

Need to know the best way
to use real-time ground
conditions or gear up for the
Food Safety Modernization Act?

HOW

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Matching supply to demand in today's volatile global environment requires tactical collaboration and strategic partnership to execute efficiently and cost effectively. *Inbound Logistics* is here to help guide you in the right direction. Over the past several years, we have solicited reader input and industry expertise to provide practical and instructive how-to guides that address fundamental transportation and logistics challenges. We are incrementally building a library of industry best practices to help readers turn interrogatives into imperatives.

The next 2
installments in
the H.O.W. library
appear on the
following pages:

52



**How to Use
Real-Time Ground
Conditions**

54



**How to Prepare for
the Food Safety
Modernization Act**

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How to Use Real-Time Ground Conditions

SPEED, SAFETY, AND RELIABILITY ARE PARAMOUNT IN TODAY'S supply chain, and shippers and consignees want an optimal balance between all three. But it's a difficult task as companies continue to optimize their networks, enhancing responsiveness but often increasing their risk exposure.

Better demand forecasting and visibility can go a long way toward smoothing out variability. But the risk of unforeseen exceptions—weather- or human-related—can have a marked impact on service, safety, and cost. The 2013-2014 Polar Vortex, which incapacitated shippers across the United States, is a good example of this volatility.

One way shippers can better prepare for these types of events is to tap into real-time road and weather data as delivered by Helios™ from Exelis, Inc. While fleet dispatch has become acclimated with GPS satellite communications, shippers can also integrate environmental intelligence into their data streams to provide a more complete picture of over-the-road conditions. A wealth of information is available—from National Weather Service alerts to Department of Transportation camera feeds—that can help shippers

make better informed decisions about assets on the road.

This kind of hyperlocal information can be used in other ways as well. A fleet manager can regularly, and visually, record and evaluate different routes, then pick the one that is best. Shippers moving over-dimensional cargo can simulate routes and identify possible infrastructure problems along the way. Or companies can simply use “geographical bread crumbs” to analyze past performance in the case of exceptions or accidents, and can use recorded data for archiving incidents or for training purposes.

A more accurate assessment of real-time ground conditions allows dispatch and operations centers to proactively identify problems and adjust routes, thereby improving efficiencies and keeping drivers safe.



DO YOU NEED ENVIRONMENTAL INTELLIGENCE?

Here are four questions shippers can answer to better understand their spatial and temporal shipping requirements.

- 1. IS A REGULAR WEATHER FORECAST ENOUGH?** Consider whether a regional National Weather Service alert or Accuweather report provides enough information to ensure that your assets on the road are properly prepared. If you need a more accurate assessment of road conditions over varied geography—mountains, for example—hyperlocal data will be more useful.
- 2. DO YOU NEED MORE FREQUENT UPDATES?** If you're shipping time-sensitive, high-value freight, an hourly broadcast over the radio may not be enough. When delays can have dire consequences, it's important to have a more timely assessment of ground conditions.
- 3. HOW DO YOU WANT INFORMATION DELIVERED?** Determine whether you want to be a passive weather spectator—reliant on radio or cable news for critical information—or a proactive participant who wants to integrate critical data feeds into your system.
- 4. DO YOU WANT TO USE THIS DATA FOR OTHER PURPOSES?** Shippers can use environmental intelligence beyond real time. Recorded data can be analyzed to optimize routes, and even facilitate driver training. A company may similarly leverage such documentation for insurance and liability reasons.



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How to Prepare for the Food Safety Modernization Act

WHEN PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNED the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in January 2011, it marked the first time in more than 70 years that the U.S. government introduced any significant legislative change to the food industry. The motive was clear: Educate and instruct public and private sectors on how to better protect the food supply chain, then react and respond when product recalls occur.

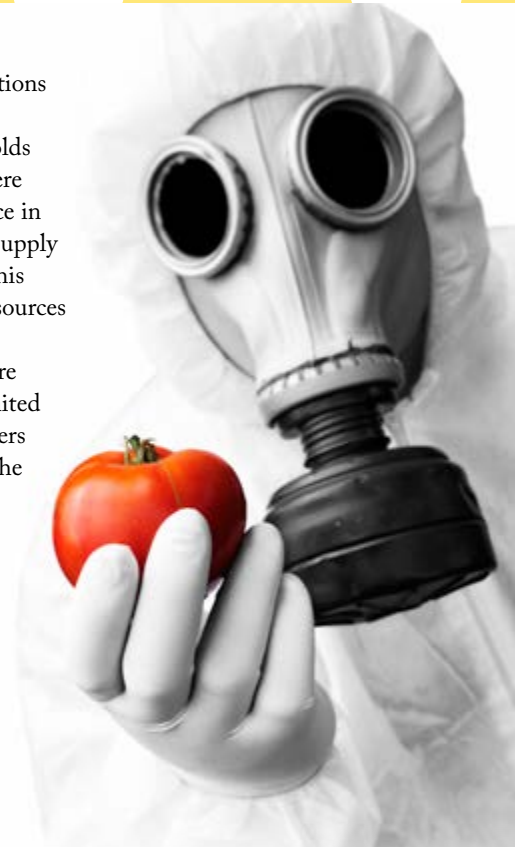
The bill covers three primary aspects of food safety:

Prevention. The premise behind the Food Safety Modernization Act is to prevent food-borne illness outbreaks and other anomalies before they happen. Accordingly, the legislation mandates all companies involved in food production, distribution, handling, and selling to evaluate potential hazards in their operations, implement measures to prevent

contamination, and have corrective actions in place in the event of an outbreak.

Inspection and Compliance. FSMA holds the FDA accountable for ensuring there is proper infrastructure and governance in place to inspect food products in the supply chain. The FDA is expected to meet this directive by applying its inspection resources in a risk-based manner.

Imports. FSMA gives the FDA more oversight over food imports to the United States. The legislation requires importers to verify suppliers as safe; authorizes the FDA to refuse imported food if the foreign facility or country is non-compliant with code; allows the FDA to require certification, based on risk criteria, that food imports are compliant with safety requirements; and provides incentive for importers to take further safety measures to expedite the FDA reviews.



3 TIPS TO PREPARE FOR FSMA

Even before the final rulemaking is published and enforced, food shippers should take a proactive approach to make sure supply chains are compliant. Here are three steps to consider.

● **TALK WITH YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNERS.** One of the best ways to collect information is to ask questions of carriers, third-party logistics providers, and suppliers. Ask your suppliers: Where did you get product? What did you do with it in your facility? Where did you send it? They should be able to provide proof of forward and backward lot traceability. Food regulations change state to state, so it is

important to also consider what your carriers have to say. They have a valuable perspective and insight.

● **LISTEN TO YOUR CUSTOMERS.** If there is a pattern of complaints, take heed. Make sure you identify where the problem is occurring within the production and distribution cycle, as well as the context of the problem. Is it packaging integrity? Temperature or time sensitivity? The more

details you glean from your customers, the easier it is to direct corrective action.

● **USE TECHNOLOGY.** What kind of functionality does your transportation management or warehouse management system have? Is it enough? A wealth of solutions are available – from lot and barcode tracking to RFID – that can facilitate information sharing among multiple supply chain partners. Find them, and use them.

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