

TEXAS · SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION

The New Authority Filing Guide

Every registration a new motor carrier makes — what it is, where to file it, and the order that keeps your truck from sitting.

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|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|
| 01 | Form the LLC | 07 | UCR registration |
| 02 | Get the EIN | 08 | IRP apportioned plates |
| 03 | USDOT number | 09 | IFTA license |
| 04 | Operating authority (MC) | 10 | Form 2290 heavy vehicle use tax |
| 05 | BOC-3 process agents | 11 | Drug & alcohol program |
| 06 | Insurance filing (BMC-91X) | 12 | Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse |

How to use this guide

There are twelve registrations between you and your first legal interstate load. Most new carriers don't lose time on the hard ones. They lose it on the easy ones they started late, or did out of order.

The list below is in the order that works. Some steps run at the same time — you can shop insurance while your authority application sits in its protest period — but none of them can be skipped.

Each step tells you what it is, where it's filed, what it costs when there's a fixed fee, and the mistake that costs people the most time.

The order at a glance

#	FILING	WHERE	WHEN
BEFORE YOU APPLY			
01	Form the LLC	Texas Secretary of State (SOSDirect)	First
02	Get the EIN	IRS (irs.gov)	After the LLC clears
APPLY			
03	USDOT number	FMCSA Motus (motus.dot.gov)	After the EIN
04	Operating authority (MC)	FMCSA Motus	With or right after the USDOT
05	BOC-3 process agents	Filed with FMCSA by a process-agent company	Right after applying
BEFORE THE FIRST LOAD			
06	Insurance filing (BMC-91X)	Your insurer files it with FMCSA	Start quoting while the authority is pending
07	UCR registration	Unified Carrier Registration (ucr.gov)	Before running interstate
08	IRP apportioned plates	TxDMV	Before running interstate
09	IFTA license	Texas Comptroller	Before running interstate
10	Form 2290 heavy vehicle use tax	IRS	Month after first use
BEFORE ANYONE DRIVES			
11	Drug & alcohol program	A consortium / third-party administrator	Before the first driver drives
12	Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse	FMCSA Clearinghouse	Before the first driver drives

01 Form the LLC

WHAT IT IS	Your business entity. The EIN, the bank account and every federal registration go under this exact name, so get it right once.
WHERE	Texas Secretary of State (SOSDirect)
COST	Texas certificate of formation filing fee: \$300.

WATCH OUT

Online filings cannot be expedited. Use the exact legal name, character for character, on everything that follows. Keep the stamped Certificate of Filing — banks, insurers and FMCSA-related vendors ask for it.

02 Get the EIN

WHAT IT IS	Your federal tax ID. You need it for the bank account, the USDOT registration and the insurance application.
WHERE	IRS (irs.gov)
COST	Free.

WATCH OUT

Never pay a website to get an EIN for you. If you applied by fax or mail and it hasn't arrived, call the IRS business line (800-829-4933) — don't file a second application.

03 USDOT number

WHAT IT IS	Your carrier identity with FMCSA. Registration moved from the old URS system to Motus in May 2026. Motus requires identity verification before you can file.
WHERE	FMCSA Motus (motus.dot.gov)
COST	No federal fee for the USDOT number itself.

WATCH OUT

The information you enter becomes your MCS-150 record. You must update it every 24 months on a schedule set by your USDOT number — miss it and the number is deactivated.

04 Operating authority (MC)

WHAT IT IS	Permission to haul regulated freight for hire across state lines. FMCSA still issues MC numbers.
WHERE	FMCSA Motus
COST	\$300 per authority type. Non-refundable.

WATCH OUT The application is published, and there is a 10-day protest period (49 CFR 365.115). Even after that, the authority does not go active until your insurance filing and BOC-3 are on file with FMCSA.

05 BOC-3 process agents

WHAT IT IS	A designated person in each state to accept legal papers on your behalf. Most carriers use a blanket company that covers every state and files the BOC-3 electronically.
WHERE	Filed with FMCSA by a process-agent company
COST	Set by the process-agent company.

WATCH OUT Confirm the company actually filed it — check your FMCSA record, not just the receipt.

