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FMCSA Company Snapshot for Trucking Target Screens

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Executive Summary

A **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Company Snapshot** is a free, one-carrier-at-a-time public record reached through the Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (SAFER) system. It can be searched by **USDOT number**, **MC/MX number**, or company name, and it displays identification, size, cargo, inspection, out-of-service, crash, and safety-rating information. For a private equity origination analyst, its best first use is an identity and scope check: determine whether a candidate name points to the intended regulated carrier, then decide which fields merit follow-up. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Start with the **legal name, doing-business-as (DBA) name, address, phone, USDOT number, and authority identifier**. A USDOT number identifies an operation; an MC, FF, or MX number describes operating authority and the types of work permitted. A brand match alone is weak evidence of legal identity. Operating authority is also separate from ownership, financial condition, and the existence of an active fleet. As of **October 3, 2026**, current registration verification needs particular care: FMCSA says its older Licensing and Insurance system is now for historical records, while filings made in **Motus** do not appear there. FMCSA directs public users to search Motus by USDOT number, legal name, or DBA. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov) (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Read **power units** and **drivers** as reported regulatory fields. The power-unit definition includes vehicles owned, term leased, or trip leased; it is therefore not a count of owned assets. Snapshot inspection and crash counts cover the preceding **24 months** as of the latest weekly calculation. General Snapshot data update daily, but those activity counts update weekly. Crash involvement does not by itself establish responsibility, and an **unrated** carrier simply has no FMCSA safety rating assigned. These distinctions rule out using the Snapshot to infer current revenue, utilization, enterprise value, or a definitive safety judgment. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov) (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

FMCSA's Pocket Guide reported **787,189 active carriers with USDOT numbers** in its **December 29, 2023** census, a historical population count rather than a target-fleet estimate. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov) The recommended screen has **four outcomes**: pass for further research when identity and operating scope align; review when a field is plausible but uncorroborated; stale or conflicting when dates and records disagree; and excluded only when a mandate criterion is clearly unsupported after checking the relevant current source.

Retain the captured page, its underlying as-of date, the query used, and the reason for the decision. The field dictionary and worksheet below turn the public record into a reproducible triage step rather than an automatic quality score. (dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Introduction and Background

Trucking and moving-services target lists commonly begin with a trade name, a website, or a commercial database record. The Company Snapshot answers a narrower question: what FMCSA's public carrier systems presently display for a specific regulated record. SAFER says its information comes from existing government motor-carrier safety databases, and its free lookup is performed one carrier at a time. The record is therefore useful for **identity resolution and first-pass operating context**, provided the analyst preserves its date and treats individual fields according to how they were collected.

A screen should begin with the intended acquisition mandate. For interstate for-hire property carriers, check relevant authority for regulated commodities outside applicable exemptions. Before excluding a target for absent authority, check whether it exclusively hauls exempt commodities or operates exclusively within a federally designated commercial zone exempt from interstate authority rules. (FMCSA authority requirements) If it covers brokers, private fleets, or intrastate moving businesses, the same Snapshot labels must be read differently. FMCSA defines a motor carrier by operation of commercial motor vehicles and a broker by arranging transportation; a property broker does not take possession of freight. Private carriers transporting their own cargo can be outside the interstate operating-authority requirement. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

The Snapshot is also only one layer of a larger evidence chain. A state registry can establish a state entity identifier and status, while FMCSA registration systems establish federal operating identity and scope. Public filings may help identify a parent when one exists. Neither a federal authority number nor an asset count proves the cap table or the target's economics. A sensible analyst writes down the proposed match, tests it against another source, and leaves disagreements visible. (www.sos.ca.gov) (www.sec.gov)

This report uses **October 3, 2026** as its decision date. That matters because FMCSA's **2026 Motus transition** changed where current registration should be checked and temporarily altered the consequences of certain late biennial updates. Older guidance still visible on FMCSA pages may point to the historical Licensing and Insurance search. The later transition notice should govern a present-day screen. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

