

FMCSA MOTUS Implementation – Common Motor Carrier Concerns

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The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) retired its legacy registration platforms and replaced them with “MOTUS” in May. This modernization effort is a significant overhaul for motor carriers, freight brokers and surface freight forwarders. It changes the way operating authority applications and license maintenance are handled, including insurance filings and biennial MCS-150 updates. A number of carrier clients have also reported serious challenges with the changeover that have continued into June.

The FMCSA developed MOTUS to serve as a single-window platform for all registration activities. The legacy “Safer” and “Licensing & Insurance” pages will no longer present current registration information to the public. MOTUS became the hub through which federal, state and industry users access safety and registration data starting on May 16, 2026.

Fraud prevention is a growing concern for the agency and a primary motivation for MOTUS functionality. The system aims to help prevent fraud events, such as the troubling rise in identity theft, account hijacking and fraudulent insurance filings in recent years. MOTUS requires new identity and business verification exercises upon registration. This includes uploading a government-issued ID and a facial scan through a smartphone or digital tablet.

The FMCSA has publicly acknowledged that there are user experience challenges with the launch, but some of those are significant. We have seen clients experience complications linking their existing accounts to the new MOTUS system and ensuring that all information transitioned smoothly from the legacy FMCSA systems to MOTUS. In the extreme, these concerns have created market uncertainty around operating authority status for some otherwise “active” carriers, which raises uncomfortable questions from customers who rely on verification of active authority. There have also been challenges in uploading required evidence of financial responsibility.

Given these challenges, we recommend these three steps for transportation service providers navigating the new MOTUS environment:

Stay Alert - First, stay alert and react promptly to legitimate FMCSA correspondence. The FMCSA may issue notices regarding account verification, data discrepancies or operating authority status. Timely responses to correspondence are critical to avoiding lapses in operating authority status or in meeting compliance requirements.

Use FMCSA Resources - Second, maintain open lines of communication with the FMCSA. If you encounter problems with data migration, account linking or verification processes, document the issues and follow up with the agency. The FMCSA has provided guidance and support resources for the transition. Consistent and timely communication can help resolve problems before they become compliance concerns.

Manage Customers - Third, maintain proactive communication with your customers. If you experience any issues with MOTUS that affect your operating authority status or its display in federal databases, inform your customers and business partners promptly. Transparency helps preserve commercial relationships and avoids disruption to your operations while technical issues are resolved.

These three steps are straightforward but essential during this time. They require staying calm and preparing good communications with both the FMCSA and customers. The cost of ignoring these steps could be significant. Carriers that fail to take timely action may find themselves with inactive accounts, outdated information or verification delays when they need to make registration changes or confirm their authority in the new system.

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