

Transport Topics

From Letters to the Editor in the June 14, 2010 print edition of *Transport Topics*.

Safety Specialists

I'm writing in response to the May 31 article "New U.S. Plan Leads to Surge in Hiring of Safety Specialists," which discusses the push to hire safety professionals as carriers prepare for Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010.

We've noticed a parallel trend at our company, which manages carriers' safety and compliance data to reduce their exposure to risk.

Historically, our clients have outsourced individual compliance activities such as log auditing and driver qualification file management. With the approach of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's CSA 2010, however, we've seen a shift toward total compliance outsourcing. Carriers are seeking not only CSA 2010 compliance services but also an entire compliance package.

We've identified a few reasons for this trend:

- Some carriers had to lay off safety personnel during the recession, and they can't afford to bring them back. These carriers believe that total outsourcing is a more affordable solution.
- Other carriers are concerned about their ability to train their safety professionals to ensure compliance under CSA 2010 prior to the program's national rollout. As Jim Parham said in your article, "It takes a lot longer to ramp up those operations than it does to close them down."
- Still others don't have systems in place that are capable of ensuring compliance. As Jeff Arnold of the North American Transportation Management Association stated in your article, carriers will need "tools to 'drill down' more extensively into their safety performance," and "the information will be more real time." CSA 2010 isn't about doing the same thing in greater depth. It requires new systems and methodologies that carriers haven't required in the past.

Whether carriers choose to hire new safety personnel or completely outsource their compliance function, one thing is certain: CSA 2010 is causing a sea change in the way carriers are approaching safety and compliance.

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