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Freight broker statistics

Loss of FMCSA authority among new property brokers, its recorded causes, and time to approval

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Abstract

Purpose: To report how many new freight brokers lose FMCSA authority within one and two years, why, and how long approval takes.

Design/methodology/approach: Every property-broker authority FMCSA granted from 2021 to 2025, one per docket, from five FMCSA datasets (data as of 7 October 2026). Loss rates use only windows that closed by 15 May 2026, when FMCSA moved to a new records system. Involuntary revocations are matched to bond or trust cancellations in the 45 days before. 120 random brokers were re-checked against live FMCSA records.

Findings: About one in three freight brokers granted FMCSA authority in 2022–2024 lost it within 12 months (31%–35%, depending on the year granted); about two in three granted in 2021–2023 lost it within two years (63%–69%). About 10% of brokers that lost authority later regained it. In the 2023–2024 cohorts, 83%–84% of first-year losses followed a BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust-fund cancellation. Brokers whose registration lists a free email address lost authority in their first year at 39%, against 27% for those listing their own domain (2023–2024 cohorts). Approval took a median of 21 calendar days in Q3 2026. FMCSA granted 3,781 property-broker authorities in 2025, down from 8,626 in 2022.

Research limitations/implications: The bond or trust reason is inferred, not stated by FMCSA. The email gap is a correlation, not proof of cause. A lost authority is not always a closed business.

Originality/value: A dated, quarterly baseline from public records, with every figure downloadable (CC BY 4.0).

Keywords: freight brokers; property brokers; FMCSA; operating authority; authority revocation; BMC-84 surety bond; BMC-85 trust fund; new firm survival; cohort analysis; administrative records

JEL codes: L92; M13; L51

Key findings

- **About 1 in 3 brokers granted authority in 2022–2024 lost it within a year**
- **About 2 in 3 brokers granted authority in 2021–2023 lost it within two years**
- **83%–84% of first-year losses (2023–2024) followed a bond or trust cancellation**
- **First-year loss, 2023–2024: 39% with a free email address, 27% with own domain**
- **Median 21 calendar days from application to active authority in Q3 2026**

1 Introduction

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) granted 8,626 property-broker authorities in 2022 and 3,781 in 2025. How long new brokers keep that authority matters well beyond their owners. A new broker needs to know how much money and time to plan for. A carrier that hauls for a broker extends it credit until the invoice is paid, and a shipper that tenders freight relies on the broker to pay that carrier. Surety companies and trust providers stand behind each broker's BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust fund, and factoring companies decide whether to buy a carrier's invoice to a given broker; carriers are advised to ask their factor before hauling for a broker they do not know (Dills, 2020).

Two kinds of estimate have circulated. The first is a duration. Overdrive computed that more than 8,000 brokers whose authority was revoked between 2015 and 2019, for not keeping the required surety or a BOC-3 process agent, had been in business for 14.5 months on average (Dills, 2020). That describes brokers who had already lost authority, so it cannot say what share of new brokers lose it. The second is a share. A broker-training company wrote that "for every three new freight brokerage authorities that are issued, only one remains active after two years," but gave no source (Freight 360, 2020). Two newer counts measure something else. Hill (2023) reported that 9,794 of the 25,291 broker authorities granted from January 2020 to December 2022 were still active in November 2023, a status on one date for brokers with very different time in business. SureLoadr (2026a), counting revocations not reversed within 90 days, reports 21,889 broker exits against 15,997 entries in 2023 to 2025. Academic work on trucking has linked exit to finance: as the industry was deregulated, 57% of general freight carriers with more than $1 million in 1977 revenue had left it by 1985, and carriers with more debt were less likely to survive (Zingales, 1997). We found no published source that reports, by year granted, the share of new property brokers that lost FMCSA authority within a fixed time.

This article provides that measure. It follows every property-broker authority FMCSA granted from 2021 to 2025, one per docket, through FMCSA's public authority, revocation, insurance and registration records as of 7 October 2026. It reports the share that lost authority within 6, 12 and 24 months of the grant, counting only windows that closed by 15 May 2026, when FMCSA's older records stopped updating; the events recorded before first-year losses; first-year loss by the type of email address on the registration; and the time from application to active authority for brokers authorized in Q3 2026. Every figure is dated and published, with its base count, in a CSV file anyone can download.

Section 2 sets out the data, definitions and checks before publication. Section 3 reports the results. Section 4 discusses what they show, what they mean for people starting a brokerage, and their limitations. Section 5 concludes.

2 Data and methods

2.1 Data sources

The figures come from five datasets that FMCSA publishes on data.transportation.gov (Table 1), retrieved through the portal's public API on 7 October 2026. The approval times in Section 2.7 come from a further retrieval of Motus AuthHist on 8 October 2026. FMCSA's older authority, revocation and insurance datasets stopped updating when the agency moved to its new registration system, Motus, on 15 May 2026; Motus AuthHist carries the authority history from then on (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration [FMCSA], 2026a, 2026d). The analysis also retrieved four Motus datasets that no published figure depends on (RevokeSuspend, its daily difference file, InsHist and Carrier), so they are not cited. Appendix A gives each query and when it ran.

Table 1. The FMCSA datasets behind the figures

Dataset	ID	Used for
AuthHist - All With History	9mw4-x3tu	Grants and first losses of authority
Motus AuthHist - All With History	yu5v-wbh6	Authority events after 15 May 2026; application and grant dates
Revocation - All With History	sa6p-acbp	Whether each revocation was involuntary or voluntary
InsHist - All With History	6sqe-dvqs	BMC-84 bond and BMC-85 trust-fund cancellations
Company Census File	az4n-8mr2	The email address on each broker's registration

Note: Motus AuthHist was retrieved again on 8 October 2026 for the approval times.

