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Warning devices

Responding to an accident or breakdown



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Don't 'accident'ally forget these tips!

Getting involved in an accident is majorly stressful, no matter how experienced your driver is. To help them feel prepared and to make things easier when they're experiencing the unexpected, remind your drivers to keep a handy accident report kit on them at all times.

A helpful accident kit should include:

- A high-visibility vest,
- A written report form to help document the accident,
- A diagram template for completing a simple drawing of the accident scene,
- Witness cards,
- Pens/pencils, and
- A camera.



Vehicle breakdowns

In addition, provide your drivers with tips on what to do in the event of a breakdown so they don't feel stranded and confused.

When a vehicle breaks down, drivers must:

- Safely stop and secure the vehicle,
- Turn on the vehicle's four-way flashers, and
- Set out emergency warning devices.

After that, the driver must also contact the motor carrier and provide:

- The location of the breakdown; and
- A description of what happened, including:
 - Odd smells,
 - Vehicle handling issues, and
 - Any other information that may be important to the repair team. ♦



Lucero Truskowski

Lucero Truskowski joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. as an Associate Editor in 2022. Lucero edits, writes, and researches content on a variety of topics, including transportation, human resources, and driver training. She holds a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — WARNING DEVICES

Warning devices: Responding to an accident or breakdown

Even the safest driver operating under the best conditions can encounter an accident or breakdown on the road. What's important is that your drivers know what to do and what to expect to make sure they can safely and legally deal with the situation.

TIP: Show your drivers examples of the type(s) of warning device(s) carried on your vehicles. Make sure they know where devices are stored in the event of an accident or breakdown.

Where do warning devices go?

When a vehicle is stopped on the traveled portion or shoulder of the highway, the driver must immediately activate the vehicle's four-way flashers. Drivers must also set out warning devices as soon as possible. The regulations require they be set out within 10 minutes of stopping.

When placing the devices, the driver should hold them in front of themselves to increase visibility to traffic while wearing a high-visibility vest. Remind drivers to stay alert to other drivers who may not see them on the road.

The placement of devices will vary depending on where the vehicle is stopped:



Two-lane road

- The first device should be placed on the traffic side of the vehicle 10 feet (4 paces) from the front or rear, depending on traffic direction.
- The second device should be placed 100 feet (40 paces) behind the vehicle.

- The third device should be placed 100 feet (40 paces) ahead of the vehicle on the shoulder or in the lane where the vehicle is stopped.

One-way or divided highway

- Devices should be placed 10, 100, and 200 feet from the rear of the vehicle, toward approaching traffic.

Within 500 feet of a hill, curve, or obstruction

- A device should be placed 100–500 feet from the vehicle in the direction of the obstruction.
- The other two devices should be placed according to the rules for two-lane or divided highways, whichever best applies.

TIP: Drivers are often surprised to see how far 100 feet is when illustrated by a vehicle and warning devices. Demonstrate correct placement by taking your drivers outside to see the correct setup. Set devices in the correct spots around one of your vehicles that's parked on site.

Don't forget the requirements

Section 393.95 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) requires a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) to carry:

- Three bidirectional emergency reflective triangles, or
- At least six fusees capable of burning for 30 minutes.

Other warning devices may be used in addition to the required warning devices, provided the alternative warning devices don't decrease the effectiveness of the required warning devices.

Fusees or any other signal produced by a flame aren't allowed on:

- Any vehicle carrying Division 1.1, 1.2, or 1.3 (explosives);
- Any cargo tank motor vehicle used for the transportation of Division 2.1 (flammable gas) or Class 3 (flammable liquid) hazardous materials whether loaded or empty; or
- Any CMV using compressed gas as a motor fuel. ♦

TIP: Select a video to help introduce this topic, making sure you consider your drivers' experience and the types of emergency situations they may deal with while on the job.



