Carrier vetting checklist for freight brokers

16 checks. Reviewed 2026-11-18. https://carrier-lookup.kq7r.workers.dev/carrier-vetting-checklist

Carrier: _____ USDOT: _____ MC: _____ Date: _____

Done	Check	Pass	Stop or escalate	Source
Identity				
[ ]	**1. Identity matches the paperwork**	Legal name, DBA and city on the rate confirmation match the FMCSA record for the USDOT or MC number given.	Name, city or number does not match what the dispatcher told you.	FMCSA company census (data.transportation.gov)
[ ]	**2. USDOT status is active**	USDOT status shows active.	Inactive USDOT number: FMCSA treats the company as out of operation.	FMCSA SAFER company snapshot
[ ]	**3. MC number belongs to the same USDOT number**	The MC number on the carrier packet resolves to the same USDOT number and company.	MC and USDOT point to different companies, or the MC number does not exist.	FMCSA licensing and insurance data (Motus)
Authority				
[ ]	**4. Carrier authority is active**	Active carrier authority (MC or MX) for interstate for-hire freight.	Broker-only or freight-forwarder-only authority, or no active authority.	FMCSA licensing and insurance data (Motus)
[ ]	**5. Authority age**	Active longer than your own minimum (brokers commonly set 30, 90 or 180 days).	Under your minimum, or recently reinstated: add the extra checks below or decline.	FMCSA authority grant dates (Motus)
[ ]	**6. No suspension or revocation notice**	No involuntary suspension or revocation notice on file.	A served notice: the authority stops on its effective date unless the carrier fixes the problem.	FMCSA authority revocation and suspension notices
[ ]	**7. BOC-3 process agent on file**	A BOC-3 filing is on record for the authority.	No BOC-3: the authority is not in force without a process agent.	49 CFR Part 366 (designation of process agents)
[ ]	**8. MCS-150 updated within the last 24 months**	The last MCS-150 update on FMCSA's record is under two years old.	Older than 24 months, or the date is blank: the carrier's own profile may be stale or abandoned.	49 CFR 390.201 (biennial MCS-150 update)
Insurance				
[ ]	**9. Insurance on file meets the minimum**	BIPD on file at or above the required minimum (usually $750,000 for general freight) with no pending cancellation.	BIPD below the minimum, no filing, or a cancellation date approaching.	49 CFR 387.9 (financial responsibility minimums)
[ ]	**10. Certificate confirmed with the insurer**	You called the insurer or agent on a number you found yourself and cargo limits and exclusions fit the load.	Certificate came only from the carrier by email, or the insurer cannot confirm it.	Your own call; FMCSA insurance filings show the insurer name
Safety				
[ ]	**11. Safety rating and its date**	Satisfactory, or unrated (most carriers are unrated, which is normal).	Unsatisfactory: do not use. Conditional: ask what was corrected.	FMCSA SAFER company snapshot
[ ]	**12. Out-of-service rates against the national average**	Vehicle and driver out-of-service rates at or below the national averages printed next to them on SAFER.	Either rate clearly above the national average, or a recent out-of-service order.	FMCSA SAFER inspection summary, 24 months
[ ]	**13. Inspection history exists and is recent**	Inspections in the last 24 months, enough to read a rate from; crashes in line with the fleet size.	A fleet that runs but shows no inspections, or a crash count out of proportion to its power units.	FMCSA Safety Measurement System
Fraud signals				
[ ]	**14. Contact details verified independently**	You reached the company on a phone number you found yourself, and the email domain matches its website.	Free-mail address, new email domain, recently changed phone number or a rush to book.	Your own call; compare with the FMCSA census phone and address

Done	Check	Pass	Stop or escalate	Source
[ ]	**15. Double-brokering red flags**	The carrier on the bill of lading, the truck and driver at pickup, and the carrier you vetted are the same company.	Different MC number on the paperwork, a rate far below the market, a driver who cannot name the dispatcher or a rush to change the pickup details.	FMCSA carrier identity and registration records
[ ]	**16. Confirm on SAFER and keep a record**	You checked FMCSA SAFER on the day you tender and saved what you saw with the date.	The record on tender day differs from what you vetted earlier.	FMCSA SAFER company snapshot

Public FMCSA data shows what a carrier filed and what FMCSA recorded. It cannot prove that the person on the phone works for the carrier. The $750,000 BIPD figure is the federal minimum for general freight (49 CFR 387.9). Free lookups for each check: https://carrier-lookup.kq7r.workers.dev/carrier-vetting-checklist. Free to copy with credit (CC BY 4.0).