CLIENT ALERTS & INSIGHTS

Crossing Lanes and Catching Fraud: DOJ, DHS and DOT Launch "Crossroads of America" Task Force to Crack Down on Trucking Fraud

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Featured Practices: Litigation, White Collar, Government Investigations & Regulatory Compliance

Featured Industries: Transportation & Logistics

Key Takeaways

- **On August 31, 2026, the Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of Homeland Security, and the White House Task Force to Eliminate Fraud announced the "Joint Task Force Crossroads of America,"** a historic multi-agency enforcement initiative targeting fraud, safety violations and immigration-related offenses by trucking companies across Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.
- **The new task force is the latest enforcement action under the Fraud Task Force and DOJ's National Fraud Enforcement Division**, reflecting the administration's continued expansion of its fraud enforcement infrastructure.
- **DHS conducted a synchronized single-day sweep targeting over 200 commercial driving schools across 23 states**, while the DOT issued emergency removals of 110+ training providers and launched a nationwide audit of third-party CDL skills testers, reflecting unprecedented cross-agency coordination in the commercial transportation sector.
- **Companies operating in trucking and servicing the industry,** including carriers, CDL training schools, third-party testing organizations and logistics providers, may prepare for heightened enforcement by immediately assessing compliance.

The White House Fraud Task Force

On March 16, 2026, President Trump signed Executive Order 14395, establishing the White House Task Force to Eliminate Fraud (the "Fraud Task Force").[1] Vice President JD Vance chairs the Fraud Task Force, with Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chairman Andrew Ferguson serving as vice chairman.

The Executive Order directs the Fraud Task Force to coordinate "a comprehensive national strategy to stop fraud, waste, and abuse within federal benefit programs, including programs administered jointly with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners."[2] Key priorities include improving eligibility verification processes, developing pre-payment controls to prevent improper payments, evaluating fraud indicators and high-risk vulnerabilities, promoting information sharing between federal and state governments, and disrupting fraud networks and facilitators.[3] The Fraud Task Force coordinates "with the Homeland Security Council on matters related to law enforcement, public safety, national security, transnational crime, and organized criminal activity."[4]

DOJ's National Fraud Enforcement Division (NFED)

The newly established Joint Task Force Crossroads of America (Joint Task Force) is the latest demonstration of a new DOJ division's broadening reach. On January 8, 2026, the White House announced the creation of a new position: an assistant attorney general with nationwide jurisdiction over fraud.[5] This announcement laid the groundwork for the NFED, which Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche formally established by memorandum on April 7, 2026.[6]

Colin McDonald took the oath as the first-ever assistant attorney general for the Fraud Division on April 1, 2026, and now leads the NFED.[7] The NFED's core mission is to investigate and prosecute individuals and entities that steal or fraudulently misuse taxpayer dollars and consolidates fraud enforcement under a single umbrella, coordinating with federal agencies and partnering with federal, state and local law enforcement across the country.[8]

On August 13, 2026, the NFED announced five priority enforcement areas: (1) public trust and financial integrity; (2) healthcare fraud; (3) internal revenue fraud; (4) global trade and commerce; and (5) corporate misconduct.[9] The NFED also launched the National Fraud Detection Center on August 24, 2026, which is "a prosecutor-led, multi-agency team designed to investigate the most harmful actors defrauding federal government programs, including illicit actors overseas and those operating fraud schemes across federal programs," and supports the "whole-of-government" approach to combatting fraud.[10]

Crossroads of America Launches

On August 31, 2026, the Joint Task Force known as Crossroads of America was announced in a press briefing with eight U.S. Attorneys joined by DOT Secretary Sean P. Duffy, DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Administrator Derek Barrs, and Vice Chairman Andrew Ferguson of the Fraud Task Force.[11] The agencies described the initiative as a "historic interagency effort" to crack down on fraud in the trucking industry and a multistate partnership to secure highways and strengthen border security.[12]

Attorney General Todd Blanche emphasized that the initiative targets fraud schemes that have placed unqualified and improperly trained drivers on the nation's highways, and pledged that DOJ would work with federal, state and local partners through the Joint Task Force to "dismantle the fraud schemes harming American truckers, drivers and community safety."[13] The Joint Task Force was created with the intent to strengthen commercial driving standards, remove noncompliant drivers, and address the fraudulent practices that allowed unqualified drivers to obtain CDLs.[14]

Along with DOT, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) intends to "bring the full weight of [its] investigative authorities, financial expertise and global law enforcement capabilities to this historic, whole-of-government effort" to pursue individuals and criminal networks that use fraudulent documents and illicit financial schemes to circumvent transportation safety laws.[15]

