

Outsourcing Driver Qualification Management

An Essential Risk Mitigation Choice for Fleets



Managing driver qualification (DQ) file involves knowing a little about a lot of topics, ranging from driver applications to fed med cards and much more. **Because of the many nuances in maintaining driver files and the time involved in doing it correctly, companies often choose to have driver qualification files managed by a third party.**

The Value of Outsourcing

The value of outsourcing DQ compliance includes a variety of benefits:

- **Going above FMCSA minimums** to show that safety is a value and a priority at your company.
- **Gaining expertise** to be sure your company doesn't have compliance or company policy gaps.
- **Augmenting compliance efforts** if there's a shortage of workers or turnover in the safety or HR department.
- **Saving time** that's required by staff to undertake due diligence in consistently meeting every regulatory and company policy requirement.
- **Reducing risk of negligent hiring or negligent supervision.** If a crash leads to litigation, a plaintiff attorney will have the driver's DQ file scrutinized for anything missed in the hiring process, compliance or company policy.
- **Reducing the risk of unqualified drivers on the road** by getting notifications for any compliance deficiencies and advanced notice of expiring documents.

What's more, the **regulations often require varied forms of interpretation and strong clarity around many driver qualification and compliance topics**, such as unique safety performance history data collection, guidance on the protection of personal privacy information, document retention practices, and accident reporting requirements, to name a few. Having a third-party accurately and efficiently manage these functions for you can get your qualified drivers on the roads quickly.



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The Importance of Risk Mitigation

An accident involving an unqualified driver can be catastrophic, which is why many private and for-hire fleets place the responsibility of managing driver compliance on third-party experts.

Almost any failure to adhere to FMCSRs or company safety policies will be the focus of plaintiff arguments. The most common examples include failure to run proper background checks, failure to conduct or review drug testing, and tolerance of driver violations such as HOS and log book citations.

Solely from a litigation standpoint, motor carriers should consider FMCSRs as minimum standards that can and should be exceeded, rather than assuming FMCSR compliance is adequate. The ability of defense attorneys to document carrier or driver safety activities that exceed FMCSRs carries great weight with juries.

*"Understanding the Impact of Nuclear Verdicts on the Trucking Industry,"
American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), June 2020, page 62)*

Taking on compliance work in-house is often not a risk worth taking given the incredible regulatory knowledge and constant diligence required to maintain quality driver files.



DQ Outsourcing Insights

- Over 50% of fleets researched¹ consider accurate and well-organized DQ files as a highly important – or the most important – factor for FMCSA compliance.
- The volume of litigation and nuclear verdicts against CMVs has skyrocketed in recent years, creating huge non-compliance risks, with the average size of verdicts increasing 483% from 2017 to 2018.²
- FMCSA driver qualification regulations often require best-practice interpretation and are not simply “black and white” compliance requirements.

1 Study by the J. J. Keller Center for Market Insights, the research arm of J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc., 2021

2 Understanding the Impact of Nuclear Verdicts on the Trucking Industry,” American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), June 2020

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Critical Considerations for Outsourcing Driver Compliance

Be sure the company you choose for outsourcing DQ compliance will review your driver qualification documentation deeply, ensuring the accuracy of information, not the mere presence of data. This means auditing to the letter of the law. Also verify that they will—and are qualified to—offer the following:

Let our team of experts keep your drivers qualified, on the road

- Provide **dedicated support** with experience auditing DQ files.
- Audit files and provide an **initial compliance assessment** as part of implementation.
- Provide **ongoing monitoring and auditing** of file compliance. Including:
 - Proactively **notify you of file deficiencies** and update them.
 - Being available to **answer all of your regulatory questions**.
 - Work with **multiple locations and drivers** to obtain all necessary documents.
 - Collaborate on **targeted improvement areas**, such as expired drivers' licenses or missing medical cards.
 - Procure **background checks**, audit them upon receipt and notify you immediately when needed.
 - Ensure **new driver compliance** as they're added to your rosters.
- Maintain **accurate driver rosters**.
- Assist with FMCSA Clearinghouse compliance by **managing pre-employment and annual queries**.
- Coordinate communications on compliance and safety issues with stakeholders.
- Track and maintain company-specific documents such as insurance information or company acknowledgements.
- Provide electronic, daily notifications of compliance deficiencies and provide advance notification of all expiring documents.
- Help interpret **reporting**.
- Provide **audit support**, gathering the required paperwork and being there during the audit process for auditor questions.
- Manage **records retention**, purging online documents according to the retention timeline stated in the regulations.

Outsourcing this work will save you lots of time and headaches so you can **focus** on other priorities.

We do **More** to Make Driver Qualification Feel Like **Less**



Let our team of experts keep your drivers qualified, on the road and in compliance with FMCSR Part 391 by **managing your driver qualification (DQ) documentation**. We'll provide the exact level of assistance you need to help reduce your operational costs, gain greater staffing flexibility, and allow you to focus on running your business.

You'll also get 24/7 access to our secure DataSense platform so you can view your drivers' DQ files ... view immediate information on your compliance level ... and use the system's robust reporting capabilities.

It's the industry's most in-depth suite of DQ services!

Driver Qualification File Audit | Driver Qualification File Management

MVR Monitoring | Non-Regulated Driver File Management

Driver Applicant Management

Discover how J. J. Keller goes the extra mile to make sure you have qualified driver files.

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