What the Company Snapshot Identifies

USDOT number, authority number, and business role

A **USDOT number** is FMCSA's identifier for an employer's or person's motor-carrier operations. An **MC, FF, or MX number** refers to an operating-authority docket. FMCSA says authority dictates the type of operation and cargo a company may carry, and a business may need more than one authority. For matching, record both the USDOT number and every displayed authority number rather than collapsing them into a single company key. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

The distinction matters in acquisitions. FMCSA says a USDOT number is assigned to one person and is not transferable to a separate legal person. The same corporation or partnership may, however, keep its number after some changes in officials or address. A name change with the same number can therefore be continuity, while a similarly named new record can be a different legal person. The analyst should resolve this through the registration history and the jurisdiction's entity record, not through string similarity alone. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov) (www.sos.ca.gov)

The Snapshot search accepts DOT number, MC/MX number, or name. An FMCSA operating-authority detail also lists legal and DBA names, phone, and addresses, which can be compared field by field. (portal.fmcsa.dot.gov) Search by an identifier when one is known; if only a name is available, search variants and inspect every plausible hit. Capture the **legal name** and **DBA** separately. SAFER defines the legal-name field as the company's legal name and describes the DBA as a possible trade name. A moving brand might be a DBA of a carrier, a broker, a distinct sister company, or simply a stale web label. The Snapshot alone cannot choose among those explanations. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Status is scoped to a type of operation

An **active USDOT record** is not the same as active interstate for-hire authority. SAFER explains that a record may have an active USDOT number while having no such authority. Its **NOT AUTHORIZED** label applies to interstate for-hire operations; SAFER expressly says it does not apply to private or intrastate operations. Screen the status against the precise mandate before assigning an exclusion. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

For current registration, use FMCSA's **Motus** search. FMCSA's 2026 notice tells the public to search by USDOT number, legal name, or DBA. The older Licensing and Insurance search accepts legal name, DBA, and state, but the system remains useful as historical context only. (li-public.fmcsa.dot.gov) Its own search interface is not evidence that Motus filings appear there. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov) FMCSA says Motus filings are not reflected in that historical system. A discrepancy between a historical L&I page and current Motus data is a dated-source conflict to preserve, not a reason to silently pick the older result. (www.govinfo.gov)

A further temporal complication is the biennial update. The standing rule calls for updates every **24 months**, even if information has not changed. (www.ecfr.gov) During the Motus transition, FMCSA temporarily suspended enforcement and USDOT inactivation for registrants whose update was due on or after **June 1, 2026**. For an October 2026 screen, an apparently late update in that cohort requires a dated review; lateness alone should not be translated into a regulatory status claim. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

How to Read Size and Safety Fields

Table 1 is a field dictionary for the initial carrier screen. The **supported inference** column is deliberately modest: it states what the displayed field can establish before documents are requested from a target.

Source field	Date or window	Supported inference	Do not infer	Corroboration and refresh
USDOT, legal name, DBA	Snapshot as-of date	A particular FMCSA record carries these identifiers and names.	Common ownership, website control, or legal succession.	Compare Motus and the relevant state entity record; save each query. (www.sos.ca.gov)

Source field	Date or window	Supported inference	Do not infer	Corroboration and refresh
Operating authority/status	Current Motus record, with historical L&I separately dated	Scope of federally registered operations. (www.govinfo.gov)	Active assets, ownership, or authorization for a different service.	Recheck Motus immediately before a mandate decision.
Power units	Registration data as displayed	Reported operating scale including owned and leased units. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)	Owned trucks, usable capacity today, or revenue.	Request fleet schedule, lease detail, and current insurance documents.
Drivers	Registration data as displayed	Reported driver count under FMCSA's field definition. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)	Employee headcount, payroll, or a driver-to-truck productivity ratio.	Request current roster and reconcile status with management materials.
Inspections and out-of-service (OOS)	Prior 24 months; counts refresh weekly	Recorded roadside activity and inspections with one or more OOS findings. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)	A complete audit of each unit or a current safety grade.	Compare a dated SMS view and request inspection detail where material. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)
Crashes	Prior 24 months; counts refresh weekly	Reportable crash involvement appearing in the record. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)	Fault, preventability, or a company-specific loss rate.	Review scope and any applicable DataQs corrections. (dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov)
Safety rating	Rating shown at lookup	The currently displayed FMCSA-assigned rating, if any. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)	That unrated means safe or unsafe; that an older rating is a current audit.	Record rating date and obtain specialist review if the mandate requires it.

