

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Innovise Business Consultants

FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse 2020 Summary

On Jan. 14, 2021, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published the 2020 Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) [summary](#). This summary includes the number of user registrations, queries conducted, violations reported and return-to-duty drivers. The summary is used to show what the program has been doing in the first year since its rollout.

What Is the Clearinghouse?

The [Clearinghouse](#) is a centralized database that employers use to report drug and alcohol program violations and conduct queries, which help determine whether current drivers or prospective drivers are prohibited from performing safety-sensitive functions due to a drug or alcohol program violation. Employers and consortia/third-party administrators (C/TPAs) are required to run queries for preemployment investigations, as well as run annual queries for current employees.

User Registrations

In 2020, there were 1,767,885 unique accounts registered. Those accounts include:

- Driver accounts – 1,599,868
- Employer accounts – 197,212
- C/TPA accounts – 14,098
- Medical review officer (MRO) accounts – 2,791
- Substance abuse professional (SAP) accounts – 3,036

Keep in mind that this information shows the number of Clearinghouse users who have registered for each role. Users may register for multiple roles.

Queries

Employers are required to conduct queries when hiring new commercial driver's license (CDL) holders and annually for current CDL drivers. These queries are conducted through the Clearinghouse.

There were a total of 4,268,411 queries in 2020. Here are the broken-down totals based on query type:

- Preemployment (full-time) queries – 1,429,842
- Full-time driver queries – 136,806
- Limited queries – 2,701,763

These queries can be conducted by employers or their designated service agents each month.

Reported Violations

It is required that employers, C/TPAs and MROs report violations of the drug and alcohol program to the Clearinghouse. There were a total of 54,955 drug violations in 2020. This includes the following violations:

- Actual knowledge of a drug violation – 1,330
- Drug test refusal – 7,803
- Positive drug test – 45,882

There were also 1,203 alcohol violations in 2020. This includes the following violations:

- Actual knowledge of an alcohol violation – 177
- Alcohol test refusal – 287
- Blood alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater – 739

Positive drug tests accounted for 82% of the total violations reported. The most identified substance in a Department of Transportation drug test in 2020 was marijuana, with 29,511 positive tests. The second most identified substance was cocaine metabolite, with 7,940 positive tests.

Return-to-Duty Process

When a driver tests positive for a controlled substance or alcohol, they must be removed from safety-sensitive functions and undergo a return-to-duty (RTD) process. The Clearinghouse records specific milestones of the RTD process. The 2020 summary provides a snapshot of the number of drivers who had an open or resolved RTD process in 2020.

There was a total of 51,998 drivers with at least one violation in the RTD process. A total of 45,475 drivers were in prohibited status, meaning they were not yet able to complete safety-sensitive functions. Of those, 34,769 had not yet started their RTD process yet.

There were 6,513 drivers that were not in prohibited status, and were thus able to resume their safety-sensitive functions.

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