

MCTD asks its customers: "How are we doing?"

Are staff persons at the Motor Carrier Transportation Division (MCTD) knowledgeable of regulations? Can they quickly and correctly answer questions? Do they conduct business in a professional and courteous manner?

These are just three of the questions 2,965 MCTD "customers" found on survey forms distributed in July 2002 as MCTD asked, "How are we doing and how can we do a better job?"

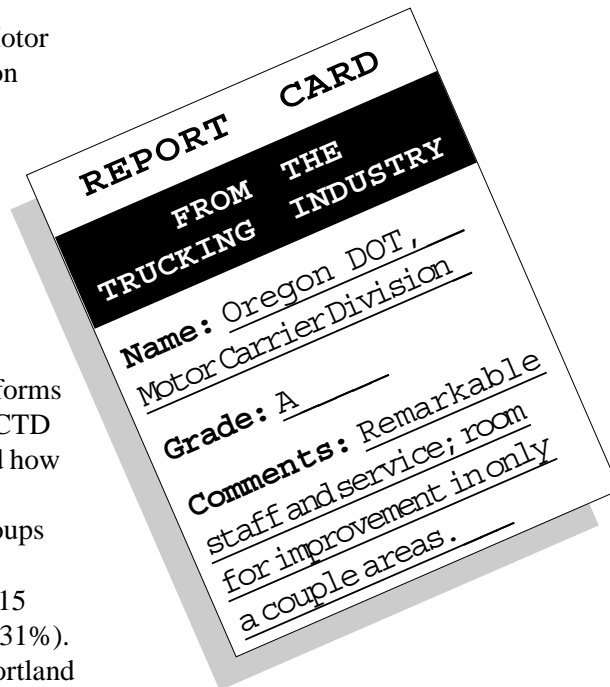
A total of 16 customer groups were contacted. In 11 surveys conducted by mail, 687 of 2,215 questionnaires were returned (31%). Four Ports of Entry and the Portland Bridge Office also handed out 750 survey forms to persons stopping there for over-the-counter registration services, with 125 returned (17%).

When MCTD conducted similar surveys in 1998 it found motor carriers gave staff high marks. This time carriers again responded with very favorable impressions of staff and the service they provide.

Two important questions most customers were asked was whether they think MCTD staff is knowledgeable of regulations and can quickly and correctly answer questions. In 11 surveys that asked these questions, 90% responded positively, 4% responded negatively, and 6% offered no opinion.

Another important question most were asked was whether staff persons conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner. In 13 surveys that asked this, 92% responded positively, 3% responded negatively, and 4% offered no opinion.

Following is a summary of noteworthy results from surveys of several customer groups:



Carriers Subject to a Truck Safety Inspection

Half of the companies (52%) surveyed say their trucks have been inspected 3-10 times by MCTD staff in the past year. As might be expected then, 52% agree the chances of being inspected on an average trip through Oregon are high, 71% say it's difficult to purposely evade an inspection, and only 24% think Oregon should increase on-highway inspection efforts. Nevertheless, 88% believe ODOT's Motor Carrier Safety Program has a positive effect on highway safety and 72% say putting drivers and vehicles out of service benefits safety.

Surveys were sent to 572 randomly selected Oregon companies who had a truck inspected by MCTD staff in the first five months of 2002. A total of 129 companies responded.

Truck Drivers Subject to a Driver Safety Inspection

The vast majority of truck drivers surveyed agree that ODOT inspectors conduct inspections in a professional, courteous manner (89%) and the

inspection form is easy to read and understand (88%). Of the drivers with an opinion, most agree that inspections are effective in identifying unsafe trucks when they're conducted during evening hours and on weekends (59%), and when done on secondary highway routes (73%). Most believe putting drivers and vehicles out of service benefits highway safety (75%). In response to the statement: "The company I work for gives me the information and support I need to be in compliance with safety regulations," 45% strongly agree, 35% agree, and 13% disagree (7% have no opinion).

Surveys were sent to 270 randomly-selected Oregon truck drivers who were subject to a driver inspection in the first five months of 2002. A total of 64 drivers responded.

Carriers Implicated in Truck Safety Hotline Reports

Most of the companies (77%) receiving an incident report relayed to MCTD through the Truck Safety Hotline say the program provides a service that helps them with their overall safety program and 79% think it's a satisfactory way to handle motorists' reports. In written comments, however, a number of people said there should be a Hotline for truck drivers to report cars. "Why don't you send me a 1-800 number for all the cars that cut me off?" one wrote. "It's too easy for people to report trucks, but not for our drivers to report bad motorists they deal with every day. It's much too easy to put all the blame for incidents on the truck driver," another said.