Rising DOJ Enforcement Operations

The Joint Task Force establishes a multistate enforcement partnership spanning Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio and will coordinate operations among the participating U.S. Attorney's Offices and state and local law enforcement. This coalition of federal, state and local partners reflects DOJ's strategy of using the NFED's coordinating authority to run multi-agency enforcement actions. The geographic focus on the Midwest corridor, a critical hub for the nation's freight and logistics infrastructure, suggests DOJ views this region as particularly vulnerable to the fraud and safety violations the Joint Task Force targets.[16]

The Joint Task Force is one recent step in an escalating set of new enforcement actions. Over the past 18 months, DOT has removed over 28,000 drivers from the roads for failing to meet English language proficiency (ELP) requirements, required states to cancel more than 30,000 improperly issued commercial driver's licenses, and removed over 8,000 noncompliant training schools from the FMCSA registry.[17] The FMCSA also recently announced three additional enforcement actions: [18]

1. **Emergency Removal of Training Providers.** The FMCSA reviewed roadside inspection records for commercial drivers cited for not meeting ELP requirements, then cross-referenced those drivers with Training Provider Registry (TPR) records to identify providers that repeatedly certified drivers who did not meet federal qualification standards.[19] The FMCSA will execute the emergency removal of more than 110 Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) providers from the TPR. [20] These providers must immediately cease all operations, "including administering curricula, utilizing facilities for instruction, and conducting behind-the-wheel training."[21]
2. **Targeted Investigations and Proposed Removals.** In July, 175 FMCSA investigators conducted nearly 400 investigations into ELDT providers in 40 states.[22] The investigations uncovered serious instances of noncompliance, including inadequate training space, unlicensed instructors, missing assessment documentation and fraudulent classroom facilities.[23] These efforts led to "more than 160 notices of proposed removals from FMCSA's TPR."[24] These providers certified drivers linked to 239 commercial motor vehicle-related fatalities.[25]

3. **Nationwide Audit of Third-Party CDL Skills Testers.** Federal law requires CDL skills tests to occur in English, yet DOT has placed more than 28,000 drivers out of service for ELP violations since June 2025, indicating compliance failures among third-party testers and insufficient state oversight.[26] The FMCSA will conduct a nationwide audit and can hold states accountable for authorizing testers who fail federal requirements, including through corrective action plans, withholding of federal highway funds (starting at up to 4% in the first year and increasing to 8% for each subsequent year of noncompliance), and potential decertification of noncompliant state CDL programs.[27]

These actions mark a significant escalation of regulatory enforcement in the commercial transportation sector and signal DOT's intent to continue removing noncompliant drivers and deficient training providers.

Increasing DHS Collaboration

The Department of Homeland Security's participation in the Joint Task Force includes both investigative and immigration enforcement components:

1. **HSI Operations**. Along with U.S. Attorney's Offices and the FMCSA, HSI leads a national criminal investigation initiative into disreputable trucking companies "focus[ing] on CDL fraud, unauthorized employment, identity-document fraud, financial crime, money laundering, labor exploitation, and potential links to human smuggling, drug trafficking, and cartel activity."[28]

Key HSI activities include:

- Inspecting more than 200 driving schools across 23 Special Agent in Charge offices and 23 states.[29]
- Disseminating over 1,000 CDL-related business leads related to "known or suspect businesses engaged in unsafe practices."[30]
- Issuing more than 80 Notices of Inspection, with multiple investigations opened identifying indicators of fraudulent CDL issuance, unauthorized employment, identity fraud and shell companies.[31]

Ongoing HSI investigations involve unauthorized employment by trucking companies using visa holders for domestic cargo transport; state motor vehicle employees suspected of accepting payments to help individuals bypass CDL requirements; medical practitioners suspected of improperly certifying CDL medical exams; and companies engaged in visa fraud, labor exploitation and financial crimes associated with CDL businesses.[32]

- **ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).** ERO announced several targeted initiatives and field operations under the Joint Task Force umbrella:

- **Operation ICE Wall:** A multistage enforcement operation that targets trucking companies and drivers with final orders of removal or prior removal histories.[33]
- **Operation Guardrail:** An initiative focused on individuals holding commercial driver's licenses who lack authorization to be in the United States.[34]
- **Operation Freightliner:** An ERO-led operation leveraging "287(g) program partners to locate, interdict, and identify individuals operating commercial vehicles in violation of the law."[35]
- **National Surge Operation:** A targeted surge conducted on August 31, 2026, "focusing on Maine, Michigan, and Wisconsin…coordinating joint enforcement and inspection responses with DOT." [36]
- **Field Office Operations:** The Miami Field Office coordinated a joint operation with Florida DOT, FMCSA, and the Office of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, and the Chicago Field Office coordinated a joint operation with Indiana State Police focused on weigh station inspections.[37]

The scope of DHS's enforcement actions across these activities underscores the interagency nature of this effort and the perceived link between trucking fraud and broader public safety concerns.