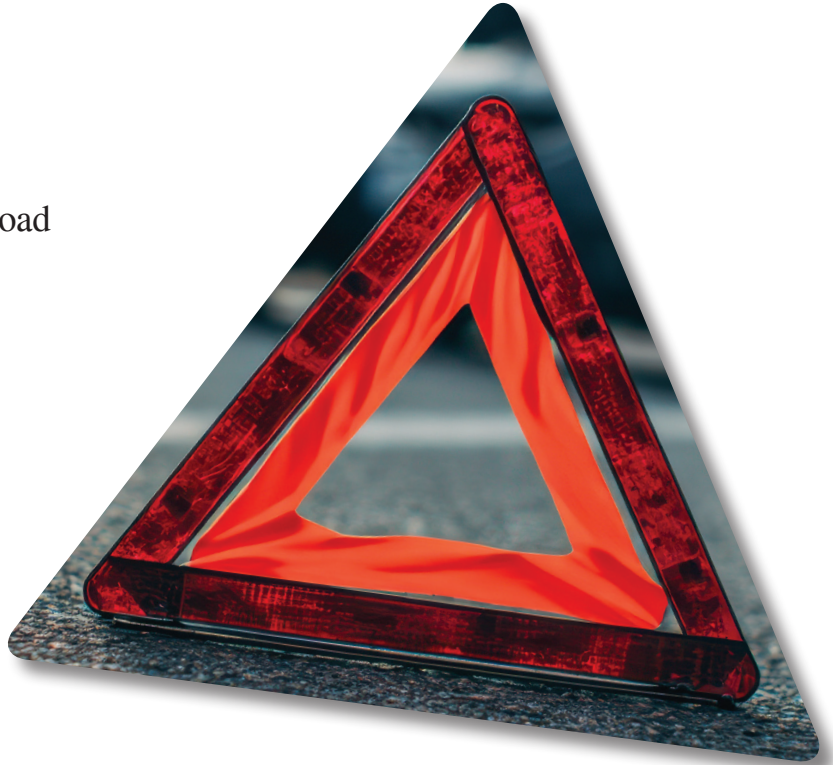
TRAINING HANDOUT — WARNING DEVICES

Accident alert!

When dealing with law enforcement and other drivers involved in the accident, be polite and respectful, keeping in mind that anything said at the accident scene could be used against you and/or your motor carrier.

When involved in an accident:

- Stop immediately.
- Pull the vehicle as far off the road as possible.
- Turn on the vehicle's four-way flashers and set out warning devices.
- Notify law enforcement.
- Check for injuries.
- Document the accident, including:
 - Time and location;
 - Description of damage;
 - Names, addresses, and insurance information of those involved;
 - Type, make, model, and license numbers of vehicles involved; and
 - Name(s) and department(s) of the investigating officer(s).
- Notify the motor carrier.
- Complete a preliminary report.
- Never discuss specific details with others, volunteer unnecessary information, or admit fault. You shouldn't try to settle anything at the scene.



Always honestly answer any questions asked by law enforcement. You should be factual but never speculate or guess as to what may have caused the accident or who's at fault. ♦



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — WARNING DEVICES

- 1. You should stop immediately when involved in an accident.**
 - A. True
 - B. False

- 2. The regulations require a CMV to carry at least:**
 - A. Three bidirectional emergency reflective triangles
 - B. Six fusees that can burn for 30 minutes
 - C. Five traffic cones
 - D. Either A or B

- 3. Warning device placement varies based on where the vehicle is stopped.**
 - A. True
 - B. False

- 4. When asked questions by law enforcement after an accident, the driver should:**
 - A. Try to make themselves look good
 - B. Make an educated guess as to who caused the accident
 - C. Be factual and answer honestly
 - D. Volunteer as much information as possible

- 5. When documenting the accident, it's important to include the time and location, as well as a description of the damage.**
 - A. True
 - B. False ♦

NAME: _____ DATE: _____



FMCSA updates the DataQs data-correction system

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has announced updates to its DataQs program to improve turnaround times for drivers and motor carriers awaiting corrections to their safety records.