Source: FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu), FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), FMCSA Revocation - All With History (sa6p-acbp), FMCSA InsHist - All With History (6sqe-dvqs) and FMCSA Company Census File (az4n-8mr2), retrieved 7 October 2026.

2.2 Who is counted

A broker is “a person who, for compensation, arranges, or offers to arrange, the transportation of property by an authorized motor carrier” (Brokers of Property, 2026). The study counts every property-broker authority FMCSA granted from 2021 to 2025: authority type “PROPERTY BROKER” in the older records and “Broker of Property (Except Household Goods)” in Motus. Each docket counts once, in the year of its earliest grant of that authority. Household-goods brokers and freight forwarders are excluded. Figure 1 gives the number granted each year. For 2023, the loss rates are based on 6,223 of the 6,224 brokers: a loss with no date in the records is left out of the windows.

2.3 What counts as a loss of authority

A loss is the first time FMCSA records show the authority ended after the grant: almost always an involuntary or voluntary revocation, plus a handful of out-of-service orders and administrative inactivations. Transfers and renumberings move an authority rather than end it, so they don’t count; Appendix A lists every record type. A broker that lost authority and later regained it still counts as a loss, and the share that regained it is reported separately (Section 3.2).

2.4 Which windows count

FMCSA moved to a new records system on 15 May 2026, and the new system has recorded far fewer revocations since; an index built from the same authority history stops at the same date (SureLoadr, 2026b). A loss within 6, 12 or 24 months is therefore counted only for brokers whose whole window closed by 15 May 2026. A year in which only some brokers’ windows had closed is reported for those brokers alone, as a partial year, with the grant dates it covers (marked * in Table 2). There is no 24-month rate for brokers granted in 2025.

2.5 Reasons for first-year losses

FMCSA’s older records say whether a revocation was involuntary or voluntary (FMCSA, 2026e), but not why. A broker’s registration stays in effect only while its BMC-84 surety bond or BMC-85 trust fund does, and the surety or trustee must give 30 days’ written notice to cancel one (Property Broker Surety Bond or Trust Fund, 2026). Each involuntary revocation is therefore linked to a bond or trust cancellation, initiated by the surety or trustee, that took effect in the 45 days before it (FMCSA, 2026c). Across all brokers granted 2021–2026, such a cancellation was found for 98.3% of the involuntary first losses that could be dated (19,372 of 19,716; 95% CI 98.1 to 98.4). First-year losses fall into three groups: a bond or trust cancellation (alone or with the BOC-3 process agent’s), a voluntary revocation, and other or unknown.

2.6 Registration email type

The email address on each broker’s registration, from the Company Census File (FMCSA, 2026b), is sorted into free providers (Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook and the others listed in Appendix A) and the broker’s own domain. It is the address on file on 7 October 2026, not necessarily the one used at approval. As a check,

the comparison is repeated for brokers whose registration was not updated more than 30 days after the grant, whose address is most likely the original. The comparison covers brokers granted in 2023–2024, whose 12-month windows had all closed; brokers with no address on file are left out.

2.7 Time from application to active authority

Approval time is the number of calendar days from the first “Initial Status” record in Motus AuthHist, the application, to the grant (FMCSA, 2026d), for the 753 property-broker dockets FMCSA authorized from 1 July 2026 to 30 September 2026. The span includes the broker’s own filings, the BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust and the BOC-3 process agent (Designation of Process Agent, 2026), and the protest period in which others may oppose an application (Rules Governing Applications for Operating Authority, 2026), not only FMCSA’s review. 48 dockets have no application date in the new records and are left out: 31 were applications pending when FMCSA switched systems in May 2026 and 17 were older authorities being reinstated. Each took at least 27 days, so counting them would put the median at 22 days. Application dates in the new system start on 19 May 2026, so the figure for July leans toward faster approvals.

2.8 Statistical methods

Every rate is reported as a percentage with its base count and a 95% confidence interval: a Wilson score interval for a single rate, and Newcombe’s hybrid score interval for the difference between two rates (the email gap, in percentage points). The intervals reflect only the uncertainty of a rate measured on a finite number of brokers; they do not cover errors in FMCSA’s records or in the matching rules. Shares of first-year losses by recorded event are given with their base counts, without intervals. Approval times are given as medians and quartiles in calendar days.

2.9 Checks before publication

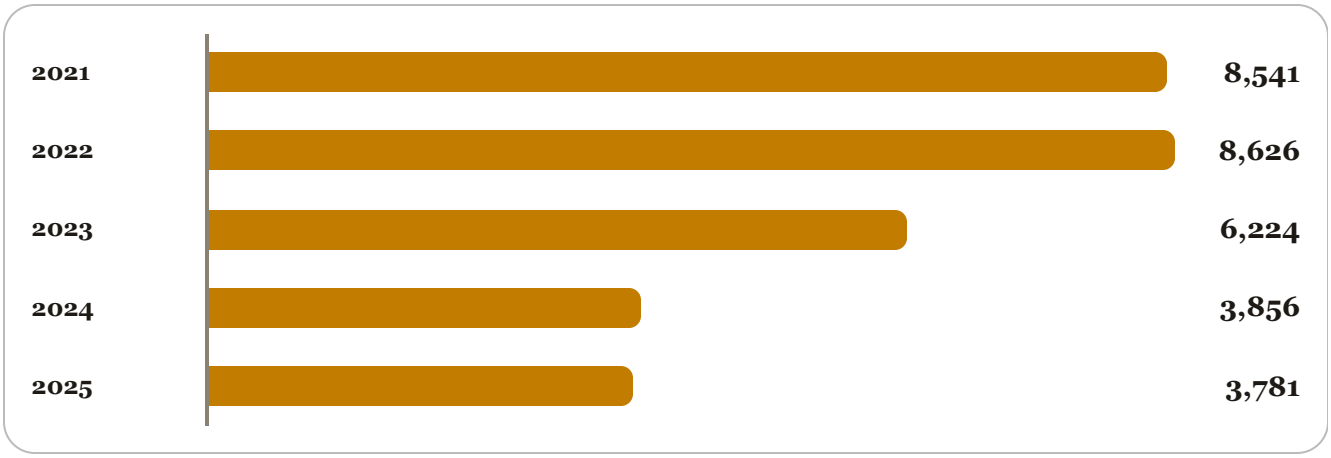
Before publication, 120 brokers were drawn at random, 20 from each year granted from 2021 to 2026, and their records were re-queried live from FMCSA on 7 October 2026 and re-derived with a second implementation. Grant dates matched for 120 of 120 and first-loss dates for 120 of 120. A separate analysis, written independently, by a separate AI agent, from the same raw records, reproduced the headline rates (see Use of AI tools). Because the portal showed rows in the three older datasets as updated after they stopped updating, all three were pulled again before publication with the snapshot’s queries and compared row by row with the snapshot: no row had been added, removed or changed.

