

Surveys reach 2,320 randomly-selected persons or companies

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?

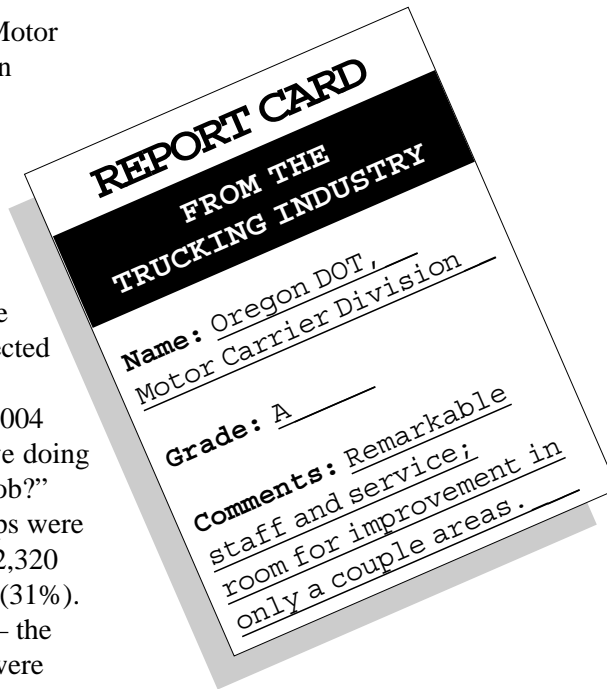
These are just three of the questions 2,320 randomly-selected "customers" found on survey forms distributed in Summer 2004 as MCTD asked, "How are we doing and how can we do a better job?" Nine different customer groups were contacted by mail and 727 of 2,320 questionnaires were returned (31%). A tenth group of customers — the users of Trucking Online — were also given the chance to complete an online survey about their experience with that Internet-based service.

When MCTD conducted similar customer surveys in 1998 and 2002, 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 staff is knowledgeable of regulations and can quickly and correctly answer questions. In six surveys that asked these questions, 88% responded positively, 6% 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 seven surveys that asked this, 94% responded positively, 3% responded negatively, and 3% offered no opinion.

Following is a summary of noteworthy results from the surveys:



Oregon Companies Subject to a Safety Compliance Review

Most of the companies surveyed (72%) believe ODOT's Motor Carrier Safety Program has a positive effect on highway safety, 87% agree that Safety Compliance Reviews influence carriers to comply with safety regulations, and 76% say the \$100 penalty that applies to most safety violations is sufficient to convince carriers to stay in compliance.

Surveys were sent to 202 Oregon companies who were subject to a Safety Compliance Review in the first five months of 2004. A total of 61 companies responded.

Oregon Companies Subject to a Truck Safety Inspection

Three-fourths of the companies surveyed (77%) say their trucks were inspected 3-10 times by MCTD staff in the past year. As might be expected then, 57% agree the chances of being inspected on an average trip through Oregon are high and only 29% think Oregon should increase on-highway

inspection efforts. Nevertheless, 89% believe ODOT's Motor Carrier Safety Program has a positive effect on highway safety and 79% agree putting drivers and vehicles out of service benefits safety. In answer to one new survey question, 94% agree that stopping trucks that are speeding or committing other traffic violations benefits highway safety.

Surveys were sent to 323 randomly-selected Oregon companies who had a truck inspected by MCTD staff in the first five months of 2004. A total of 110 companies responded.

Oregon 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 (94%) and the inspection form is easy to read and understand (90%). 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 (61%) and when done on secondary highway routes (73%). Most agree there's a benefit to highway safety when drivers and vehicles with critical safety violations are put out of service (79%) and when trucks are stopped for speeding or committing other traffic violations (88%).

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," 48% strongly agree, 45% agree, and 3% disagree (4% have no opinion).

Surveys were sent to 338 randomly-selected Oregon truck drivers who were subject to a driver inspection in the first five months of 2004. A total of 110 drivers responded.

