



DRUG & ALCOHOL CLEARINGHOUSE

SDLA Webinars – Questions and Answers

The following questions were submitted by SDLAs to FMCSA during the Clearinghouse-II Check-In Webinars.

State Requirements and Obtaining Legislative Authority

1. Does the Clearinghouse-II final rule apply to restricted CDLs?

Yes. The SDLAs' query and downgrade requirements apply to restricted CDLs.

2. Do SDLAs have the option to disqualify drivers with a “Prohibited” status, rather than downgrade their CDL?

Yes. The Clearinghouse-II final rule requires that SLDAs “remove the commercial driving privilege for individuals who are in a “Prohibited” Clearinghouse status. The downgrade is the minimum licensing action States must take to remove the commercial privilege from the driver’s license. It is up to the State’s discretion to remove these commercial driving privileges by other more stringent means, such as suspension or revocation.

3. Why would SDLAs be notified of a non-commercial driver who has violations recorded in the Clearinghouse?

A CLP holder may have incurred part 382 violations prior to losing their commercial driving privileges in the past or in another State, and then failed to complete the RTD process. The Clearinghouse-II final rule requires that SLDAs verify that an applicant has a “not prohibited” Clearinghouse status before issuing a CLP or CDL.

4. Is information available to help States draft legislative language?

FMCSA has created a factsheet to assist States in obtaining legislative authority; refer to the [Clearinghouse-II State Requirements factsheet](#).

5. Can an SDLA start querying the Clearinghouse and initiating downgrades before the compliance date?

Yes. As long as they have the legislative authority to do so, States can begin querying the Clearinghouse and deny or downgrade CDLs based on “prohibited” Clearinghouse statuses.



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Establishing Connectivity

6. When will the representational state transfer (REST) services be available to be used in production?

They are available now, however, a State must have a signed Interconnection Security Agreement (ISA) with FMCSA to use the REST services (ISA is coming soon). You will also need to get FMCSA Portal access and use those credentials to set up the REST service.

7. Is the application programming interface (API) spec available for establishing direct connection to the Clearinghouse?

Yes, the Open API Spec has been available since June 2022 and links can be found on the SDLA Resources Page (<https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/Resource/Page/SDLAResources>). In March 2023, FMCSA added a service that will add the ability for States or AAMVA to automatically submit an error report.

8. For direct connect methods, how long does it take to establish an approved ISA?

FMCSA is still working on this with the Security and Privacy Office to establish a timeline. An ISA template will be available on the SDLA Resources page. We will let States know steps they need to take. FMCSA will put this information in a comprehensive job aid.

Note: States using the AAMVA connection do not need the ISA; you only need it if you are doing the Direct Connect option.

9. If SDLAs are required to query the Clearinghouse before completing a CDL transaction, what do we do if the Clearinghouse is down?

FMCSA has many risk mitigation strategies in place to ensure that the Clearinghouse stays operational as much as possible. The Clearinghouse has a dedicated technical team that will mobilize immediately to resolve any outages as quickly as possible. States will be notified when FMCSA become aware of an outage, and will be notified when an outage has been resolved.

10. When querying the Clearinghouse, what action should an SDLA take if their State's system cannot connect with the Clearinghouse?

As a backup, any SDLA staff member with an FMCSA Portal account that has the "DACH-General Query" user role can log in to the Clearinghouse user interface and manually look up the driver's current status.



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11. Our State's initial plan was to just access this information through the Clearinghouse website, but would it be pretty straightforward if we wanted to then integrate Clearinghouse access with our IT system at a later date?

Yes. A State may implement more than one option at the same time. For example, you can select the web interface with person-read email and manual login and also configure direct machine-to-machine or machine-read email, and they can work simultaneously.

12. For the machine-to-machine connection option, why does FMCSA request access to the SDLA's system?

If a State chooses to implement the full machine-to-machine connection, this access will enable FMCSA to publish change notifications to a State's publicly accessible REST service.

13. When will AAMVA's connection specifications be available?

AAMVA plans to make their specifications available in August 2023.

Clearinghouse Functionality

14. Is it possible for a State to get the number of its CDL holders who are prohibited in the Clearinghouse?

Yes. If you would like direct access right now, you can create an FMCSA portal account and log into the Clearinghouse website using your Portal credentials. We do have a report available that will allow you to get a list of the prohibited drivers for your State, SDLA users can request "full access" to the Clearinghouse to access this report.

15. How does an SDLA obtain full access to the Clearinghouse (i.e., to search for a driver's status history and run reports)?

Refer to the [Using the Clearinghouse for SDLAs job aid](#) for these instructions. This job aid is also available on the [SDLA Resources webpage](#).

16. Will the "Prohibited Drivers" report be a current list of who in a State is prohibited in the Clearinghouse at the time the report is run?

Yes, it will provide real-time information.

17. Why is the "run reports" function available to the SDLA but not to enforcement users?

The Clearinghouse Team has made the prohibited status report available to Federal enforcement users of the Clearinghouse.



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Note (March 2023): This response has been updated to reflect that the “run reports” function is now available to Federal enforcement users.

18. How will an SDLA be notified if a driver’s status changes to “Not Prohibited” within 60 days of the SDLA pulling a prohibited driver report?

If the SDLA is using a Direct Connect “push” notification option, the SDLA will receive a notification from the Clearinghouse whenever a driver’s status changes to “not prohibited.” Those using the AAMVA-supported solution will also receive this “push” notification.

If the SDLA is not using an FMCSA “push” option to receive notifications, they will need to set up periodic “pull” actions to ensure they always have access to the latest driver information so that they can respond to a driver’s change in status within the required 60-day time frame.

Miscellaneous

19. What if FMCSA pushes a driver notification to a State and the State knows the driver is not located in their State anymore?

If the pointer should transfer to a different State, it would turn to a manual process. The State would need to notify FMCSA that they don’t “own” the driver, and FMCSA would need to work to figure out where the pointer should go.

20. What is the plan for graphics for posting on SDLA social media, State websites—will that be available before implementation date, like it was with ELDT?

Yes, we will be developing these sorts of materials; we will work to provide these as soon as possible.

21. If SDLAs have questions in between check in webinars, who should we contact?

SDLAs can reach out to:

- The Clearinghouse team at clearinghouse@dot.gov for questions about the Clearinghouse-II final rule or the “direct connect” methods.
- Your FMCSA Division Office representative for questions about implementing the Clearinghouse-II in your State.
- Carlos Dequina (carlos.dequina@dot.gov) for questions about how the Clearinghouse-II final rule will impact your State’s CDL program.
- Apti Morada (amorada@aamva.org) or Rajesh Dharmarajan (rdharmarajan@aamva.org) for questions about using an AAMVA-supported service to connect to the Clearinghouse.