



Inspection Bulletin

North American Standard Inspection Program

2022-03 – The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot Program

Created: Sept. 22, 2022

Summary

On July 26, 2022, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) began accepting applications from motor carriers to participate in its Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) Program. This inspection bulletin summarizes the program and provides information on enhancements the agency made to Query Central (QC) in support of this program. Specifically, enhancements were made to QC to allow roadside enforcement personnel to verify a carrier’s and driver’s participation in or removal from the pilot program. The pilot program is expected to run until July 2025.

Background

Section 23022 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), requires FMCSA to establish an apprenticeship pilot program that would allow drivers ages 18, 19 and 20 years old with an intrastate commercial driver’s license (CDL) to operate in interstate commerce under very specific conditions.

To meet this requirement, FMCSA established the SDAP Program. This three-year program, which is expected to conclude in July 2025, will allow these individuals to explore interstate trucking careers and help trucking companies hire and train new drivers through an apprenticeship pilot program.

How to Verify a Motor Carrier or Apprentice Driver is Participating in the SDAP Program

Roadside inspectors will begin seeing SDAP Program participants operating in interstate commerce during the last quarter of calendar year 2022. Each carrier and apprentice driver will be provided an approval letter from the FMCSA. The approval letters must always be kept in the cab or on the driver’s person while operating in interstate commerce. Roadside personnel will be given the tools to verify a motor carrier’s or driver’s participation in the pilot program by querying a carrier’s USDOT number or a driver’s license number in QC.

Motor Carrier Verification

To determine if a motor carrier is participating in the SDAP Program, roadside inspectors should enter the motor carrier’s USDOT number.



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Query Central

Driver Vehicle **Carrier**

QUICK SEARCH

Carrier Search:

USDOT#: Search

Vehicle Search (VIN -or- Plate/State):

VIN#: Search

Plate: State: << Select >>

Carrier Search Alert Message

If a motor carrier is participating in the SDAP Program, the following message will appear after you have entered the company’s USDOT number:

ALERT: The carrier you have queried is participating in the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) Program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the [Apprenticeship Program](#).

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Query Central

CARRIER SUMMARY

Driver Vehicle Carrier Help Home

Carrier Summary Carrier Detail Violation History No Past Inspections PRISM Summary Report **Apprenticeship Program**

ALERT: The carrier you have queried is participating in the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the [Apprenticeship Program](#).

Motor Carrier Identification & Safety Data

Please Note: You can now access L&I detail by clicking on the MC/MX number(s).

Legal Name:	<input type="text"/>	USDOT#:	<input type="text"/>
DBA Name:	<input type="text"/>	MC/MX#:	<input type="text"/>
Physical Address:	<input type="text"/>	Phone#:	(555)555-5555
Country of Domicile:	<input type="text"/>	Fax#:	(555)555-5555
Mailing Address:	<input type="text"/>	Status of USDOT #:	ACTIVE
		Entity:	CARRIER

Inspection Value: 24 - PASS
Inspection Value is based on Intrastate Safety data.

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Searching a motor carrier’s USDOT number will also provide the roadside inspector a list of apprentices and experienced drivers employed by the motor carrier that are approved to participate in the pilot program. To access this information, the roadside inspector should click on “Apprenticeship Program,” as highlighted on the previous page. In addition, roadside inspectors can click on the “Apprentice Program” tab to obtain the same list. A screenshot of the information that is displayed is shown below.

The screenshot displays the 'SAFE DRIVER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM' interface. At the top, it shows the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Query Central logo and navigation tabs for Driver, Vehicle, and Carrier. The main content area is titled 'Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot Program' and includes a form for Carrier Name, DBA Name, USDOT#, and Participation Status (set to 'Removed'). Below this are two tables: 'List of Approved Apprentice Drivers' and 'List of Approved Experienced Drivers'. Both tables show columns for Driver's Name, DOB, CDL Number, License State, Participation Status, and Experienced Driver Required in Passenger Seat?.