3 Results

3.1 New property-broker authorities per year

FMCSA granted 3,781 property-broker authorities in 2025, down from 8,626 in 2022 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Property-broker authorities granted by FMCSA, by year granted



Note: One count per docket, at its earliest grant in the year; household-goods brokers and freight forwarders are excluded.

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu) and FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), retrieved 7 October 2026.

3.2 Loss of authority within 6, 12 and 24 months

About one in three brokers granted authority in 2022 to 2024 lost it within 12 months, and about two in three granted in 2021 to 2023 lost it within 24 months (Table 2).

Table 2. Loss of FMCSA authority within 6, 12 and 24 months of the grant, by year granted

Granted in	Brokers	Lost within 6 months	Lost within 12 months	Lost within 24 months	Held on 15 May 2026
2021	8,541	7.3 (6.8 to 7.9)	24.5 (23.6 to 25.5)	62.5 (61.5 to 63.6)	17.7 (16.9 to 18.5)
2022	8,626	7.5 (6.9 to 8.0)	30.8 (29.9 to 31.8)	68.6 (67.6 to 69.5)	21.0 (20.2 to 21.9)
2023	6,224	12.6 (11.8 to 13.4)	35.1 (33.9 to 36.3)	66.2 (65.0 to 67.4)	29.3 (28.1 to 30.4)
2024	3,856	14.1 (13.0 to 15.2)	32.1 (30.6 to 33.5)	59.2* (56.8 to 61.6)	45.2 (43.6 to 46.8)
2025	3,781	15.1* (14.0 to 16.4)	30.7* (28.3 to 33.2)	Not yet measurable	72.2 (70.8 to 73.6)

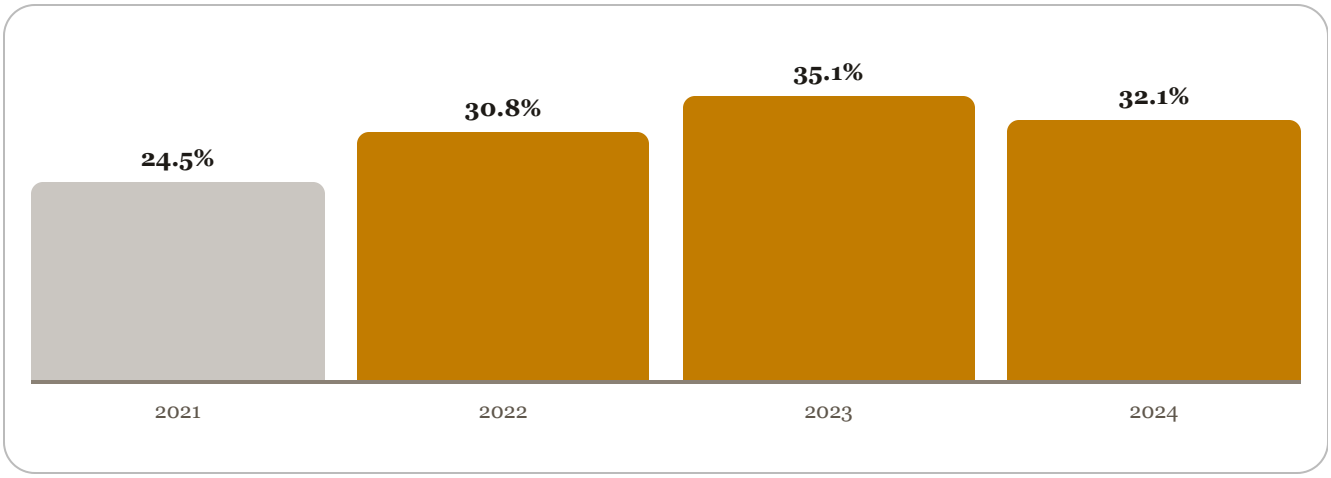
*Partial year, for the brokers whose window closed by 15 May 2026: the 24-month rate for 2024 covers the 1,665 brokers granted from 2 January 2024 to 15 May 2024; the 12-month rate for 2025 covers the 1,355 granted from 2 January 2025 to 15 May 2025; the 6-month rate for 2025 covers the 3,341 granted up to 13 November 2025.

Note: Percentages, with 95% Wilson confidence intervals in parentheses. Rates count only brokers whose window closed by 15 May 2026. For 2023, rates are based on 6,223 of the 6,224 brokers: a loss with no date in the records is left out.

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu) and FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), retrieved 7 October 2026.

First-year losses were less common among brokers granted authority in 2021, at 24.5%, and the share lost within six months rose from 7.3% for 2021 to 14.1% for 2024 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Share of new property brokers that lost FMCSA authority within 12 months, by year granted



Note: Only years whose 12-month window closed for every broker by 15 May 2026. Highlighted: the years the headline figure covers, 2022 to 2024.

