

Step-by-Step Checklist: How to Set Up MC Authority with FMCSA

Motor Carrier Authority (For-Hire Interstate Operations)

Use this checklist to **track progress, compliance, and avoid common delays** when applying for MC Authority.

Before You Apply (Preparation)

- ☐ Confirm you need **MC Authority** (for-hire, interstate operations)
 - ☐ Decide carrier type:
 - ☐ Motor Carrier of Property
 - ☐ Broker (if applicable)
 - ☐ Determine operation type:
 - ☐ Interstate
 - ☐ Intrastate (state-specific authority may also apply)
 - ☐ Legal business entity is registered with your state
 - ☐ EIN obtained from the IRS (**FREE**)
 - ☐ Business bank account opened
-

Step 1: Apply for DOT Number & MC Authority

- ☐ Create an account in the **FMCSA Unified Registration System (URS)**
- ☐ Complete the online application (MCSA-1)
- ☐ Select correct authority type

- ☐ Pay FMCSA filing fee (**\$300 per authority type**)
- ☐ Application submitted successfully

FMCSA fees are paid directly by the business owner.

Step 2: FMCSA Application Review (Waiting Period)

- ☐ MC number issued (pending status)
 - ☐ 21-day public protest period begins
 - ☐ FMCSA application status monitored
-

Step 3: Insurance Requirements (Critical)

- ☐ Obtain required insurance coverage:
 - ☐ Auto Liability (typically \$750,000 minimum)
 - ☐ Cargo Insurance (required by most brokers/shippers)
 - ☐ Insurance company files:
 - ☐ **BMC-91 or BMC-91X** (liability)
 - ☐ **BMC-34** (cargo, if applicable)
 - ☐ Confirm filings are visible in FMCSA system
-

Step 4: Designate Process Agents (BOC-3)

- ☐ Select a BOC-3 process agent service
- ☐ BOC-3 filed electronically with FMCSA
- ☐ Coverage includes all required states

BOC-3 must be on file before authority can be activated.

Step 5: Unified Carrier Registration (UCR)

- ☐ Register for **UCR**
 - ☐ Pay annual UCR fee (based on fleet size)
 - ☐ Confirmation saved for records
-

Step 6: Safety & Compliance Setup (Required)

- ☐ Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse account created
 - ☐ Random testing consortium enrolled (if CDL drivers)
 - ☐ Driver qualification files established
 - ☐ Hours of Service (HOS) system selected
 - ☐ ELD compliance reviewed (if applicable)
 - ☐ Vehicle maintenance files created
 - ☐ Accident register set up
-

Step 7: Vehicle & Driver Requirements

- ☐ Vehicle(s) properly titled and registered
 - ☐ Annual vehicle inspections completed
 - ☐ Proof of insurance carried in vehicle
 - ☐ Driver credentials verified:
 - ☐ Valid license
 - ☐ Medical certificate (if required)
 - ☐ Background checks completed
-

Step 8: New Entrant Safety Audit Preparation

- ☐ Safety policies documented
- ☐ Compliance records organized
- ☐ New Entrant Safety Audit readiness confirmed
- ☐ Contact information updated in FMCSA portal

The New Entrant Safety Audit typically occurs within the first 12 months.

Step 9: Authority Activation

- ☐ Insurance filings accepted
- ☐ BOC-3 on file
- ☐ UCR active
- ☐ Authority status shows **ACTIVE** in FMCSA system

You are now authorized to operate legally.

Ongoing Compliance (Do Not Skip)

- ☐ Maintain active insurance at all times
 - ☐ Renew UCR annually
 - ☐ Update FMCSA MCS-150 every 2 years or as required
 - ☐ Maintain driver, vehicle, and safety files
 - ☐ Comply with DOT audits and inspections
-

Important Notes

- All **FMCSA and government fees are paid by the business owner**
 - Missing filings are the most common cause of delayed authority activation
 - Insurance filings must be submitted by the **insurance provider**, not the carrier
-

Optional Setup Assistance

MC Authority setup assistance is available for those who prefer guided support.

Service Fee: \$500 (services only)

- Includes guidance, filing support, and compliance setup
- All FMCSA, insurance, and government fees are paid separately by the business owner

I am not an attorney or accountant. Legal or accounting matters may be referred to licensed professionals.

Final Reminder

Strong compliance practices from day one help protect your authority and your business. Use this checklist to stay organized, informed, and audit-ready.

— **Halima Moore**
Owner & Founder