Driver's Name	DOB	CDL Number	License State	Participation Status	Experienced Driver Required in Passenger Seat?
			NY	Active	Yes
			NY	Active	Yes
			NY	Active	No
			NY	Removed	No
			NY	Removed	No
			NY	Removed	No
			NY	Removed	No

Driver's Name	DOB	CDL Number	License State	Participation Status
			NY	Active
			NY	Removed
			NY	Removed
			NY	Removed

Carrier Removed from the Program

If a motor carrier has been removed from the SDAP Program, the following message will appear after you have entered the company’s USDOT number:

ALERT: The carrier you have queried has been removed from Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) Program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the [Apprenticeship Program](#).

The screenshot displays the 'CARRIER SUMMARY' interface. At the top, it shows the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Query Central logo and navigation tabs for Driver, Vehicle, and Carrier. The main content area features a red alert box with the text: 'ALERT: The carrier you have queried has been removed from the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the [Apprenticeship Program](#).' Below the alert is the 'Motor Carrier Identification & Safety Data' section, which includes a note: 'Please Note: You can now access L&I detail by clicking on the MC/MX number(s)'. This section contains a table with fields for Legal Name, DBA Name, Physical Address, Country of Domicile, Mailing Address, USDOT#, MC/MX#, Phone#, Fax#, Status of USDOT #, and Entity. The 'Inspection Value' is displayed as '22 - PASS' with a note that it is based on safety data. A final alert box at the bottom states: 'ALERT: This carrier is a new entrant. An inspection is requested.'

Motor Carrier Identification & Safety Data	
Legal Name:	USDOT#:
DBA Name:	MC/MX#:
Physical Address:	Phone#: (555)555-5555
Country of Domicile:	Fax#: (555)555-5555
Mailing Address:	Status of USDOT #: ACTIVE
	Entity: CARRIER

Inspection Value: 22 - PASS
Inspection Value is based on Safety data.

ALERT: This carrier is a new entrant. An inspection is requested.

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Apprentice Verification

As noted, while participating in the SDAP Program, apprentices will be required to keep an approval letter in the cab or on their person while operating in interstate commerce. As required by BIL, an apprentice must complete a 400-hour probationary period and demonstrate competency in operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV).

Apprentices driving during the 400-hour probationary period **must** have an experienced driver in the passenger seat at all times. Those who have successfully completed the 400-hour probationary period **are not required** to have an experienced driver in the passenger seat or in the vehicle. QC will display whether an apprentice must have an experienced driver in the passenger seat at the time.

To determine if a driver is participating in the SDAP Program, roadside inspectors should enter the driver’s name and CDL number as shown below.

If a driver is participating in the SDAP Program, the following message will appear after you have entered the driver’s license number when you do a “Driver Search.”

ALERT: The driver you have queried is participating in the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) Program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the [Apprenticeship Program](#).

To verify, click on the “Apprenticeship Program” link, as highlighted in the screenshot below. Once you click on the link, the system will provide the list of the motor carrier’s apprentices and experienced drivers participating in the program, as shown.

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If a driver has been removed from the SDAP Program, the following message will appear after you have entered the driver’s license number when you do a “Driver Search.”

ALERT: The driver you have queried has been removed from the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) Program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the [Apprentice Program](#).

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Query Central		DRIVER SUMMARY
Driver	Vehicle	Help Home
<p>ALERT: The driver you have queried has been removed from the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the Apprenticeship Program.</p>		
Driver Summary Information		
CDL Number:		CDL State: NY
Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse Status		
Not prohibited		
This Driver has No Past Inspections		

Qualification Criteria for Participating in SDAP

To ensure adequate safety measures are in place throughout the pilot program, FMCSA identified certain qualifications that motor carriers, experienced drivers and apprentice drivers must meet to be accepted into the program.