States will need to meet strict deadlines and follow a three-step independent review process when handling requests to fix data on crashes, inspections, and violations.

DataQs background

DataQs is an online system that allows motor carriers, drivers, and other industry personnel to view and track FMCSA crash and inspection data. Interested parties use the system — available at dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov — to submit a “Request for Data Review” (RDR) when they believe data may be incomplete or incorrect.

In 2024, DataQs processed more than 71,000 requests, including at least 8,300 related to crash data. The FMCSA says the revisions announced April 15, 2026, will establish a more streamlined framework for handling RDRs, specifically for states receiving Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) funding from FMCSA. The states will need to:

- Designate points of contact for crash and inspection RDRs.
- Review requests submitted within 3 years of an inspection and within 5 years of a crash.
- Include detailed explanations of their decisions, including evidence reviewed and next steps in the review process, for all decisions, especially those where no data correction is made.
- Participate in FMCSA program reviews and follow established policies, including those related to adjudicated citations.

Three-stage review

States will also need to implement a multi-stage, independent review structure that includes:

- **Initial review within 21 days** to ensure decisions aren’t made solely by the issuing officer when denying a correction;
- **Reconsideration within 21 days** conducted by independent subject matter experts not involved in the initial decision; and
- **Final review completed within 45 days** by a senior decision-maker or independent panel, helping to remove bias from the determination.

The FMCSA is requiring states to submit DataQs Implementation Plans detailing how they’ll meet the new requirements, address backlogs, and prevent future delays. The approved plans will be publicly available through the DataQs system.

States will need to begin submitting draft plans in June 2026 and implement them before the end of September.

Find more information at <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2026-07429.pdf> ♦



UCR fees to see a 20 percent increase

The Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) Board of Directors proposed a fee increase of 20 percent for the 2027 registration year and for the years following.

Under this proposal, increased fees would land between \$9–\$9,329 per entity depending on the tax bracket. UCR fees must be paid by motor carriers, motor private carriers of property, brokers, freight forwarders, and leasing companies.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) notes in its proposal to adopt this fee increase

that, despite the increased costs, the fees for registration year 2027 would still be less than they were from 2019–2022. Collections are expected to begin October 2026.

Background

No fee increases were proposed for the 2026 registration year, but on September 18, 2025, the UCR Board of Directors recommended a fee increase for 2027 that averages out to about 20 percent across all brackets.

Supporting documents were submitted, in addition to an explanation of the basis for the recommendation and proposed procedures. There's also an explanation of the methodology used to calculate the fee to allow the public to properly analyze the data and make comments.

The purpose of the fee increase is to cover a projected shortfall of nearly \$22 million in required funding. ♦



Answers to quiz on page 5:

1.) **A** 2.) **D** 3.) **A** 4.) **C** 5.) **A** ♦



Next Month's Topic: Back Safety/Safe Lifting Practices

Back problems are a common cause of lost work time for the professional driver. The nature of the job, including prolonged periods of sitting behind the wheel and lifting heavy objects, can contribute to back pain. Many of these problems can be prevented by practicing proper lifting techniques and engaging in a healthy lifestyle. ♦



Expert Help: Question of the Month

Question: Are three emergency triangles required to be in both non-CDL and CDL vehicles? Also, what are the regulation and proper set-up requirements?

Answer: Yes, drivers of commercial motor vehicles must carry emergency warning devices, typically reflective triangles. This is required under 49 CFR 393.95(f) and it applies to all "commercial motor vehicles" as defined in 49 CFR 390.5, whether a CDL is required or not.

Note that these same vehicles, when operating in interstate commerce, are subject to most other requirements found in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, including daily and annual inspections, markings, hours of service, cargo securement, driver qualification, and so on.

Placement of warning devices is regulated under section 392.22. ♦



Expert Help

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