Key Takeaways for Service Provider Clients

The Joint Task Force has significant implications for trucking companies and commercial services that support the sector:

- **Heightened Enforcement Risk.** The Joint Task Force's multi-agency structure means that companies may face simultaneous scrutiny from DOJ, DOT and DHS. Carriers, CDL training schools, third-party testing organizations and logistics providers should all anticipate increased enforcement activity.
- **Immigration Compliance Is Now a Top Trucking Issue.** The merging of trucking fraud enforcement and immigration enforcement means that companies must ensure their workforce compliance programs address immigration-related risks, including I-9 verification and CDL eligibility.
- **CDL Training and Testing Risk Effects.** CDL training and testing ecosystem will face sustained regulatory pressure with the DOT's emergency removal of training providers, nationwide audit of skills testers, and 40-state investigation. Companies that rely on third-party training or testing providers must now conduct due diligence to confirm that their providers remain in good standing and must keep detailed records evidencing these efforts.
- **Geographic Focus May Expand.** Companies operating outside the Midwest should not assume they are outside the enforcement perimeter. Although the Joint Task Force currently focuses on Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, even today these DHS operations span 23 states, and the DOT actions are nationwide.

- **Proactive Compliance Review Is Critical.** Now is the time for companies to review compliance with FMCSA regulations, including ELP requirements, driver qualification files requirements, and training provider credentials. The pace and scale of these enforcement actions is unlikely to end soon. Improving compliance and fixing gaps before enforcement will be well rewarded in better weathering risk today as well as in future casualty events.

Benesch's teams of attorneys in its White Collar, Government Investigations & Regulatory Compliance Practice Group and Transportation & Logistics Practice Group are on the leading edge of these developments and advising clients with proactive compliance reviews, risk assessments, audit response strategies, enforcement preparedness preparations, risk management tools and litigation defense. The team is here to help if you have questions regarding impacts from the Joint Task Force or the administration's broader fraud enforcement initiatives, or would like assistance in assessing specific risk areas.

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[1] Exec. Order No. 14395: Establishing the Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, 91 Fed. Reg. 12503 (Mar. 16, 2026); Marisa T. Darden, et al., *White House Taps Vice President To Lead New "Task Force To Eliminate Fraud*," Benesch (Apr. 7, 2026), https://www.beneschlaw.com/insight/white-house-taps-vice-president-to-lead-new-task-force-to-eliminate

[2] *Id.*

[3] *Id.*

[4] *Id.*

[5] White House, *Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Establishes New Department of Justice Division for National Fraud Enforcement* (Jan. 8, 2026), available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2026/01/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-establishes-new-de

[6] Memorandum from Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, *Creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division* (Apr. 7, 2026), available at: https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1435311/dl?inline; *see also* Marisa T. Darden, et al., *The Devil Is In The Details: DOJ Provides New Insights Regarding National Fraud Enforcement Division's Priorities*, Benesch (Apr. 23, 2026), https://www.beneschlaw.com/insight/the-devil-is-in-the-details-doj-provides-new-insights-regarding-nation

[7] U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *About the National Fraud Enforcement Division*, available at: https://www.justice.gov/fraud/about-national-fraud-enforcement-division.

[8] *Id.*

[9] Memorandum from Assistant Attorney General Colin M. McDonald, *National Fraud Enforcement Division Enforcement Priorities* (Aug. 13, 2026).

[10] U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Department of Justice Announces Launch of National Fraud Detection Center to Combat Fraud Against Taxpayer-Funded Programs* (Aug. 24, 2026), available at: https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-announces-launch-national-fraud-detection-center-com

[11] U.S. Dep't of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, *U.S. Attorneys and Department of Justice Join Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security and White House Fraud Task Force to Launch Historic Interagency Effort to Crack Down on Fraud in Trucking Industry* (Aug. 31, 2026), available at: https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/us-attorneys-and-department-justice-join-departments-transportation-and-

[12] *Id.*

[13] *Id.*

[14] *See id.*

[15] *Id.*

[16] *Id.*

[17] *Id.*

[18] *Id.*

[19] *Id.*

[20] *Id.*

[21] *Id.*

[22] *Id.*

[23] *Id.*

[24] *Id.*

[25] *Id.*

[26] *Id.*

[27] *Id.*

[28] *Id.*

[29] *Id.*

[30] *Id.*

[31] *Id.*

[32] *Id.*

[33] *Id.*

[34] *Id.*

[35] *Id.* "The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 added Section 287(g) to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), authorizing [ICE] to delegate state and local law enforcement officers the authority to perform specified immigration officer functions under ICE's direction and oversight." *Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g) Immigration and Nationality Act*, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, available at: https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g; 8 U.S.C. §§ 1357(g).

[36] U.S. Dep't of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, *supra* note 13.

[37] *Id.*