The table is a **claim-control device**. It places the same number into a dated field, a narrow inference, and a specific next source. The power-unit row is particularly important: SAFER's definition explicitly includes owned, term-leased, and trip-leased vehicles. A purchaser cannot turn it into an owned-fleet valuation input without schedules and title or lease evidence.

Inspections, out-of-service counts, and crashes

SAFER defines its inspection count as roadside inspections over the past two years. It says an OOS inspection can reflect one or more out-of-service findings within a single inspection. Thus the OOS count is not a count of individual defects. Nor is the inspection denominator a random audit of all operating vehicles. A low inspection count may offer little information about the fleet's current state, especially when the carrier has limited interstate activity. SAFER says operational inspection and crash data are generally presented for interstate carriers. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Crash rows need equal care. A sample Snapshot explicitly states that crash counts indicate involvement without determining responsibility. FMCSA's DataQs help says reportable crash records are displayed without deciding responsibility. The Safety Measurement System (SMS) can later distinguish certain reviewed not-preventable crashes for its calculation, while still listing them publicly. The acquisition screen should retain the reported count and any review status, not convert the count to a fault finding. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov) (dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov) (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Safety rating and CSA are different views

FMCSA's **Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA)** program includes the SMS, interventions, and safety-fitness determinations. SMS uses roadside inspections and crash reports from the last **two years**, plus investigation data, to prioritize safety and compliance work. FMCSA says SMS results update **monthly** and compare carriers within similar safety-event groups. The Snapshot is a smaller, more frequently refreshed public record, so an SMS percentile should not be copied into a Snapshot field or interpreted as a standalone acquisition score. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

An **unrated** motor carrier has simply not been assigned an FMCSA safety rating. A displayed rating is a distinct regulatory assessment, and its date and underlying process matter. FMCSA has cautioned that a satisfactory rating reflects an evaluation at the time of an investigation, not a continuously refreshed approval of current operations. Consequently, neither an absent rating nor an old favorable rating can close a present safety diligence question. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov) (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Public SMS data have their own limits. FMCSA says complete results are available to enforcement users and logged-in carriers, while the Crash Indicator BASIC is not public. Its comparison method also considers safety-based roadside inspection violations beyond out-of-service findings. An analyst should note which public view was available, avoid filling hidden fields by assumption, and ask a qualified specialist for deeper review when safety is material to a mandate. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

A Reproducible Trucking Target Screen

A first-pass screen should be a **sequence of evidence decisions**, not an automatic quality score. The four outcomes below belong to the acquisition mandate, not to FMCSA. They do not change a carrier's regulatory status. A pass means only that the target deserves the next research step. The rule is intentionally reversible as new evidence arrives.

1. **Resolve the candidate.** Search a known USDOT or authority number first. If the lead began with a brand, search name variants and identify the legal-name and DBA pairing. Retain each plausible record rather than forcing one match.
2. **Check role and scope.** Determine whether the target is a motor carrier, broker, private carrier, or another relevant role. Compare the activity with the mandate before reading NOT AUTHORIZED as disqualifying.
3. **Confirm current registration.** Search Motus by identifier and name. Save any historical Licensing and Insurance page as an older layer only. If records disagree, preserve the dates and identify the field that differs. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)
4. **Read scale fields literally.** Record reported power units and drivers with the Snapshot as-of date. Treat ratios as consistency prompts. Seek a fleet schedule, roster, and lease documents before making capacity or asset claims.
5. **Read safety context.** Record the 24-month count window, weekly count refresh, rating status and date, and the separate monthly SMS view when available. Flag thin or missing observations as uncertainty rather than good performance. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

