



Starting early next year, trucking companies will be required to pay the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) a fee prior to hiring each driver — in addition to a once per year fee for already employed drivers — as part of the agency’s new Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse rule.

Starting on January 6, 2020, carriers will be required to query an FMCSA database of drivers who have refused or failed drug and alcohol tests prior to hiring a new driver and at least once per year for drivers already employed by the company. The database will provide drug and alcohol testing information for the past five years.

The FMCSA says that the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse database “will improve highway safety by helping employers, FMCSA, State Driver Licensing Agencies, and State law enforcement to quickly and efficiently identify drivers who are not legally permitted to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) due to drug and alcohol program violations.”

This month, the FMCSA announced the pricing to access the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse database. The agency says that they will charge carriers a \$1.25 flat fee for each query. Carriers may also purchase bulk query plans, but they will still pay the \$1.25 per query fee.

The FMCSA will offer two types of queries — limited (which checks for the presence of information in the queried driver’s Clearinghouse record) and full (which will provide employers with detailed information about any resolved or unresolved violations in a driver’s

Clearinghouse record). Driver consent must be obtained by the carrier for both types of queries.

The Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse is designed to replace the process of calling a driver's previous employer to obtain drug and alcohol testing records by 2023. Until then, carriers must both query the database and call previous employers.

Though the fee is small, it could add up to big payouts to the FMCSA over time, given that there were about 3.5 million truck drivers working in the U.S. in 2018 coupled with the fact that the industry has chronically high turnover, according to [ATA data](#).

You can [click here](#) for more information on the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse.

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