

Registering for FMCSA Drug clearing house

DOT Clearinghouse registration is now open

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) [Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse](#) will officially launch January 6, 2020, for DOT employers. There are several steps employers need to take over the next three months to prepare:

1. Register with the Clearinghouse

Registration is **now open**. Upon registration, employers will be able to designate C/TPAs (like ESS) who will access the Clearinghouse on their behalf. Owner-operators should note that they **must** designate C/TPAs, as they will be unable to query the Clearinghouse on their own behalves. For DOT employers that have a USDOT number, you must use your FMCSA Portal Account to register. If you do not have a USDOT number, you will register at the Clearinghouse website.

Under either of these circumstances, you can begin the registration process by [clicking here](#).

2. Designate Your Consortium/Third-Party Administrator (C/TPA)

During registration, you will have the opportunity to select your C/TPA. ESS has already registered as a C/TPA, so you should see us as an option. Be sure to input our full name: Employment Screening Services. If more than one **Employment Screening Services** is listed, select the option with the following address: 2700 Corporate Dr., Ste. 100, Birmingham, Alabama. You will also have the option to identify which specific functions you are authorizing ESS to perform. Please select the "**Conduct Queries**" function.

3. Select and purchase a query plan

Employers will need to pre-pay for all queries, even if you plan to have your C/TPA make queries for you. [Employers must purchase their own query plans](#), as C/TPAs are not authorized to purchase plans. Queries can be purchased online via your FMCSA portal for \$1.25 each (this is for both limited and full queries). High-volume employers may purchase unlimited query packages for \$24,000 per year.

You can learn more about query plans and how to purchase them by [clicking here](#).

4. Be aware of your query requirements

Employers must perform a **full query prior to employing** any regulated driver and a **limited or full query annually** for each employee driver on the employee roster. A full query must be conducted if a limited query returns preliminary results. If an employer fails to make a full query **within 24 hours** after receiving results from a limited query, the driver must be removed from any safety-sensitive positions, such as those requiring driving CMVs.

5. Instruct Your Drivers to Register with the Clearinghouse ASAP

As an employer, you must **obtain consent** from your employees before making either type of query.¹ For limited queries, consent must be obtained outside of the Clearinghouse process. The form used must specify the time period for how long the driver's authorization will remain

valid. Employers are advised to keep electronic or paper copies of signed consent forms in their drivers' qualification files.

A sample limited consent form can be found by [clicking here](#).

Full queries require electronic consent, which the driver must provide via his or her online FMCSA portal. Drivers who are registered by January 6 will have their accounts and contact preferences setup, allowing them to quickly respond to full query requests from employers. Once the Clearinghouse goes live, unregistered drivers will be sent notifications of an employer's intent to perform a full query by USPS to the address on their CDLs. The FMCSA expects a 10-day timeline for this manual process (and that's assuming the address on their CDL is correct and up to date). Accordingly, you will want to make sure that all of your current employees are registered **before** January 6 and that all prospective employees are registered early in the application process in order to avoid any undue interruptions to your company's daily operations or delays in the hiring process.

6. Be Prepared to Report Violations by January 6, 2020

Employers or their designated C/TPAs must report the following items to the Clearinghouse:

- Alcohol test results with a concentration of 0.04 or greater;
- Refusals to test;
- Actual knowledge of violations;
- Negative return-to-duty (RTD) test results; and
- Successful completion of a driver's follow-up testing plan.

Medical review officers (MROs) will report verified positive results, adulterated test results, and other "failed test" results directly to the Clearinghouse.

7. Know Whether to Report a Violation Occurring Close to January 6 to the Clearinghouse

Only violations occurring on or after January 6th should be reported using the online Clearinghouse. The MRO's "verified" date will be the date he or she uses to determine if the result should be reported via the Clearinghouse. Similarly, employers should use the date the violative action occurred or was discovered (e.g., the day the employee refuses to test) to determine whether the results should be reported.

8. Educate Your Driver on a Key Change to Testing Procedures

When using the Clearinghouse, employers must report violations for drivers by referencing the driver's CDL number and issuing state. The FMCSA's standard Chain of Custody form **will not** be updated to request this information, so drivers will need to know to complete this form by writing their CDL number in Step 1-C, "Donor SSN or Employee I.D. No."