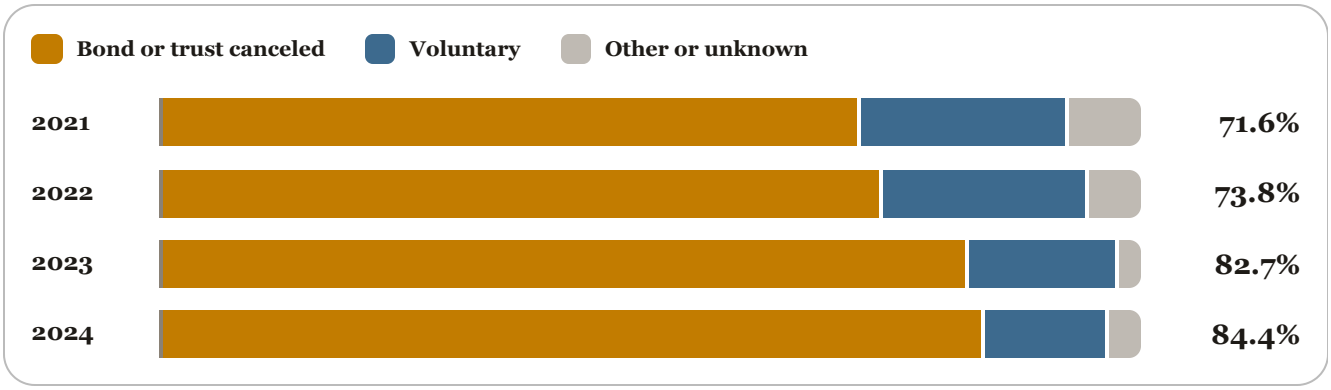
Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu) and FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), retrieved 7 October 2026.

Losing authority was not always final. Of brokers granted authority in 2021 to 2023 who lost it, between 9.8% (2023) and 10.7% (2021) later got it back. On 15 May 2026, 45.2% of brokers granted authority in 2024 still held it.

3.3 Events recorded before first-year losses

Most first-year losses followed the cancellation of the broker's bond or trust fund (Figure 3). Of first-year losses among brokers granted authority in 2023 and 2024, 82.7% and 84.4% followed a BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust-fund cancellation, up from 71.6% for 2021, while the voluntary share fell from 21.2% to 12.5% (Table 3).

Figure 3. First-year losses of FMCSA authority by the event recorded before them, by year granted



Note: A bond or trust cancellation took effect in the 45 days before an involuntary revocation; other includes process-agent (BOC-3) cancellations and endings whose cause is not recorded.

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA Revocation - All With History (sa6p-acbp), FMCSA InsHist - All With History (6sqe-dvqs) and FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu), retrieved 7 October 2026.

Table 3. First-year losses of FMCSA authority by recorded event, by year granted

Granted in	First-year losses	Bond or trust canceled	Voluntary	Other or unknown
2021	2,096	71.6%	21.2%	7.3%
2022	2,659	73.8%	21.0%	5.2%
2023	2,183	82.7%	15.0%	2.2%
2024	1,236	84.4%	12.5%	3.2%

Note: Shares of each year's first-year losses (the base). Intervals are not computed for these shares.

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA Revocation - All With History (sa6p-acbp), FMCSA InsHist - All With History (6sqe-dvqs) and FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu), retrieved 7 October 2026.

3.4 First-year loss by registration email type

Among brokers granted authority in 2023–2024, those whose registration lists a free email address lost authority within 12 months more often than those listing their own domain: 39.2% against 26.6%, a gap of 12.6 percentage points (Table 4). The gap was 10.0 points among brokers whose registration was not updated more than 30 days after the grant.

Table 4. Loss of FMCSA authority within 12 months by registration email type, brokers granted 2023–2024

Registration email	Brokers	Lost within 12 months	Share, % (95% CI)
Free email provider	5,714	2,241	39.2 (38.0 to 40.5)
Own domain	4,316	1,149	26.6 (25.3 to 28.0)
Difference, percentage points			12.6 (10.8 to 14.4)
Difference, registration not updated after 30 days			10.0 (7.7 to 12.3)

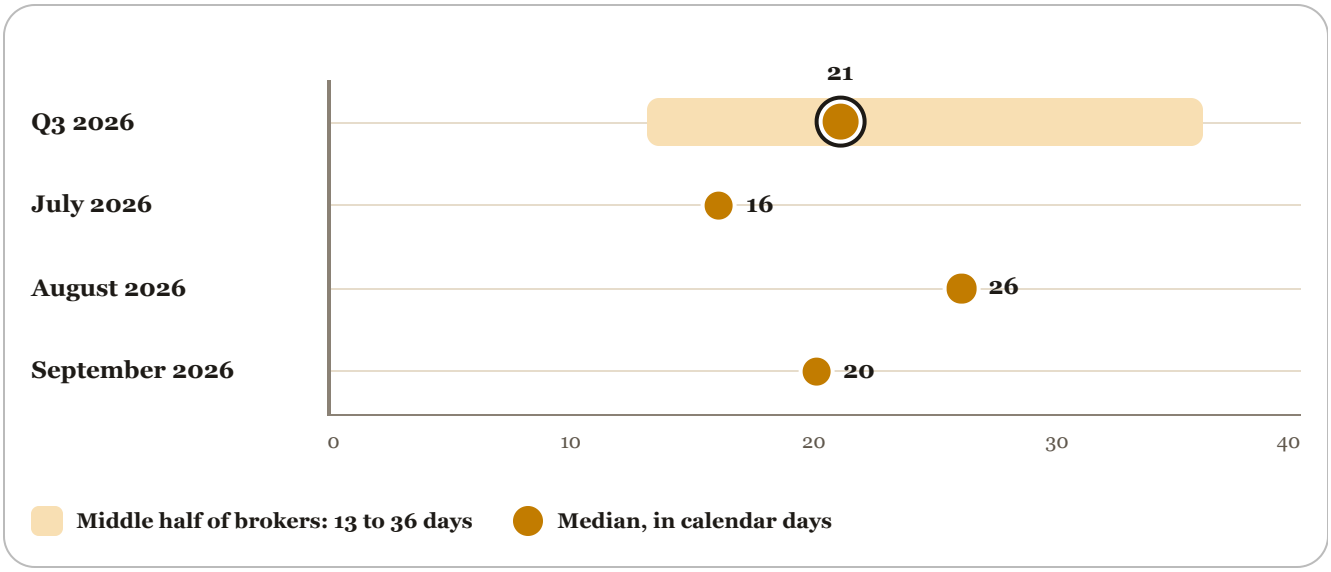
Note: Email type is the address on the registration on file on 7 October 2026. Rates with 95% Wilson intervals; differences are free minus own domain, in percentage points, with 95% Newcombe hybrid score intervals. A correlation, not proof of cause.