06 Insurance filing (BMC-91X)

WHAT IT IS	Proof of your auto liability coverage. The federal minimum for general freight is \$750,000 (\$1,000,000 for oil and most hazmat; \$5,000,000 for certain high-hazard loads). Most brokers and shippers require \$1,000,000.
WHERE	Your insurer files it with FMCSA
COST	Premium depends on your equipment, drivers, radius and commodity.

WATCH OUT Only the insurer can file the BMC-91X. If your record shows pending financial responsibility filings, call your agent the same day. Quote early: new authorities have fewer markets and underwriting takes time.

07 UCR registration

WHAT IT IS	An annual registration for interstate carriers, brokers and forwarders.
WHERE	Unified Carrier Registration (ucr.gov)
COST	Annual fee set by fleet size.

WATCH OUT It renews every year. Roadside enforcement checks it.

08 IRP apportioned plates

WHAT IT IS	Registration for trucks over 26,000 lbs that travel between states. Fees are split among the states you run.
WHERE	TxDMV
COST	Based on weight and your mileage by state.

WATCH OUT A regular Texas base plate is not enough for interstate work. Plates on heavy vehicles also require proof the Form 2290 tax was paid (step 10).

09 IFTA license

WHAT IT IS	One fuel-tax account for all the IFTA states you run. You file a return every quarter.
WHERE	Texas Comptroller
COST	Quarterly fuel tax based on miles and gallons by state.

WATCH OUT Returns are due the last day of the month after each quarter (April, July, October, January). Keep trip and fuel records from day one. Decals go on both sides of the cab.

10 Form 2290 heavy vehicle use tax

WHAT IT IS	Federal tax on trucks with a taxable gross weight of 55,000 lbs or more.
WHERE	IRS
COST	\$100 plus \$22 for each 1,000 lbs over 55,000, up to \$550 a year (26 U.S.C. 4481).

WATCH OUT You need the stamped Schedule 1 to register the truck. File by the end of the month after the month the truck is first used.

11 Drug & alcohol program

WHAT IT IS	A testing program, including random testing. Owner-operators join a consortium so they are in a random pool.
WHERE	A consortium / third-party administrator
COST	Set by the consortium.

WATCH OUT No one — including you — performs safety-sensitive work until a negative pre-employment test result is on file. Having no program is an automatic failure of the new entrant safety audit.

12 Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse

WHAT IT IS	The federal database of driver drug and alcohol violations. You register as an employer.
WHERE	FMCSA Clearinghouse
COST	Query fees apply.

WATCH OUT Run a full query on every driver before hire, and a query on every driver at least once a year after (49 CFR 382.701).

Your first 18 months

Every new carrier is in FMCSA's new entrant program for 18 months, and the law requires a safety review within your first 12 months of operation. Keep these ready from day one:

- ❑ A driver qualification file for every driver, including yourself if you drive.
- ❑ Drug and alcohol program records: consortium enrollment, pre-employment results, random selections.
- ❑ Hours-of-service records (ELD) and supporting documents.
- ❑ Annual inspection reports and maintenance records for every truck and trailer.
- ❑ An accident register, even if it's empty.
- ❑ Continuous insurance. A lapse shuts down your authority and fails the audit.
- ❑ Your MCS-150 biennial update date on the calendar.

Staying inside Texas?

Loads that never leave Texas can bring separate state requirements, including TxDMV motor carrier registration for heavier vehicles. Ask TxDMV about your operation before you run.

Where to call

FMCSA registration	1-800-832-5660
TxDMV motor carrier	1-800-299-1700, option 3, then 3
IRS business & specialty tax	800-829-4933
Texas Secretary of State	512-463-5555

About TCZ Insurance Agency

I ran my own authority and my own trucks, then worked dispatch, cross-border logistics and truck sales in Laredo before getting licensed. When you're ready for coverage, and for the BMC-91X to be filed the day you need it, call or email.

(956) 526-6727 · quote@tczinsurance.com · tczinsurance.com

General information about federal and Texas motor carrier registration as of September 2026. Not legal, tax or regulatory advice, and not an offer of insurance or a quote. Requirements and fees change — confirm with FMCSA, the IRS, TxDMV, the Texas Comptroller and the Texas Secretary of State before you file. Gustavo J. Cazares, Texas General Lines Agent — Property & Casualty, License #3551627, NPN 22350196, Laredo, Texas.