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Query Central		DRIVER SUMMARY
Driver	Vehicle	Carrier
<p>ALERT: The driver you have queried is participating in the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot (SDAP) program. If inspected, you must check the carrier and driver to verify if they are eligible to participate in the program. See the Apprenticeship Program.</p>		
Driver Identification		License Summary
Driver Name:		Commercial Status: Licensed
Address:		Class: B
CDL#:	SSN:	Non-Commercial Status: Licensed
St/Prov: NY	DOB:	Class: B
		Expires: 1/29/2030
		Restrictions:
		Endorsements: Passenger, School and Passenger
		Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse Status
		Not prohibited
Permits		
Class	Issue Date	Expiration Date
B		
Status		
Eligible		
Permit Restrictions		
Class	Restriction	
B	Other	
Permit Endorsements		
Class	Endorsement	
B	Passenger	
B	School and Passenger	
Medical Certification		
Issue Date	Expiration Date	SPE Issue
SPE Expiration	Med WE Issue	Med WE Expiration
Status Code	Self Certification	
Certified	Non-excepted Interstate	

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Any motor carrier that fails to maintain qualification requirements, fails to comply with participation requirements or is determined to pose a safety risk may be removed from the program at FMCSA’s discretion. Additionally, experienced drivers may be removed in the event of a preventable accident or a pointed moving violation, and apprentices may be removed from the program if FMCSA determines they pose a safety risk.

What are the motor carrier participation standards?

To be accepted into the SDAP Program, a motor carrier must meet the following minimum safety criteria:

- Must have proper registration and operating authority, if required
- Must have at least the minimum levels of financial responsibility required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs)
- Must not be a high- or moderate-risk carrier
- Must not have a conditional or unsatisfactory safety rating
- Must not have any open enforcement actions in the previous six years
- Must not have a crash rate above the national average
- Must not have a driver OOS rate above the 2021 national average
- Must not have a vehicle OOS rate above the 2021 national average

In addition, a motor carrier must have a registered apprenticeship (RA) program through the U.S. Department of Labor and must provide proof of insurance for under-21 drivers prior to being issued an exemption from FMCSA for the age requirements found in Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 391.11(b)(1).

A motor carrier will be removed or suspended from the program if the carrier:

- Does not have proper registration and operating authority
- Does not have the minimum levels of financial responsibility
- Is prioritized as a high risk
- Is prioritized as a moderate risk for two consecutive months
- Receives a conditional or unsatisfactory safety rating
- Is the subject of an open federal enforcement action pending review (e.g., imminent hazard, OOS, patterns of safety violations); enforcement actions resulting in civil penalties will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis
- Has a crash rate above the national average for three consecutive months
- Has a driver OOS rate above the national average for three consecutive months
- Has a vehicle OOS rate above the national average for three consecutive months
- Fails to report required monthly data
- Poses a safety risk, which is determined at the FMCSA’s discretion

Experienced Driver Qualification Requirements

Experienced drivers must meet the following requirements to be accepted as a valid experienced driver:

- Must be at least 26 years of age
- Must have held a CDL for two years prior to serving as an experienced driver
- In the prior two years has not had:
 - Any preventable crashes reportable to the U.S. DOT
 - Any pointed moving violations
- Must have at least five years’ experience driving a CMV in interstate commerce

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What are the apprentice driver participation standards?

For the two-year period preceding the date of hire, an apprentice driver may not have:

