

# VEHICLE CRASHES AND CSA

History tends to repeat itself. The more commercial motor vehicle (CMV) accidents you've had in the past, the more likely you are to have them in the future. That's why the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's CSA enforcement program tracks your *personal* accident history. Have too many accidents — whether they're your fault or not — and the agency may take action against you. To survive under CSA, you need to understand how your accident record will be graded and what you can do to stay below the radar.

## All Accidents Count!

Under CSA, your 3-year accident record is one of the 7 BASICs on which you and your employer will be judged. If you've been involved in a DOT-recordable crash of any type — *whether you were at fault or not* — your grade on the Crash Indicator BASIC will take a hit. The higher the "severity" of your crashes, the worse your grade will be:

No.	Description	Severity
1.	Injury or fatality with hazmat release	3
2.	Injuries or fatalities	2
3.	Tow-away with hazmat release	2
4.	Tow-away but no injuries or fatalities	1

The scoring system relies on DOT-recordable crashes only — those that result in one or more fatalities, injuries requiring immediate treatment away from the scene, or vehicles being towed away due to disabling damage.

## Keeping Your Score Low

Keeping your score low in the Crash Indicator BASIC comes down to avoiding accidents. Are you doing all you can to prevent crashes?

- **Eliminate preventable crashes.** Most drivers have non-preventable crashes at some point, but you need to eliminate the *preventable* ones so your crash rate is not higher than everyone else's.
- **Drive defensively!** Pay attention to what's happening around you at all times, in all directions, and signal your intentions to other drivers. Match your speed and space to the driving environment. Avoid in-cab distractions like cell phones. Prepare for the unexpected by learning emergency maneuvers such as evasive steering, skid control, off-road recovery, and emergency braking techniques. Use extreme caution and slow down when hazardous conditions exist.
- **Drive safely.** If you perform well on the other BASICs, your Crash Indicator BASIC score will follow suit. Being fully qualified to drive, making sure your vehicle is in safe working order, managing fatigue, securing your cargo, avoiding drugs and alcohol, and following the rules of the road all help prevent accidents.
- **Stay alert.** Get enough rest, avoid distractions, and pay attention to your surroundings. Maintain complete control of the vehicle at all times.
- **Check the report.** If you do have a crash, make sure the reporting officer filled out the report correctly, and challenge any bad crash data on your record.

## Vehicle Crashes Under CSA

- All reportable crashes count! Fault, chargeability, and preventability are not considered in the CSA scoring process.
- Your crashes are time weighted. Each year of age decreases the impact of a crash on your score, and crashes no longer count after 3 years.
- During a post-crash investigation, violations that resulted from the crash are not used in the CSA scoring system. However, violations that existed before the crash occurred may be factored into your BASIC scores.
- Follow your company's accident procedures after every crash!

  
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