

# **Turn Signals**

The Latest News in Trucking Safety and Regulations

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***The American Trucking Associations and nine other major trucking groups have petitioned the Secretary of Transportation to withdraw CSA data from public view.*** It is no coincidence that this request comes on the heels of the departure of Anne Ferro from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. During her tenure as its chief, the agency instituted the CSA evaluation program which calculates monthly scores in seven areas, called Basics, for all motor carriers. The trucking organizations do not object to the program for DOT's internal use, but to the public's data access. They question the science of the scoring methodology which assigns "Alert" status to carriers whose scores exceed certain levels in each Basic. Research shows poor scores in three of the Basics do not correlate to future accidents. Shippers and brokers often shun trucking companies with CSA Alerts because they fear liability issues if the trucker has an accident. Insurance rates are also skyrocketing for motor carriers with poor CSA scores. While FMCSA has defended its program, no response has yet come from the DOT Secretary Anthony Fox.

***FMCSA is contemplating doing a study to see if driver pay methods are linked to safety on the highway.*** The trucking industry objects to the study's validity due to its proposal to online quiz 2,000 safety/operations managers and owner-operators. Motor carrier leaders also believe the agency should not be meddling with management-labor relations. Many safety advocacy groups have argued for such a study because they believe per-mile and revenue-percentage pay incentivize drivers to speed and break rules.

***The North America Council for Freight Efficiency released a study showing dramatic cost reductions for fleets instituting various technologies and practices.*** The ten large fleets studied have 41,000 trucks and 130,000 trailers, and represent 2.5% of North America's trucking vehicles. The average fuel savings per truck is estimated at \$7,200 annually. The most widespread practices were use of synthetic transmission oil and axle lube, reduction of empty miles, limiting speed, routing software, engine programming, minimizing fifth wheel height, and the installation of vehicle aerodynamic devices. Average payback on investments was three years.

***FMCSA is warning trucking companies that scammers continue new ways to get the carrier's banking account information.*** Now they're claiming to be a credit service like Equifax asking for the information in the guise of making the trucker eligible for pending government contracts. Clearly, never give out this data to unsolicited parties.

***On October 22<sup>nd</sup> FMCSA will release its proposal to increase minimum levels of liability insurance for motor carriers.*** Stay tuned for details in next month's issue.

***Did you know.....*** Reacting to the arrival of several infected patients in the USA, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has issued guidance on the proper transportation of Ebola-contaminated waste. Carriers handling these types of products refused to transport the Ebola material until the agency verified the procedures and rules.