- Had more than one license (except for a military license)
- Had their license suspended, revoked, cancelled or disqualified for a violation related to 49 CFR 383.51 in any state
- Had any conviction for a violation of military, state or local law relating to motor vehicle traffic control (other than a parking violation) arising in connection with any traffic crash and have no record of a crash in which they were at fault
- Been convicted of any violations described below in any type of motor vehicle:
 - operating under the influence of alcohol as prescribed by state law
 - operating under the influence of a controlled substance
 - refusing to take an alcohol test as required by a state under its implied consent laws or regulations as defined in 49 CFR 383.72
 - leaving the scene of a crash
 - using a vehicle to commit a felony
- Been convicted of any violations described below while operating a CMV:
 - operating with an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater
 - driving while their CDL is revoked, suspended or cancelled, or while they are disqualified from operating a CMV
 - causing a fatality through negligent operation (including motor vehicle manslaughter, homicide by motor vehicle or negligent homicide)
- Been convicted more than once for any of the violations described below:
 - driving any type of motor vehicle recklessly, as defined by state or local law or regulation (including offenses of driving a motor vehicle in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property)
 - driving a CMV without the required CDL
 - violating a state or local law or ordinance on motor vehicle traffic control prohibiting texting while driving
 - violating a state or local law or ordinance on motor vehicle traffic control restricting or prohibiting the use of a hand-held mobile device while driving

A driver will be disqualified or removed if at any time while in the SDAP Program, the driver is disqualified for a major offense, serious traffic violations, railroad-highway grade crossing or violation of an out-of-service order, as outlined in section 383.51 of the FMCSRs.

NOTE: FMCSA reserves the right to not accept or remove from the SDAP Program a motor carrier or driver who poses a safety risk.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Are apprentice drivers restricted from transporting certain cargo or operating certain vehicles?

Yes. While participating in the pilot program, apprentice drivers may not transport passengers or hazardous materials (HM); may not operate special configuration vehicles, to include doubles, triples and cargo tanks; and may not operate vehicles with a gross combined vehicle weight rating (GCVWR) greater than 80,000 lbs.

Are there any restrictions for an apprentice under the SDAP Program for operating a CMV with non-placardable amounts of HM?

No. Apprentice drivers can operate a CMV with non-placardable amounts of HM.

If an apprentice driver is involved in a crash, are they automatically removed?

FMCSA is fully committed to evaluating the circumstances in any crash to ensure all levels of safety are met. FMCSA has the authority to remove a motor carrier or an apprentice from the program or terminate the program at any time it has evidence it is compromising safety on our highways.

How many motor carriers and drivers are expected to participate in the pilot program?

FMCSA expects to have approximately 1,000 motor carriers participate in the program. BIL restricts the number of apprentices to no more than 3,000 apprentice drivers at any time in the pilot program.

Will the approved motor carrier’s name be available to the public?

Once a motor carrier is approved and attends the webinars, the motor carrier’s name will be posted on FMCSA’s website at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/SDAPProgramJobs>.

What should I do if a motor carrier or under-21 driver is discovered operating in interstate commerce and is not a part of the pilot program?

The inspector should ensure that the motor carrier or driver is not operating under a different exemption (e.g., custom harvester). If a motor carrier or driver is found to be operating in interstate commerce and is not exempt, the inspector should follow the procedures established in his or her state (e.g., cite the driver, declare the driver out of service) to enforce the regulations.

These procedures should also be followed if there are other issues discovered at the roadside. Examples include the following:

- An apprentice driver is operating under a different approved motor carrier
- An apprentice driver is operating under a motor carrier that has not been approved to participate under the SDAP Program
- An apprentice driver under probationary period one or two is driving without an experienced driver in the passenger seat
- An apprentice driver has been removed from the program

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What should I do if a motor carrier or driver has an SDAP Program approval letter, but QC does not have the carrier or driver’s information listed?

The information in QC is real time; however, it may take FMCSA up to four hours to add or delete motor carriers or drivers to or from the list. If you are unable to verify the information, we recommend that you contact one of the following individuals to confirm that a motor carrier or driver is part of the SDAP Program.

M. Davis – info@mdavisco.com

Francisco Soto – francisco.soto@dot.gov (202-366-6511)

Nicole Michel – nicole.michel@dot.gov (202-366-4354)

SDAP Program Email – safedriver@dot.gov

What if I need additional information about the SDAP Program?

For additional information about the SDAP Program, visit www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safedriver or send an email to the SDAP Program email at safedriver@dot.gov.