6. **Decide and preserve.** Assign pass, review, stale/conflicting, or excluded with a written criterion, supporting pages, collection times, and a next refresh event. Docket describes Triage as checking identity and fit, Scout as collecting sourced answers, and Audit as reviewing conflicts and unsupported findings; that model illustrates the evidence discipline required of a sourced target-research provider.

Table 2 compares the roles of the evidence channels used in this workflow. It is a service-and-source comparison, so the provider row describes a research process rather than suggesting that a private service replaces an official register.

Channel	Role in a target screen	What it cannot settle
SAFER Company Snapshot	Public carrier identification, reported scale, and selected safety fields.	Current ownership, revenue, and owned-fleet assets.
Motus	Current FMCSA registration search by identifier or name. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)	State-law entity continuity and transaction perimeter.
State business registry	Jurisdiction-specific entity identification and status. (www.sos.ca.gov)	Federal carrier authority or activity.
Docket sourced target research	Triage checks entity fit; Scout collects cited answers; Audit reviews evidence conflicts.	Does not itself confer authority or replace filings and company documents.

The channels answer different questions. The DOT public SMS data file, for example, is built from monthly input snapshots rather than the live Snapshot lookup. (data.transportation.gov) A screen becomes stronger when a federal carrier key, an entity filing, and a dated source trail agree. A disagreement is an item to investigate, not a score to average.

Table 3 is a triage worksheet. It is designed for a single target record, with a field-level disposition before any company-level decision.

Question	Record to retain	Pass or review rule	Escalation
Is this the same entity?	USDOT, legal name, DBA, address, phone, state entity number, and collection dates. (www.sos.ca.gov)	Pass when identifiers and legal entity evidence align; otherwise review.	Search name history and relevant jurisdiction filings.
Does the activity match the mandate?	Carrier/broker role, authority type, Motus status, and status date.	Exclude only if the relevant current activity clearly falls outside the mandate.	Resolve private or intrastate scope before acting on NOT AUTHORIZED.
Is reported scale plausible?	Power units, drivers, as-of date, fleet schedule if available.	Pass as a preliminary size indicator; review conflicting counts.	Ask for current owned/leased unit and driver schedules.
What do safety rows show?	Inspection, OOS, crash, and rating fields with their windows. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)	Review any material pattern or sparse data; never auto-grade from one count.	Compare SMS, request detailed records, and use specialist diligence.
Are sources current enough?	Page copy, lookup date, underlying data date, query and source URL.	Mark stale/conflicting when material timestamps or systems disagree.	Refresh Motus and Snapshot; preserve both versions. (www.govinfo.gov)

Question	Record to retain	Pass or review rule	Escalation
What is the final disposition?	Written criterion, evidence, contradiction log, owner, next review date.	Pass, review, stale/conflicting, or excluded.	Reopen when a status, identity, or material scale field changes.

The worksheet separates **record identity**, **mandate fit**, and **data freshness**. A carrier can have an unambiguous identity but an unresolved fleet count; a broker can be a clear entity match but outside a carrier-only mandate. Those are different findings and should remain separately visible to the deal team.

