>USDOT Number Requirement</b>	USDOT Number of the Registrant	Two General Situations Apply:  1. USDOT Number of the motor carrier responsible for safety if known and expected to stay the same for at least 30 days from the renewal. 2. USDOT Number of the Registrant as a default if the motor carrier responsible for safety is unknown, or expected to change within 30 days of renewal.
<b>MCS-150 Requirement</b>	Updated MCS-150 for the IRP registrant required unless one has been submitted within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period.	An Updated MCS-150 associated with each USDOT Number on the IRP account is required unless one has been submitted within 12 months prior to the first day of the renewal period.
<b>Action</b>	Record USDOT Number in Section C of the IRP Schedule A and the appropriate USDOT Number of the motor carrier responsible for safety in column 21 in the vehicle section. Indicate in column 22 if the lease is for the full registration year (Y/N).	

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***How does PRISM affect roadside inspections?***

Motor carriers in the PRISM MCSIP process are recommended for inspection at the roadside. Once a motor carrier improves its safety status sufficient to exit the MCSIP, it will no longer be recommended for inspection.