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA Company Census File (az4n-8mr2), FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu) and FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), retrieved 7 October 2026.

3.5 Time from application to active authority, Q3 2026

For the 705 property brokers FMCSA authorized in Q3 2026 with a recorded application date, the median time from application to active authority was 21 calendar days, and half took between 13 and 36 days (Figure 4). FMCSA's guidance is that first-time applications may take 20 to 25 business days (FMCSA, n.d.); the span measured here also includes the broker's own filings and the protest period (Section 2.7).

Figure 4. Days from application to active authority, property brokers authorized in Q3 2026



Note: Calendar days from the first Initial Status record to the grant: the middle half of brokers and the median for the quarter, then the median for each month granted. Application dates in the new records start on 19 May 2026, so July leans toward faster approvals.

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), retrieved 8 October 2026.

Table 5. Median days from application to active authority, by month granted, Q3 2026

Granted in	Brokers	Median days
July 2026	155	16
August 2026	308	26
September 2026	242	20
All of Q3 2026	705	21

Note: Calendar days. 48 of the 753 dockets have no application date and are left out (Section 2.7).

Source: S4L Research analysis of FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), retrieved 8 October 2026.

4 Discussion

4.1 What the results show

Of brokers granted authority in 2022, 2023 and 2024, 30.8%, 35.1% and 32.1% lost it within 12 months, and losses did not stop there: of those granted in 2021, 2022 and 2023, 62.5%, 68.6% and 66.2% lost it within 24 months. Early losses grew more common: the share lost within six months rose from 7.3% for

brokers granted authority in 2021 to 14.1% for 2024.

The two-year figures are close to the unsourced line that only one in three new authorities remains active after two years (Freight 360, 2020), though the measures differ: here a broker that lost authority and later regained it still counts as a loss, and between 9.8% and 10.7% of brokers granted authority in 2021 to 2023 who lost it later got it back. Overdrive's 14.5-month average (Dills, 2020) describes revoked brokers rather than a share, but is consistent with these figures.

The recorded events point to the broker's financial security. Of first-year losses among brokers granted authority in 2023 and 2024, 82.7% and 84.4% followed a BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust-fund cancellation that took effect in the 45 days before revocation (Section 2.5), up from 71.6% for 2021; the voluntary share fell from 21.2% for 2021 to 12.5% for 2024. A broker's registration stays in effect only while its bond or trust does (Property Broker Surety Bond or Trust Fund, 2026), so a cancellation that is not replaced ends in revocation. The requirement has ended authorities in bulk before: when the required broker bond rose from $10,000 to $75,000 in October 2013, a count from the same authority history recorded 10,595 broker revocations that year, against a surrounding baseline near 2,000 (SureLoadr, 2026b). A cancellation is not a claim, though. FMCSA estimated that about 1.3% of brokers a year have a drawdown on their bond or trust (Broker and Freight Forwarder Financial Responsibility, 2023), and the records do not say why a surety or trustee canceled. It can mark a broker in financial trouble, or one that stopped paying for its bond or trust.

The email gap is a correlation. Among brokers granted authority in 2023 and 2024, those whose registration lists a free email address lost authority in their first year at 39.2%, against 26.6% for those listing their own domain, a gap of 12.6 percentage points (95% CI 10.8 to 14.4). Three explanations lead; this study cannot tell them apart. Preparation: brokers with more capital or experience may be likelier both to use a company domain and to keep their bond in force. Timing: the address is the one on file at retrieval, so brokers who kept authority may have switched to their own domain later; yet the gap was still 10.0 points (95% CI 7.7 to 12.3) among brokers whose registration was not updated more than 30 days after the grant. Vetting: a carrier-screening checklist for brokers lists a free email account among its warning signs (Transportation Intermediaries Association, 2023); if shippers and carriers screen brokers the same way, those brokers may win less freight.

4.2 What this means for new brokers

For anyone starting a brokerage, the records point to four practical steps. None guarantees an outcome, and the last rests on a correlation.

Keep the bond or trust in force. Among brokers granted authority in 2023 and 2024, 82.7% and 84.4% of first-year losses followed a BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust-fund cancellation, the most common event on record before a revocation. Treat the bond or trust as a fixed cost of staying in business, and deal with any cancellation notice at once.

Plan for two years, not one. Losses kept coming after the first anniversary: of brokers granted authority in 2023, 35.1% lost it within 12 months and 66.2% within 24 months. Budget for the bond or trust and the running costs across that whole period.

Use the wait for approval. For brokers authorized in Q3 2026, the median time from application to active authority was 21 calendar days, and half took between 13 and 36 days. That is time to build a target list of shippers and to prepare for the checks a shipper runs before tendering a first load.

