

DISPATCHER LAUNCH CHECKLIST

From setup to your first carriers, without crossing FMCSA's dispatcher vs. broker line. We ran a team of dispatchers; this is the order we'd do it in again.

1. BUSINESS SETUP (WEEK 1-2)

- ☐ Form your LLC (or decide on sole proprietor) in your state
- ☐ Get a free EIN at IRS.gov
- ☐ Open a separate business bank account
- ☐ Business phone number, email, and a simple one-page website or profile
- ☐ Check your state and city/county business license rules
- ☐ Load board account and a rate-tracking sheet
- ☐ Written dispatch agreement ready to sign (see box 2)

2. STAY A DISPATCHER, NOT A BROKER

- ☐ Each carrier appoints you as its agent in a **written contract** (fee, duties, insurance and liability)
- ☐ You're paid **only by the carrier**, never by a broker, 3PL, or factor
- ☐ You book loads **through brokers** and don't solicit or negotiate with shippers
- ☐ You tell brokers which carrier you're booking for, and that carrier hauls it
- ☐ No load without a truck, and no re-assigning loads
- ☐ Several carriers? Keep their lanes or equipment from overlapping so you never pick between them

Want to work shippers directly? That takes broker authority and a \$75,000 bond or trust fund (49 CFR 387.307).

3. YOUR OWN AUTHORITY, OR AN AGENT UNDER A BROKER?

- **Dispatching for carriers:** FMCSA has no dispatcher license. You don't need authority if you stay inside box 2.
- **Agent under a licensed broker:** you book freight under that broker's authority and contract, and the broker pays you. It's a different job from dispatching.
- **Your own broker authority:** apply in FMCSA's Motus system, file a BOC-3, and keep the \$75,000 bond or trust fund on file.

4. LAND YOUR FIRST CARRIERS

- ☐ Pick one lane of focus: equipment type plus region (e.g., flatbed, Southeast)
- ☐ Build a list of small carriers (1-10 trucks) from public FMCSA data and prospecting tools
- ☐ Write a 30-second call script plus answers to "why should I pay you?"
- ☐ Offer clear terms: your % or flat fee, what you handle, how to cancel
- ☐ Build credibility with your process, not one screenshot of a rare high-paying load
- ☐ Read Facebook group rules first: many big carrier groups ban dispatcher solicitation
- ☐ Ask every happy carrier for one referral

5. YOUR FIRST 90 DAYS

WHEN	DO THIS	DONE
Weeks 1-2	Setup (box 1) and dispatch agreement with agent language (box 2)	☐
Weeks 2-4	Build a list of 100 carriers in your focus lane; start calls and follow-ups	☐
Weeks 4-8	Dispatch your first carriers; build a preferred-broker list (fast payers, repeat lanes)	☐
Weeks 8-12	Add carriers whose lanes or equipment don't overlap; collect referrals and results	☐

BOOK BETTER LOADS FOR YOUR CARRIERS

The Broker Setup & Negotiation Guide: 27 pages on setting up with brokers, vetting broker credit, reading rate confirmations, and negotiating, with 6 word-for-word scripts. \$19.99. 30-Day Money-Back Guarantee.

[See the Guide →](#)

Sources (checked October 7, 2026): FMCSA, Definitions of Broker and Bona Fide Agents, final guidance, 88 FR 39369 (June 23, 2023), federalregister.gov/d/2023-13080; 49 CFR 387.307 (broker bond, ecfr.gov); FMCSA Motus (fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/move-motus).

For information only, not legal, tax, or financial advice. Rules and fees change, so confirm with the official source before you file. © 2026 American Truckers LLC • americantruckersllc.com