New Authority Launch Checklist

Updated November 2026 · Version v1

Rules and fees change. Each item links to the official page; check it on the day you file. Items marked state vary by your base state.

Business setup

- [ ] Form your business entity with your state, if you choose an LLC or corporation
- [ ] Get an EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Open a business bank account in the legal name

Federal registration

- [ ] Apply for a USDOT number and interstate operating authority (MC) through FMCSA registration (fmcsa.dot.gov/registration)
- [ ] File a BOC-3 process agent designation (usually through a process agent company)
- [ ] Insurance company files proof of liability coverage with FMCSA; at least $750,000 for general freight (49 CFR 387.9)
- [ ] Register with the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) program for the year (ucr.gov)
- [ ] Watch your authority status on FMCSA; you may not haul for hire until it shows active

State and tax items

- [ ] IRP apportioned plates through your base state (state)
- [ ] IFTA fuel tax license and decals through your base state; returns are quarterly (state)
- [ ] Heavy Vehicle Use Tax, IRS Form 2290, for trucks 55,000 lb or more taxable gross weight (irs.gov)
- [ ] Any state permits your lanes need, such as New York HUT, Kentucky KYU, New Mexico WDT or Oregon weight-mile (state)

Safety program

- [ ] Join a drug and alcohol testing consortium and complete a pre-employment drug test (49 CFR Part 382)
- [ ] Register in the FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse and run the required queries (clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov)
- [ ] Install a registered ELD (49 CFR Part 395 Subpart B; FMCSA ELD registration list)
- [ ] Driver qualification file, medical certificate and CDL (49 CFR Part 391)
- [ ] Prepare for the new entrant safety audit, usually within the first 12 months (49 CFR 385.307)

Ready to book

- [ ] Build your carrier packet (see the Broker Setup Packet Checklist)
- [ ] Company email on your own domain and a phone that is answered
- [ ] Trailer documents: registration, annual inspection, lease if leased
- [ ] Factoring or cash plan to cover fuel until brokers pay

First 90 days

- [ ] Days 1-30: set up with brokers that accept new authorities; haul clean, on time, with fast paperwork
- [ ] Days 31-60: ask brokers you hauled for to add you to direct lanes; keep inspections clean
- [ ] Days 61-90: review rate per mile and lanes; drop brokers who pay slowly

General information, not legal, tax, insurance or financial advice. Rules change; check each cited official source before you act.

Sources (checked November 2026)

FMCSA Registration: https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration

Unified Carrier Registration: https://www.ucr.gov/

IRS Form 2290: https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-2290

FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse: https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/

49 CFR 385.307, New entrant safety audit: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-385/subpart-D/section-385.307

IFTA, Inc.: https://www.iftach.org/

International Registration Plan: https://www.irponline.org/