PSP: Pre-Employment Screening Program

Last month we discussed CSA (Comprehensive Safety Analysis) and left off by saying that drivers don't get safety ratings as part of CSA but that driver profiles are now available online so here we go again with another government acronym. The **P**re-Employment **S**creening **P**rogram (PSP) is a pay-per-search database that provides online access to drivers' crash and serious safety violation histories as a pre-employment condition and has returned nearly 200,000 requests in less than one year of operation.

While CSA is related to PSP they aren't the same because a 2005 congressional directive to make driver safety information electronically available for pre-employment screening led to the creation of PSP, separate from CSA's creation. Companies using PSP have reported that the information is providing helpful not only for hiring but also for training and for meeting CSA standards.

"There are things we are finding that we couldn't see before," said Gary Falldin, director of safety at Transport America, Eagan, Minn. "It does give us a good picture of an employee." He also said, "We are able to see were people are lacking and pay special attention to that driver and work with him." Basically, it allows the company to customize their training efforts to the individual driver. Fleets also report that very few drivers have been disqualified because of their PSP record. It's important for the driver to understand that not only will their profile live on for 3-5 years; violations also count against the company's CSA rating so of course the goal is to promote professional and safe driving.

PSP is controlled by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and is run by National Information Consortium Technologies, a private company that designs and manages internet based resources for 23 states and hundreds of local governments. The company is required to adhere to the Federal Privacy Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act and all other applicable laws and will be subject to routine audits. Subscription cost is $25 per year + $10 for each search for companies with < 100 trucks and $100 per year + $10 for each search for companies with > 100 trucks.

While this cost seems modest it does represent considerable new revenue for the FMCSA. From May through Dec. 2010 about 3,400 fleets have conducted approximately 180,000 searches while drivers have run about 7,000 searches. That's very close to 2 million $ of additional revenue at the lower $25 fee for just that 8 month period alone! Let's be politically incorrect and call it a hidden tax, what do you say!

Searches, or "Profiles" contain five years of crash data and three years of roadside inspection data on a driver. The driver's written authorization is required before a profile can be obtained and profiles are not available on current drivers. Most fleets using the system have reported few complaints from drivers mostly because it looks like it's just another form and because drivers know they won't be seriously considered unless they sign.

If a driver is declined employment because of data found on their profile and the driver believes the information is not accurate they can contest the information by visiting FMCSA's DataQs online system at https://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov/login.asp.

For more information go to www.psp.fmcsa.dot.gov

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