Register on your own domain. Brokers granted authority in 2023 and 2024 whose registration listed their own domain lost authority in their first year less often than those listing a free address: 26.6% against 39.2%. That is a correlation, not proof of cause, and better-prepared brokers may simply do both. Still, carriers are advised to check a broker before hauling for it (Dills, 2020), and an address on your own domain costs little. The same domain is the base for a company website; what that site should carry is set out in what a freight broker website needs to show and how shippers vet a broker online.

4.3 Limitations

Six limits apply. First, FMCSA moved to a new records system on 15 May 2026, when its older records stopped updating, and the new system has recorded far fewer revocations since; the open data cannot show whether revocations slowed or went unrecorded. Rates therefore use only windows that closed by that date (Section 2.4). There is no 24-month rate for brokers granted authority in 2025; the 24-month rate for 2024 covers only the 1,665 brokers granted from 2 January 2024 to 15 May 2024; the 12-month rate for 2025 covers only the 1,355 granted from 2 January 2025 to 15 May 2025; and the 6-month rate for 2025 covers the 3,341 granted up to 13 November 2025. FMCSA's immediate-suspension rules for brokers whose bond or trust falls below the required amount apply from 16 January 2026 (Broker and Freight Forwarder Financial Responsibility, 2023; Broker and Freight Forwarder Financial Responsibility; Extension of Compliance Date, 2024). The 24-month window for 2024 grants and the 12-month window for 2025 grants run past that date, so they may not compare exactly with earlier years. Second, the bond or trust reason is inferred. FMCSA's older records say only whether a revocation was voluntary or involuntary, so an involuntary revocation is linked to a cancellation that took effect in the 45 days before it (Section 2.5). Such a cancellation was found for 98.3% of the involuntary first losses that could be dated, among brokers granted 2021–2026. Third, a lost authority is not always a closed business: some authorities were given up voluntarily, some were later regained, and a brokerage can be revoked months after it stops trading (SureLoadr, 2026a). Fourth, email type is a correlation, measured on the address on file on 7 October 2026, which may not be the one used at approval. Fifth, 48 of the 753 dockets authorized in Q3 2026 have no application date in the new records and are left out of the approval times (Section 2.7). Each took at least 27 days, so including them would put the median at 22 days. Sixth, FMCSA's data change daily, so a later download will not reproduce these figures exactly.

5 Conclusion

FMCSA's public records can answer a question the trade has mostly answered without sources. Of property brokers granted authority in 2022 to 2024, between 30.8% and 35.1% lost it within 12 months, and of those granted in 2021 to 2023, between 62.5% and 68.6% lost it within 24 months. The unsourced line that only one in three new authorities remains active after two years (Freight 360, 2020) is close to the records for those years; what changes is that the figure can now be checked, dated and measured again. Most first-year losses among brokers granted authority in 2021 to 2024 followed the cancellation of a bond or trust fund, the event most often on record before an authority ends. Among brokers granted authority in 2023 and 2024, those whose registration lists their own domain lost authority in their first year less often than those using a free email address, a correlation this study cannot explain. FMCSA's move to a new records system on 15 May 2026 limits which windows can be measured until it is clear whether that system records revocations as the old one did. Each quarterly update will be published as a new, dated version, and every figure, with its base count, is in the accompanying CSV file.

Declarations

Data availability

This study uses only public data. The source records are five datasets that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) publishes on data.transportation.gov: AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu), Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), Revocation - All With History (sa6p-acbp), InsHist - All With History (6sqe-dvqs) and the Company Census File (az4n-8mr2). They were retrieved through the portal's public API on 7 October 2026; the Q3 2026 approval-time figures come from a further retrieval of Motus AuthHist on 8 October 2026. Anyone can download the same datasets in the same way, although FMCSA updates them regularly, so a later download will not be identical. Every figure in this article is in the file freight-broker-statistics.csv (https://s4l.io/research/data/freight-broker-statistics.csv), released under CC BY 4.0, with its base count and, where one applies, its 95% confidence interval. The copy this version cites, which never changes, is freight-broker-statistics-v1.csv (https://s4l.io/research/data/freight-broker-statistics-v1.csv), also deposited with a DOI as a versioned data set (Perez, 2026). The broker-level working files are not published, because they contain company names and the email addresses brokers registered with FMCSA. These are public records, but republishing them would go beyond this study's totals-only rule. The author keeps the retrieved snapshots so that the results can be re-run, and the working files can be rebuilt from the public datasets with the analysis code (see Code availability).

Code availability

The analysis code (Python, standard library only) is held by the author and will be published with a later version. Until then, Appendix A gives the exact queries, retrieval times and decision rules, and the author will share the scripts with anyone reproducing the results (nic@s4l.io).

Use of AI tools

The author used Claude, an AI model made by Anthropic, under his direction to write and run the scripts that retrieve the data and compute the figures, to write the second, independent implementation used in the checks before publication, and to draft text. The author set the research questions and rules, reviewed the outputs, and is responsible for the content of this article.

Author contributions

Nicolas Perez: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition, Writing – review & editing. Data curation, formal analysis, software, visualization and the first draft were carried out with an AI tool under the author's direction (see Use of AI tools).

Competing interests

Nicolas Perez is co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Sites4Logistics, a trade name of Midnite Systems, LLC. The company sells websites, search engine optimization and AI search visibility services to logistics companies, including freight brokers, so it has a commercial interest in how brokers present themselves online. That interest bears most directly on one finding: brokers whose FMCSA registration lists a free email address lost authority in their first year more often than brokers whose registration lists their own domain. This article reports that gap as a correlation, not proof of cause. Other pages on this website describe the company's services, and this article links to some of them. So that readers can check the work independently of that interest, the analysis uses only public FMCSA records, every figure is published in a CSV file, and the method and its limitations are set out in full. The author declares no other competing interests.

