



Module 1: Compliance Foundations

Understanding the Regulatory Framework That Governs Motor Carriers

Module 1 establishes the regulatory foundation every motor carrier safety and compliance professional must understand to effectively manage risk, prepare for audits, and maintain operational control.

This course provides a structured, real-world overview of the federal and workplace safety regulations that govern commercial motor carriers, with emphasis on how inspectors and auditors evaluate compliance in practice—not theory.

Course Overview

Compliance Foundations is designed to eliminate one of the most common weaknesses in fleet safety programs: fragmented understanding of how regulations work together during enforcement and audits.

Participants will learn how requirements from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and OSHA intersect across driver qualification, hours of service, drug and alcohol testing, vehicle maintenance, and recordkeeping.

Rather than teaching regulations in isolation, this course walks participants through how carriers are actually reviewed, using a structured mock DOT audit framework that mirrors real enforcement activity. This module serves as the entry point for the PMT Academy and establishes the baseline knowledge required for all subsequent modules.

Who Should Attend

- Safety Managers and Directors
- Fleet and Operations Managers
- Human Resources and Risk Management Professionals
- Company Owners and Executives
- Individuals new to safety or compliance roles
- Professionals seeking a stronger audit-ready foundation

No prior formal compliance training is required.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Explain the roles of Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration in transportation safety
- Demonstrate how to properly maintain driver qualification files and medical certification records
- Apply Hours of Service rules and ELD requirements to real operational scenarios
- Identify the most common compliance risks cited during inspections and audits
- Prepare documentation and systems to withstand a DOT compliance review



Topics Covered

- Regulatory framework overview (DOT, FMCSA, OSHA)
- Driver Qualification (DQ) file requirements and common deficiencies
- Medical certification and CDL documentation
- Hours of Service rules, ELD compliance, and telematics usage
- Recordkeeping and document retention requirements
- Compliance audits, investigations, and enforcement actions

Focus Areas: What Inspectors Look at Most

This module emphasizes the areas that most frequently determine audit outcomes, including:

- Driver Qualification (DQ) files
- Hours of Service (HOS) compliance and ELD records
- Drug & Alcohol Testing and Clearinghouse compliance
- Vehicle maintenance and inspection records (49 CFR Part 396)
- Accident register requirements (49 CFR §390.15)
- Hazardous Materials compliance, when applicable (49 CFR Parts 171–180)

Participants are introduced to a DOT Compliance Review / Mock Audit Checklist, which will be revisited throughout the Academy, with applicable sections emphasized at the conclusion of each module.

Drug & Alcohol Testing & Clearinghouse Compliance (Integrated Section)

This module includes a focused introduction to federal controlled substances and alcohol testing requirements under 49 CFR Parts 382 and 40, along with FMCSA Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse obligations.

Participants will learn:

- Required elements of a compliant drug & alcohol policy
- Types of testing: pre-employment, random, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, return-to-duty, and follow-up
- Random testing pool management and FMCSA testing rate requirements
- Supervisor reasonable suspicion training requirements
- Clearinghouse pre-employment and annual query obligations
- Reporting responsibilities and common enforcement failures
- How substance violations affect driver qualification and company liability

Learning Activities

- **Mock DOT Audit:** Walk-through of a structured compliance review
 - **Hands-On File Review:** Evaluate sample driver qualification files for missing or incorrect documentation
 - **Case Studies:** Identify compliance breakdowns and enforcement exposure
 - **Clearinghouse Exercise:** Practice completing and documenting required queries
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Required Resources & References

- FMCSA Safety Planner (FMCSA.gov)
- OSHA General Industry Standards (29 CFR Part 1910)
- 49 CFR Part 391 – Driver Qualifications
- 49 CFR Part 395 – Hours of Service
- 49 CFR Part 382 & Part 40 – Drug & Alcohol Testing
- FMCSA Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse User Guide

Assessment & Evaluation

- Knowledge check quiz on compliance fundamentals
- Hands-on review of a sample driver file
- Participation in a mock DOT audit simulation
- Applied discussion focused on inspector and auditor priorities

Course Format

- Instructor-led, in-person classroom training
- Facilitated discussion and applied scenarios

Duration: 1 Day (8 Hours)

Certificate: Certificate of Completion

Why This Module Matters

Most serious compliance failures do not result from intentional violations—they result from misunderstanding how inspectors evaluate systems.

Module 1 gives participants the clarity, structure, and confidence needed to manage compliance proactively instead of reacting after enforcement action occurs.