

# Assessment of the CDL Disqualification Process

Dave Madsen, Volpe Center  
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U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration**



# FMCSA Program Objectives

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**Ensure** CDL records correctly reflect disqualifying citations and suspensions.



**Identify** and address issues associated with:

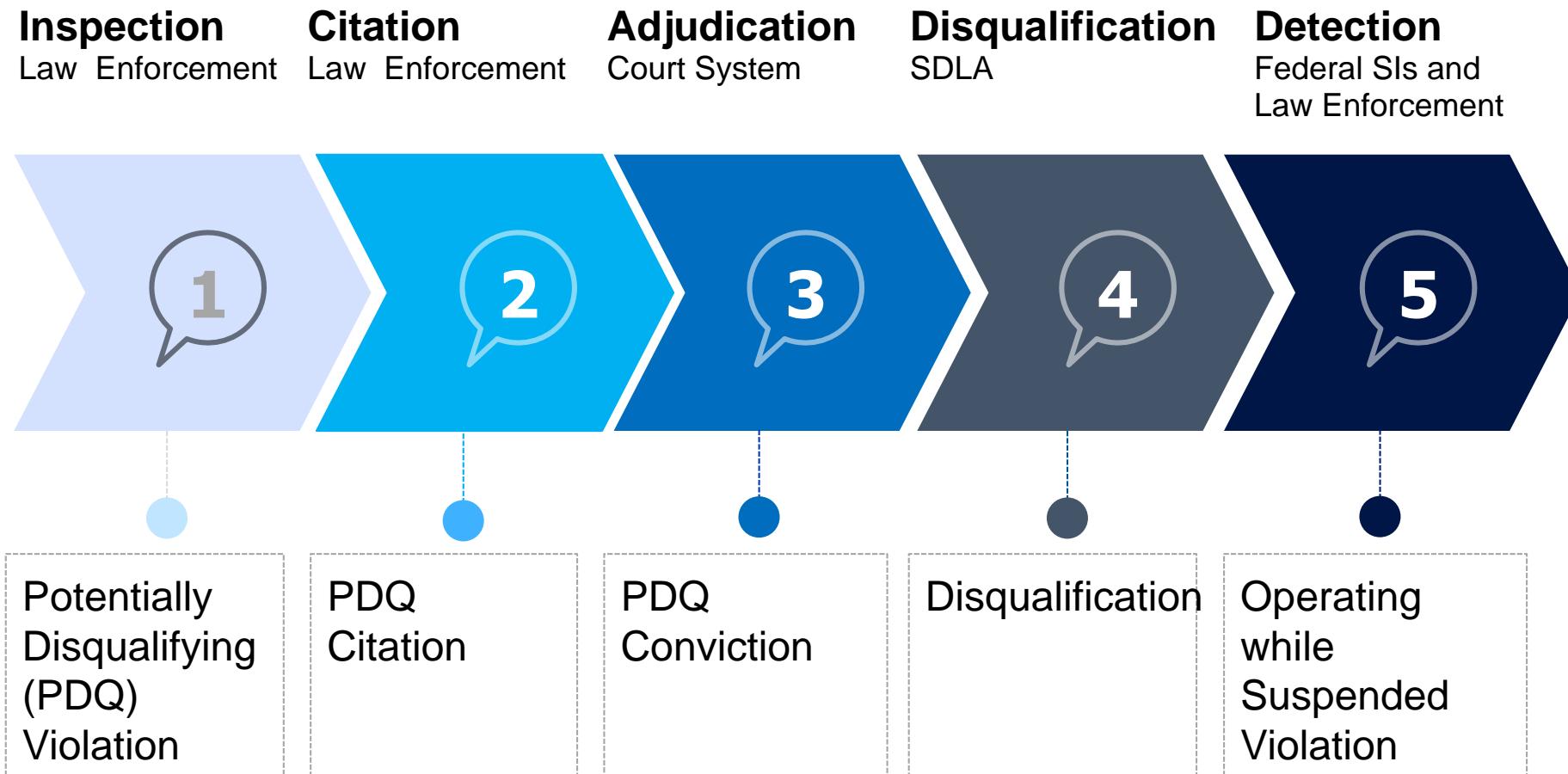
- Citing and processing disqualifying violations
- Recognizing when drivers are operating with a suspended license.



**Increase** awareness among States of their important role in improving safety through disqualifying activities.

# Overview: Disqualification Process

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## Scope: Nine Selected States

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- Range of CDL enforcement activities, through four factors:
  1. Traffic enforcement rate (Low, Medium, High)
  2. Driver disqualification rates (Low, Medium, High)
  3. CMV exposure (Low, Medium, High)
  4. Geographic region (FMCSA Service Centers)
- For each State:
  - CDL driver population
  - 383.51 violations tracked
  - 3-year timeframe (2016-2018)

# Data Used for Analysis

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- **MCMIS**
  - Inspection violations w/associated citation information
- **Court**
  - Citations (Charged Offenses)
  - Adjudications by outcome (e.g., guilty, not guilty, other)
- **State-to-ACD Crosswalks**
  - State codes that map to 383.51
- **Federal-to-ACD Crosswalks**
  - Federal codes recorded during inspections that map to 383.51
- **CDLIS**
  - Conviction/suspension records for CDL Holders
- **SDLA**
  - Suspension (Safety and non-safety) on in-state CDL holders



# Preliminary Observations from One State\*

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## Law Enforcement

- Speeding +15 MPH recorded in inspections resulted in PDQ citation 76% of the time and at a non-PDQ level 24% (e.g. speeding less than 15 MPH)
- Inspectors were able to detect safety-based disqualified CDL drivers 60% of the time

## Court

- Most charges (83%) of PDQ citations result in PDQ convictions
- Clear forms of “Masking” (e.g., “Following to Closely” charge reduced to “Littering” conviction) were rarely observed (16 out of 3,191 of the PDQ charges).

## SDLA

- 86% PDQ convictions that should have resulted in disqualification, did show a disqualification on the CDLIS record.
- 27% of PDQ convictions from the court not found in CDLIS Driver history records. Most of these “missing convictions” centered around specific violations such as “using a hand-held mobile telephone while driving or operating a CMV.”

\* Results and approach are currently being peer-reviewed

## Next Steps: Process Other States

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- Finish processing 8 remaining states to provide a better national picture of CDL Disqualification Process.
- Develop best practices – How to detect issues that allow unsafe CDLIS driver to continue to operate and how to fix them.
- Point of Contact: Nicole Michel, FMCSA Research Division at [nicole.michel@dot.gov](mailto:nicole.michel@dot.gov)