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This work was funded by Midnite Systems, LLC (doing business as Sites4Logistics), the company the author co-founded and leads. It received no grant or payment from any other organization. Through the author, the company designed the study, collected and analyzed the data, decided to publish and prepared the article.

Ethics statement

This study analyzes public administrative records that FMCSA publishes about registered motor carriers, brokers and freight forwarders. It involved no contact with any person and no private information, and no ethics board review was sought. Some registrants are individuals trading under their own names, so the working files hold names and registration email addresses exactly as FMCSA publishes them; these never leave the working files. Results are published only as totals. No company, person, docket number or email address is named, and no company is scored or ranked.

Acknowledgments

FMCSA publishes the records this work relies on. FMCSA did not review this article and is not responsible for its analysis or conclusions.

Not peer reviewed. This article has not been peer reviewed. Its figures were checked before publication as described in Section 2.9.

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Appendix A: Rules as applied

These are the rules of the analysis as it ran on the snapshot of 7 October 2026, with the queries and retrieval times its output records. Code availability says how to get the scripts.

A.1 Queries and retrieval

Table 6. Datasets retrieved, with their queries and retrieval times

Dataset (ID)	Query	Retrieved
AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu)	`mod_col_1 in ('PROPERTY BROKER','BROKER','HOUSEHOLD GOODS BROKER','PROPERTY FREIGHT FORWARDER','HOUSEHOLD GOODS FREIGHT FORWARDER')`	7 October 2026, 20:16
Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6)	All rows	7 October 2026, 20:17; again on 8 October 2026 for the approval times
Revocation - All With History (sa6p-acbp)	`type_license='BROKER' OR type_license IS NULL`	7 October 2026, 20:17
InsHist - All With History (6sqe-dvqs)	`ins_form_code in ('84','85','85C')`	7 October 2026, 20:17
Company Census File (az4n-8mr2)	`dot_number in (...)`, up to 150 USDOT numbers a request, for the brokers granted in 2023 and 2024	7 October 2026, 20:36

Note: All from https://data.transportation.gov/resource/ followed by the dataset ID and .json, through the portal's public API without a key, in pages of 50,000 rows ordered by :id. Times are UTC. The analysis also retrieved Motus RevokeSuspend (wb4f-neki and its daily difference file, e67p-xyd5), Motus InsHist (3uet-3z4i) and Motus Carrier (inys-ebih); no figure in this article depends on them.

Source: FMCSA AuthHist - All With History (9mw4-x3tu), FMCSA Motus AuthHist - All With History (yu5v-wbh6), FMCSA Revocation - All With History (sa6p-acbp), FMCSA InsHist - All With History (6sqe-dvqs) and FMCSA Company Census File (az4n-8mr2), retrieved 7 October 2026.

A.2 Who is counted

- Up to 15 May 2026: AuthHist rows with authority type `PROPERTY BROKER` and original action `GRANTED`. After it: Motus AuthHist rows with type `Broker of Property (Except Household Goods)` and reason `Granted`.
- One count per docket, at its earliest grant in the year. Dockets are matched on a normalized number: the letters and the integer, without hyphens or leading zeros.
- Excluded: household-goods brokers, property and household-goods freight forwarders, and the older records' generic type `BROKER`.

A.3 Loss of authority and reinstatement

- Older records: the first loss-type disposition (`ADMINISTRATIVE INACTIVATION`, `OUT OF SERVICE`, `REVOKED`, `SAFETY REVOCATION`, `SAFETY SUSPENSION`, `TERM EXPIRED`) on any property-broker granted or reinstated row of the docket dated on or after the grant.
- Motus: the first row after 15 May 2026 with status Inactive or Withdrawn, unless the reason is Transferred or Renumbered. A suspension counts.

- Not a loss: `CANCELLED AND REISSUED`, `RENUMBERED`, `REPLACED BY PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY`, `TRANSFER CONSUMMATED` and `TRANSFERRED`, which move an authority rather than end it.
- Regained: a later reinstatement or new grant dated on or after the first loss. The first loss still counts as a loss.
- Held on 15 May 2026: an open granted or reinstated row in the older records on that date.

A.4 Windows

- Within 6, 12 or 24 months: a loss no more than 183, 365 or 730 days after the grant.
- A rate counts only the brokers whose whole window closed by 15 May 2026. A year whose rate covers only part of its grants is marked as a partial year, with the grant dates it covers (Table 2).
- A broker whose loss has no date, or an impossible one, is left out of the window rates.

A.5 Reasons for first-year losses

- Each loss in the older records is matched by docket to the Revocation dataset, in this order: an involuntary record effective within 3 days; a voluntary record effective within 3 days or served 0 to 60 days before; an involuntary record served 0 to 60 days before; or, at docket level only, an undated record when the docket has one loss and all its records are of one type.
- An involuntary loss counts as a bond or trust cancellation when a BMC-84 or BMC-85 cancellation initiated by the surety or trustee took effect 0 to 45 days before it, and as other or unknown when none did.
- Motus losses are grouped by their reason text, which names insurance (for a broker, the BMC-84 or BMC-85), the BOC-3 process agent, both, or a voluntary revocation.
- The groups: bond or trust (alone or with the BOC-3), voluntary, and other or unknown (the BOC-3 alone, losses that are not revocations, and involuntary revocations with no matched cancellation).

A.6 Registration email type

- The email address in the Company Census File on 7 October 2026, joined on the USDOT number of the grant record, for brokers granted in 2023–2024.
- Free providers: aol.com, att.net, comcast.net, gmail.com, gmx.com, hotmail.com, icloud.com, live.com, mail.com, me.com, msn.com, outlook.com, proton.me, protonmail.com, sbcglobal.net, verizon.net, yahoo.com and ymail.com. Any other domain is the broker’s own.
- Registration not updated: no update to the broker’s registration form (MCS-150) later than 30 days after the grant.