Trucking company due diligence checklist

- **Mandate:** Write the carrier, broker, private-fleet, or moving-services scope.
- **Lead name:** Preserve the name exactly as it entered the target list.
- **Lead source:** Save the page or file that supplied the initial candidate.
- **Search key:** Record whether the lookup used USDOT, docket number, or name.
- **Search variants:** Retain plausible name variants and their rejected matches.
- **USDOT:** Copy the identifier exactly and note the lookup time.
- **Authority docket:** Record each MC, FF, or MX number separately.
- **Legal name:** Copy the carrier's displayed legal-name field.
- **DBA:** Copy each displayed trade name without merging it into the legal name.
- **Address:** Compare physical and mailing addresses with other dated evidence.
- **Phone:** Treat a matching number as corroboration, not proof of ownership.
- **State entity:** Record the jurisdiction and registry identifier for the proposed target.
- **Business role:** State whether the record describes carrier or broker activity.
- **Operating scope:** Compare the authority type with the mandate's service definition.
- **Status source:** Save current Motus results and separately label historical pages.
- **Status date:** Preserve the effective date shown by the relevant system.
- **Power units:** Save the count with its underlying Snapshot date.
- **Drivers:** Save the count and avoid treating it as payroll headcount.
- **Fleet bridge:** Request owned, term-leased, and trip-leased unit detail if material.
- **Safety window:** Record the trailing period for each inspection and crash count.
- **Rating:** Record whether a rating exists and the rating's date.
- **Contradictions:** Keep both versions and identify which field and date differ.
- **Disposition:** Write pass, review, stale/conflicting, or excluded with a reason.
- **Refresh trigger:** Set the event or date that will reopen the screen.

Three hypothetical examples

Hypothetical example 1, brand mismatch. An analyst starts with the fictional brand Harbor Arc Movers. A name search finds Harbor Arc Logistics LLC as a DBA on one USDOT record, while the website names Harbor Arc Holdings Inc. The analyst records the USDOT and DBA pairing, then checks the appropriate state registry

and company materials. The result is **review** until the relationship between the operating carrier and the proposed acquisition entity is documented. SAFER's legal-name and DBA fields support this separation. (portal.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Hypothetical example 2, apparently inactive authority. A fictional carrier has an active USDOT record but displays NOT AUTHORIZED. The mandate requires interstate for-hire freight. The analyst checks current Motus authority, activity type, and applicable exempt-commodity or commercial-zone exemptions before excluding the target for absent required authority. (FMCSA authority exemptions) If the target instead serves a private-fleet mandate, the same label is not an automatic exclusion. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Hypothetical example 3, fleet-count conflict. A fictional Snapshot lists **42 power units** and **61 drivers**, while a current company fleet schedule lists **31 active units**. The difference is **11 units**; reported drivers per Snapshot power unit are **61 ÷ 42 = 1.45**. These are arithmetic checks, not proof of idle assets, staffing efficiency, or revenue. The analyst marks the field **stale/conflicting**, dates both sources, and requests the owned/leased-unit bridge. SAFER's definition allows leased units in the reported count. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Data Analysis and Evidence

The most useful quantitative analysis is an **evidence-age and denominator check**. SAFER says Snapshot data update daily except for inspection and crash counts, which update weekly. Its FAQ defines the latter as the **previous 24 months before the latest weekly calculation**. SMS has a separate **monthly** cycle. These are three clocks: the analyst's collection time, the underlying Snapshot as-of time, and the count calculation time. They should occupy separate worksheet cells. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov) (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Hypothetical date calculation. If a captured Snapshot displays an underlying as-of date of **October 1, 2026**, and the analyst collects it on **October 3, 2026**, the displayed underlying date is **two calendar days old**. Subtract the source date from the collection date. Record both dates; the age does not mean every field was entered on October 1. Recalculate from the actual as-of line for each target and refresh the page before a material decision.

FMCSA's older Pocket Guide reported **787,189 active carriers with USDOT numbers**, **5,421,013 power units**, and **5,790,793 drivers** in its **December 29, 2023** management-system snapshot. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov) Those totals describe that guide's national scope, not an individual carrier or today's acquisition universe. A separate FMCSA registration-statistics page used an **August 28, 2026** snapshot with broader interstate and intrastate coverage, (ai.fmcsa.dot.gov) so the two totals should not be subtracted to claim market growth. (ai.fmcsa.dot.gov)

