CLIENT ALERTS & INSIGHTS

FMCSA's New Motus System: What Every USDOT-Registered Entity Needs To Know and Do Before May 14th

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Featured Industries: Transportation & Logistics, International Trade & Supply Chain Management

Key Takeaways

- The FMCSA is replacing its current registration systems with a new, centralized platform called Motus, which will handle all registration activities for motor carriers, freight brokers, and freight forwarders. The current system will be shut down permanently on May 14, 2026.
- Entities that do not update and verify their information before the deadline risk being locked out or delayed in accessing the new Motus system, which could disrupt operations and compliance.
- USDOT-registered companies can prepare by immediately confirming their FMCSA Portal account is active, verifying the correct Company Official and Login.gov email, and ensuring all company information is current to avoid complications when Motus launches.

A Major FMCSA Registration Overhaul Is Imminent

Federal registration for motor carriers, freight brokers, and surface freight forwarders is getting its biggest makeover in decades. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration ("FMCSA") is retiring its current, decentralized patchwork of legacy registration platforms and replacing them with a single, modernized system called "Motus" (a Latin word meaning "movement" or "motion"). In anticipation of the new system going live, FMCSA has publicly requested that entities holding a United States Department of Transportation ("USDOT") number promptly take certain actions in preparation.

What is Motus?

Motus is designed to become the single destination for all FMCSA registration activities. Tasks such as applying for operating authority, maintaining USDOT registration, completing biennial updates, and managing financial responsibility filings will all eventually flow through the single, centralized Motus platform rather than through multiple, disconnected systems. Over the long term, FMCSA intends that Motus will serve as the hub through which all federal, state and industry users access safety and registration data, a role currently split between the FMCSA Portal, the Unified Registration System and other tools like SAFER.

Fortunately, fraud prevention is a central pillar of Motus. The transportation industry has seen a troubling rise in identity theft, account hijacking, and fraudulent insurance filings in recent years. Motus intends to help address these issues directly through mandatory identity and business verification at the point of registration. Under Motus, individual users will be required to verify their identity using a government-issued ID and a facial scan through a smartphone or digital tablet. FMCSA has also engaged a separate private verification company to confirm independently a company's legal name, ownership structure, principal place of business, and state and federal registration standing before granting access.

May 14 is a Hard Deadline

According to FMCSA, the existing FMCSA Portal registration functions are currently scheduled to go dark permanently on **May 14, 2026, at 8:00 PM EDT**. After that point, USDOT-registered entities will not be able to submit updates, make changes, or file new applications through the current system. The FMCSA is asking businesses to take certain steps ahead of the deadline to confirm that the information in their current FMCSA Portal accounts is accurate. Those who do not do so risk being locked out or delayed when Motus opens to them.

Recommended Steps Before May 14

Any entity holding a USDOT number should take the following actions now:

1. Confirm that the company's FMCSA Portal account is active and accessible. Accounts go inactive after 90 days of non-use and are archived after 12 months. Reactivation requires contacting FMCSA directly and may take time.
2. Verify that the designated Company Official is the correct person (an owner or authorized internal employee) and that their Login.gov email address will be the same one used to access Motus. A mismatch here will prevent the company from claiming its USDOT number when Motus opens.
3. Ensure all company information on file is current, including address, operation classification, and authorized users. Outdated records will trigger verification delays under the new system's strict data validation processes.

FMCSA has provided an in-depth user guide explaining these steps.

Don’t Wait on This

As Benjamin Franklin said, “Never leave till tomorrow that which you can do today.” USDOT-registered entities that fail to take timely action may find themselves with inactive accounts, outdated information, or the wrong person listed as Company Official. Such USDOT-registered entities will, according to FMCSA, face real delays when they need to make registration changes or claim their USDOT number in the new system. The steps required right now are straightforward and take minimal time. The cost of ignoring them could be significant.

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