A.7 Approval time

- Motus AuthHist, type `Broker of Property (Except Household Goods)`: calendar days from the first `Initial Status` record to `Granted`, for dockets granted from 1 July 2026 to 30 September 2026.

A.8 Checks

- A seeded random sample (seed 20261007) of 20 dockets from each year granted, 2021 to 2026, re-queried live from both authority histories on 7 October 2026 and re-derived with separate code, and checked against FMCSA's SAFER Company Snapshot, the live system of record.

Appendix B: Data dictionary

Every figure in this article is one row of freight-broker-statistics-v1.csv, the data file of version 1, which is published under CC BY 4.0 beside the article. Table 7 describes its columns and Table 8 the figures it holds.

Table 7. Columns of the data file

Column	What it holds
`table`	The group of figures the row belongs to, such as first_year or application_to_active_authority.
`group`	Who or what the figure is for: the year granted, a month, a quarter or a category.
`measure`	What the figure counts, such as lost_authority_within_12_months.
`value`	The figure itself, in the unit given.
`unit`	percent, percentage points, count or days.
`base_n`	How many brokers or dockets the figure is based on, where one applies.
`ci95_low`	Lower end of the 95% confidence interval, where one applies.
`ci95_high`	Upper end of the 95% confidence interval, where one applies.
`source`	The FMCSA records the figure comes from.
`note`	Scope notes: partial years, inferred reasons, correlations.

Source: S4L Research, freight-broker-statistics-v1.csv.

Table 8. Tables and measures in the data file, with the groups each is given for

table	measure	unit	group
first_year	new_property_broker_authorities	count	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
first_year	lost_authority_within_6_months	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
first_year	lost_authority_within_12_months	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
first_year	lost_authority_within_24_months	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
first_year	held_authority_on_2026-05-15	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
first_year	regained_authority_after_losing_it	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
first_year_loss_reason	first_year_losses	count	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
first_year_loss_reason	bond_or_trust_cancelled_within_45_days	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
first_year_loss_reason	voluntary	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
first_year_loss_reason	other_or_unknown	percent	2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
email_signal	lost_authority_within_12_months_2023_2024	percent	free_email_provider, own_domain
email_signal_2023_2024	gap_points	percentage points	free_minus_own_domain, free_minus_own_domain_unchanged_records
bond_match	bond_or_trust_cancelled_within_45_days	percent	involuntary_first_losses_2021_2026
application_to_active_authority	median_days	days	Q3 2026, 2026-07, 2026-08, 2026-09
application_to_active_authority	p25_days	days	Q3 2026
application_to_active_authority	p75_days	days	Q3 2026
application_to_active_authority	dockets_without_application_date	count	Q3 2026
application_to_active_authority	median_days_if_left_out_dockets_included	days	Q3 2026
validation	grant_date_matches	count	2021_2026
validation	first_loss_date_matches	count	2021_2026

Source: S4L Research, freight-broker-statistics-v1.csv.

Questions and answers

How many freight brokers fail in their first year?

In FMCSA records, about one in three lost FMCSA authority within a year: 31% of brokers granted authority in 2022, 35% in 2023 and 32% in 2024. Brokers granted in 2021 did better, at 25%. A lost authority is not always a closed business: most were revoked after the broker's bond or trust lapsed, some were given up voluntarily, and about 10% of brokers that lost authority later got it back.

How many freight brokers lose their authority within two years?

About two in three in FMCSA records: 63% of brokers granted authority in 2021, 69% in 2022 and 66% in 2023 lost FMCSA authority within two years. About 10% of brokers that lost authority later regained it.

Why do new freight brokers lose their authority?

Mostly because their BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust fund was canceled. Of first-year losses in the 2023–2024 cohorts, 83%–84% had such a cancellation take effect in the 45 days before the broker lost FMCSA authority, and voluntary revocations made up most of the rest. The records don't say why a bond was canceled: it can be a broker in trouble or one that stopped paying the premium.

How long does it take to get a freight broker license?

About three weeks. A freight broker "license" is FMCSA operating authority to broker property. For property brokers FMCSA authorized in Q3 2026, the median time from application to active authority was 21 calendar days, and half took between 13 and 36 days. That span includes the broker's own filings (the BMC-84 bond or BMC-85 trust and the BOC-3 process agent) and the protest period, not only FMCSA's review. FMCSA's own guidance is that first-time applications may take 20 to 25 business days (FMCSA, n.d.).

How many new freight brokers are there each year?

FMCSA granted 8,541 property-broker authorities in 2021, 8,626 in 2022, 6,224 in 2023, 3,856 in 2024 and 3,781 in 2025.

Does a broker's email address really matter?

It goes with very different outcomes. Brokers whose FMCSA registration lists a free email address lost FMCSA authority in their first year at 39%, against 27% for brokers whose registration lists their own domain (2023–2024). That is a correlation, not proof of cause: better-prepared brokers likely do both. The address is the one on file in October 2026, not necessarily the one used at approval, but the gap held at about 10 points among brokers whose registration hasn't been updated since their first month, so the address is most likely the original.

Can I use these statistics?

Yes, under CC BY 4.0. Credit the author and S4L Research, and link to this article. To quote a figure that must not change under your citation, cite the version: How to cite this article.

Version history and corrections

Version	Published	Data as of	What changed
Version 1 (this version)	11 October 2026	7 October 2026	Version 1, in the S4L Research article format, with the same data and findings, adding the abstract, the new sections, 95% intervals, declarations and references. PDF DOI 10.5281/zenodo.23306868
First published	8 October 2026	7 October 2026	First published as a web page.

Corrections

None.

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When citing a figure that may change, cite the version.

APA 7

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Chicago (author-date)

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MLA 9

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