A useful ratio is **reported power units per reported driver**, or its reciprocal. In the hypothetical example above, **42 ÷ 61 = 0.69 units per driver**. It is a cross-field consistency check: an extreme or changing value can prompt a roster and fleet-schedule request. It is not a utilization measure. The numerator mixes owned and leased vehicles, while the driver field is a reported count rather than a payroll reconciliation. Neither field contains loads, miles, rates, revenue, or asset title information. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Similarly, **OOS inspections ÷ roadside inspections** can be calculated only when the denominator and category refer to the same period and unit. For a hypothetical **5 OOS inspections among 40 vehicle inspections**, the ratio is **12.5%**. It is a description of that observed slice, not a probability for every truck or a

transferable national benchmark. SAFER states that one OOS inspection can contain more than one OOS finding, and the counts reflect a trailing two-year window. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

The data ecosystem offers further checks, but they answer different questions. The Department of Transportation's public SMS file is organized as **one carrier per row**, (data.transportation.gov) uses monthly input snapshots, and defines an inspection total over a **24-month measurement period**. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics' Vehicle Inventory and Use Survey measures physical and operational traits of the wider truck population. These can contextualize a research design; neither validates a particular target's current owned fleet. FMCSA's financial and operating statistics are a separate reporting program, reinforcing that a Snapshot fleet count is not a revenue field. (data.transportation.gov) (www.bts.gov) (transtats.bts.gov)

For a mandate, avoid building a numerical composite score from Snapshot fields alone. Small denominators, different update cycles, role differences, and incomplete public SMS fields can make seemingly precise rankings brittle. Preserve the raw count, its window, the role classification, and the next document required. If a calculation changes the decision, include the formula and inputs in the evidence record. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Implications and Future Directions

The **2026 Motus transition** makes source hierarchy operationally important. FMCSA says Motus serves as a unified registration system and permits public record searches. It also says the historical Licensing and Insurance system does not show Motus filings. A durable workflow should store both the official system and the field's effective date, so a later analyst can explain a changed authority result without overwriting the old observation. (www.govinfo.gov) (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Changes can also enter different public views at different times. SAFER's Snapshot generally updates daily, its inspection and crash counts weekly, and SMS monthly. FMCSA's SMS help says registration changes after a monthly snapshot appear in the next month's results. (ai.fmcsa.dot.gov) A conflict between a newly updated registration and an older SMS view can therefore be a timing issue rather than proof that either page is wrong. Put **retrieval time**, **underlying data date**, and **source refresh cadence** beside each field. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov) (ai.fmcsa.dot.gov)

The larger diligence path depends on the transaction. The relevant state registry can support entity identity but a foreign registration's status may be confined to that state. (www.sos.ca.gov) Public SEC filings can help when a target has a public parent, (www.sec.gov) while private-company ownership often needs company-supplied records. Fleet ownership, insurance, employment, and financial performance require their own evidence. UCR's notice says its **2026 auto-renewals under option A** use the number of power units on the carrier's most current MCS-150 form (plan.ucr.gov). Check the target's actual registration basis before comparing its UCR count with Snapshot power units; that comparison is a consistency check, not an asset inventory. (www.sos.ca.gov) (www.sec.gov) (plan.ucr.gov)

When safety records appear incomplete or incorrect, FMCSA's **DataQs** system provides a process to request review of federal and state data. That mechanism is relevant to source interpretation; an analyst should retain the original observation and the dated disposition of any later correction. The decision file should make clear which findings were directly observed, which were inferred, and which remain unanswered. (dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can the Company Snapshot verify a trucking acquisition target's identity?

It can identify the federal carrier record and provide a strong starting key through USDOT, legal name, DBA, and authority number. Confirm the acquisition entity with the appropriate state registry and current registration source, especially when a brand, broker, or holding company is involved. (www.sos.ca.gov)

Does the power-unit count show how many trucks the target owns?