Surveys are included in the incident response form received by all companies implicated by a Hotline report. This summarized the most recent responses of 128 companies.

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Visit MCTD on the World Wide Web for a more detailed look at survey responses —
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/MCT/SURVEY02.shtml

“How are we doing?” — MCTD asks its customers

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Persons Calling Salem for Registration Services or an Over-Dimension Permit

Most of the customers (89%) calling the Salem Permit Analysts for help with highway-use taxes, registration, or over-dimension permits agree staff is flexible in accommodating their needs (only 2% disagree). Similarly, most (84%) agree the analysts process tax, registration, and single-trip permit transactions in a timely and accurate manner (9% disagree). Many, however, added written comments about phone service. “Waiting time is too long. Have more people available to answer questions, or get a toll free number,” one person wrote. Despite budgetary constraints at MCTD, some fault management for

slow service. “Staffing appears inadequate,” one person wrote. “Have additional staff on heavy days. Waiting 6-7 hours for an over-dimension permit is not acceptable when my customer is waiting,” another said.

When asked about their interest in conducting business with MCTD via the Internet, half of those calling for registration services (54%) and three-fourths of those calling for over-dimension permits (74%) say they would use computer programs if they were available. But most (68%) would not use a credit card to pay for online transactions if a 2% transaction fee were added each time. When asked if they prefer to pay by automatic withdrawal from checking, with no fee added, 50% say that’s a better choice.

Surveys were sent to randomly-selected persons who called Salem Permit Analysts during the last week of June 2002, including 181 who called for registration services and 149 who called for over-dimension permits. A total of 48 responded from the first group and 58 from the latter.

Methodology and Cost

Customer survey projects can involve hiring a contractor to define methodology, design forms or write scripts used in phone surveys, conduct the surveys, and report results. Depending on the complexity of the effort, it’s not uncommon for professionals to charge tens of thousands of dollars for labor, materials, and fees to conduct this kind of survey.

MCTD took a least-cost approach, however, and spent just \$1,041 in postage and printing to conduct its surveys. It saved money by using forms developed by staff and assigning one staff person to collect surveys and report results. Also, it sent surveys to enough randomly-selected persons or companies from each customer group to get within a 95% response confidence level, +/- 4% to 8%. But it did not undertake the costly process of identifying those not responding so it could reach each of them and again request that they respond.

Compared to the last time MCTD conducted customer surveys in 1998, this time the agency spent roughly twice as much to send out twice as many forms and, as a result of a comparable response rate, get twice as many responses. But across the board it turns out the responses were remarkably consistent with those from the 1998 survey.

Companies Participating in the Green Light Preclearance Program

The vast majority of companies say it’s easy to use Green Light to preclear Oregon weigh stations (only 3% disagree), it saves time by avoiding weigh station stops (8% disagree), and it saves money in truck operating costs (6% disagree). But 20% say they would not be participating in Green Light if MCTD had not distributed transponders at no charge, and 28% are not willing to spend \$50 for each new transponder when the batteries die in the ones they’re using now. Rather, 86% are interested in spending \$10-\$15 to just replace the batteries.

When asked if they have a problem with the fact that Green Light allows ODOT to collect weigh station records

electronically, just like it collects records manually when a truck stops at a station, 88% of the companies say that’s not a problem (only 3% say it is a problem and 9% have no opinion). When asked about ODOT using weigh station records for enforcement purposes, such as checking driver logbooks, 72% say it is appropriate (15% say it’s inappropriate and 13% have no opinion).

Surveys were sent to 200 randomly-selected companies in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington who have at least half of their truck fleet equipped with Green Light transponders. A total of 90 companies responded.

Carriers Designated as Oregon Trusted Carrier Partners

Every company responding to this survey says they take pride in being an Oregon Trusted Carrier Partner and 95% say they clearly derive benefits from that (1% disagree and 4% have no opinion).

About one-third of the companies (36%) say putting Trusted Carrier plates on their Green Light transponder-equipped trucks helps them retain drivers (4% disagree, while 60% have no opinion or say the question is not applicable).

When asked if the Trusted Carrier plate has a positive effect on the way Oregon weigh station operators treat their drivers, 78% say it does (5% disagree and 17% have no opinion). When asked if it has a positive effect on the way Oregon law enforcement officers treat their drivers, a smaller percentage, 61%, say it does (10% disagree and 29% have no opinion).

All but a few of the companies say the Trusted Carrier designation is a major incentive to maintain a good safety record (96% agree, 2% disagree) and it’s a major incentive to stay in compliance with other regulations like registration and road-use tax reporting and payment (92% agree, 4% disagree).

Surveys were sent to 150 randomly-selected companies in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington who qualify as Trusted Carrier Partners. A total of 80 companies responded.