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Visit MCTD on the World Wide Web for a more detailed look at survey responses —

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/MCT/SURVEY04.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 calling the Salem Registration Permit Analysts for help with truck-related business (86%) agree staff is flexible in accommodating their needs and only 2% say they do not process tax and registration transactions in a timely and accurate manner. Those calling Over-Dimension Permit Analysts for a single-trip permit also seem happy with service as 89% say their requests are processed in a timely and accurate manner (11% offer no opinion).

However, many complained about phone wait times. “Every time I have to call with a question, it takes way too long to talk to someone,” one person wrote. “The wait to speak to a real person is unacceptable in my opinion,” another wrote. “I waited forever on my last call and finally hung up. That’s typical.”

The survey sent to those calling the Registration Permit Analysts asked if the respondent was using Trucking Online to conduct business via the Internet and, surprisingly, 45% say

they are signed up for the service. This suggests to MCTD managers that Trucking Online cannot completely eliminate the need for companies to call for service. It helps explain why so many (74%) say MCTD should continue to operate a 24/7 phone Service Center (only 5% disagree and 21% offer no opinion).

Of those not using Trucking Online, most say they actually like doing business by phone, mail, or fax, some don’t do enough business with Oregon, and others don’t like doing business on the Internet.

Surveys were sent to 267 randomly-selected companies who called the Salem Registration Permit Analysts from June 14-21, 2004, and 207 randomly-selected companies who called the Over-Dimension Permit Analysts from June 19-23. A total of 66 responded from the first group and 76 from the second group.

Companies Participating in the Green Light Weigh Station Preclearance Program

The vast majority of companies say it’s easy to use Green Light to preclear weigh stations (only 3% disagree), it saves time by avoiding stops (4% disagree), and it saves money in truck operating costs (4% disagree). But 16% say they would not be participating in Green Light if MCTD had not given them their first transponders at no charge, and 30% are not willing to spend \$50 for each new transponder when the batteries die in the old ones. Rather, 82% say they plan to pay the Transponder Service Center in Salem about \$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, 89% of the companies say that’s not a problem (only 1% say it’s a problem and 10% have no opinion). When asked about

ODOT using weigh station records for enforcement purposes, such as checking driver logbooks, 78% say it is appropriate (9% say it’s inappropriate and 13% have no opinion).

Surveys were sent to 294 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 80 companies responded.

Companies Designated as Oregon Trusted Carrier Partners

Almost all of the companies responding to this survey say they take pride in being an Oregon Trusted Carrier Partner (1% do not) and 86% say they clearly derive benefits from that (14% offer no opinion).

One-third of the companies (33%) say putting Trusted Carrier plates on their Green Light transponder-equipped trucks helps them retain drivers (11% disagree, while 56% have no opinion or say the question is not applicable) and 70% say displaying a Trusted Carrier plate enhances their company’s image in the eyes of the general public and helps them market their product (4% disagree with that).

When asked if the Trusted Carrier plate has a positive effect on the way Oregon weigh station operators treat their drivers, 80% say it does (1% disagree and 19% offer no opinion). When asked if it has a positive effect on the way Oregon law enforcement officers treat their drivers, a smaller percentage, 67%, say it does (3% disagree and 30% offer no opinion).

Most of the companies say the Trusted Carrier designation is a major incentive to maintain a good safety record (90% agree, 3% disagree) and a major incentive to stay in compliance with other regulations like registration and road-use tax reporting (89% agree, 5% disagree).

Surveys were sent to 261 randomly-selected companies in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington who qualify as Trusted Carrier Partners. A total of 104 companies responded.

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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 thousands of dollars for labor, materials, and fees to conduct this kind of survey. MCTD took a least-cost approach, however, and spent just \$1,172 in postage and printing to conduct its surveys. It saved money by using forms developed by staff and assigning one person to collect surveys and report results. Surveys were received from enough randomly-selected persons or companies from each customer group to get within a 95% confidence level and a margin of error ranging from +/-8.5% to +/-11.5%.

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Companies Subject to a Weight-Mile Tax, IRP and/or IFTA Audit

Almost all of the companies responding to this survey say they were given enough time to prepare for their audit, whether it was a check of weight-mile tax records or those related to the International Registration Plan and International Fuel Tax Agreement (98% agree, 1% disagree, 1% offer no opinion). Almost all say the audit was completed in a timely manner (96% agree, 2% disagree, 2% offer no opinion).