No. SAFER's definition includes owned, term-leased, and trip-leased units. Use a current fleet schedule, lease and title evidence, and insurance information before discussing owned assets or usable capacity. (safer.fmcsa.dot.gov)

What does an unrated safety rating mean?

It means FMCSA has not assigned a safety rating to that motor carrier. It does not establish good or poor current performance. Read it alongside dated inspection, crash, and specialist diligence evidence. (csa.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Are Snapshot crashes proof the carrier caused them?

No. FMCSA says reportable crash involvement can be displayed without a responsibility determination. Preserve any later preventability review as a separate dated fact. (dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Which record should be checked for current operating authority in October 2026?

FMCSA directs public users to **Motus**. Its prior Licensing and Insurance system is historical and does not reflect Motus filings. The authority's scope must still be matched to the mandate; an active USDOT number alone does not settle interstate for-hire authority. (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

Conclusion

The FMCSA Company Snapshot is a practical first-pass carrier record because it joins identifiers, reported scale, and selected safety information in one public lookup. Its value in acquisition origination comes from **disciplined interpretation**: resolve the legal carrier behind the brand, distinguish USDOT registration from operating authority, attach dates to every observation, and read each count within its defined window.

A usable screen preserves uncertainty. Power units are a reported mix of owned and leased vehicles; driver counts are reported headcount fields; inspections and crashes describe recorded activity, not a complete view of the business. Current registration should be corroborated through Motus, and the 2026 transition means historical authority pages may disagree with newer filings. Where a field matters to investment judgment, the next step is an appropriate filing, schedule, company document, or specialist review.

The resulting decision is modest but valuable: **pass, review, stale/conflicting, or excluded**, with a dated reason and the evidence needed to reopen it. That makes a regulatory lookup useful for PE target triage without turning it into an ownership, financial, or valuation conclusion.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/CompanySnapshot.aspx
2. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/modernization-faqs
3. https://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/saferhelp.aspx
4. https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetyplanner/MyFiles/Sections.aspx?ch=20&sec=58
5. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/sites/fmcsa.dot.gov/files/2025-09/FMCSA%20Pocket%20Guide%202024-v6%20508%20.pdf
6. https://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov?welcome=1
7. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/faq/what-operating-authority-mc-number-and-who-needs-it
8. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/faq/what-are-definitions-motor-carrier-broker-and-freight-forwarder-authorities
9. https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/cbs-field-status-definitions
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11. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/temporary-suspension-biennial-update-requirement
12. https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/faq/do-i-need-new-usdot-number-if-i-am-changing-my-companys-legal-name-or-form-business
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19. https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/About/Measure
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About Docket

Docket provides deal-origination research software and managed research for private equity firms. We help investment teams investigate acquisition targets using structured screening criteria, retained sources and reviewable company evidence. Teams can work through a self-serve platform or use managed research, depending on how they want research delivered.

Research against a defined mandate

A useful target list needs more than company names. Docket focuses on the questions that determine whether a company fits an investment mandate, including the evidence needed to support or qualify each answer. Our research approach makes the connection between screening criteria, source material and conclusions visible to the team reviewing the work.

Triage, Scout and Audit

Docket's three named research agents perform complementary tasks. Triage resolves company identity and screens fit. Scout collects sourced answers against the mandate. Audit checks retained evidence, addresses contradictions and leaves unsupported answers visibly unresolved. This structure helps reviewers distinguish established findings from missing information and questions requiring further investigation.

Evidence that supports investment-team judgment

Our research library covers market mapping, screening criteria, private-company data, succession and ownership, source evaluation and evidence standards. These resources explain the methods and limitations behind origination research. Findings support a team's judgment; they do not establish that a company is for sale or guarantee a transaction or investment outcome.

Work with Docket

Visit Docket to explore the platform, managed research and the current contact path. Read about screening criteria, evidence standards, AI research agents and market mapping.

Public examples are illustrative unless explicitly identified otherwise. Research preparation and authorized outreach are separate activities; confidential target lists and customer outcomes should never be inferred from an educational example.

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