Most say their auditor was fair and impartial (2% disagree) and helpful answering questions about reporting requirements and offering tips about good record keeping (2% disagree).

Surveys were sent to 251 randomly-selected companies subject to a weight-mile tax audit in the past year and all 177 companies subject to an IRP and/or IFTA audit in the past year. A total of 47 companies responded from the first group and 73 companies responded from the second group.

Companies Using Trucking Online to Conduct Business via the Internet

Most of the companies who went online to complete this survey say it's easy to use Trucking Online to get credentials like a temporary pass, trip permit, or a Weight Receipt and Tax Identifier (74% agree, 5% disagree, 20% offer no opinion). Fewer are using the service to look up vehicle status or see whether Oregon received a filing related to insurance, surety bonds, or weight-mile tax reports (56% agree it's easy for that, 3% disagree, 41% offer no opinion). Fewer still are using it to get scale crossing reports or a list of size and weight citations and warnings (22% agree it's easy for that, 1% disagree, 77% offer no opinion).

When asked if their company is using or plans to use the newest online service that allows them to file weight-mile tax reports and payments, 49% agree, 5% disagree, and 46% offer no opinion.

Almost all respondents say Trucking Online saves time they used to spend making phone calls or sending things by mail or fax (87% agree, 3% disagree, 10% offer no opinion) and most agree it saves time drivers used to spend stopping at an Oregon Port of Entry or field office (76% agree, 1% disagree, 22% offer no opinion). Overall, most agree the online service saves money by lowering business operating costs (67% agree, 3% disagree, 30% offer no opinion). When asked to estimate the number of transactions (weight receipts, passes, or permits) completed online in the recent month, 75% estimate 1-10 transactions, 19% estimate 11-50 transactions, and 5% estimate 51-100 or more transactions. In quantifying the amount of time saved in the recent month, 42% say they saved one hour or less, 55% saved 1-10 hours, and 2% saved 10-20 or more hours.

Most companies say Trucking Online meets or exceeds expectations (69% agree, 7% disagree, 23% offer no opinion) and of those who use similar Internet-based systems in other states, most agree Oregon's online service is as good or better (38% agree, 4% disagree, 58% offer no opinion).

Rather than offering suggestions for improving the online service, many customers used a comment box on the survey form to remark about phone service. “Have more staff answering the phones,” one person said. “Faster phone help service,” another said. “I spend lots of time sitting on hold when I do have a problem.”

Rather than randomly-sampling users, this survey was posted online from June 20 thru September 30, and was accessible to all with a password to the secure Trucking Online main menu page. A total of 99 companies completed this unscientific survey.

Best of comments from customer surveys

As a small, one-person operation, it is sometimes extremely difficult to keep all of your required paperwork up to date. It seems that safe operation and maintenance of my equipment would be far more important to the safety of others than the paperwork you require! Safety Compliance Review Survey, Customer #18

Be more friendly – smile. Truck Driver Survey, Customer #89

Get a toll free number. I call long distance and usually am on hold for a long time. Once I get a human, everything works well. Registration Permit Analysts Survey, Customer #24

Green Light is an excellent program. Keep up the good work!!! Green Light Survey, Customer #62

I love this program. Trusted Carrier Partner Survey, Customer #30

I've had several audits and felt they were all professionally done. Weight-Mile Tax Audit Survey, Customer #2

Set up training classes on record-keeping. IRP/IFTA Audit Survey, Customer #65

Don't audit me again. I have one truck and have now been audited for every year I've been in Oregon. After the first audit, you owed me \$47. After the second audit, you owed me \$193. What a waste of time. IRP/IFTA Audit Survey, Customer #68

I am pleased and impressed. All of the issues that I encountered with the system previously have been resolved with the current version of the interface. Thanks!!! Trucking Online Survey

Have more agents available when phoning to make call time shorter! Trucking Online Survey

Make the system more user-friendly, like that of other states. Even New York's system is easier than Oregon's. Trucking Online Survey