

2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

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Summary

This inspection bulletin clarifies the five marking options available to intermodal equipment providers (IEPs) for identifying intermodal chassis per § 390.21(g)(4) and provides guidance for identifying the IEP using the fifth marking option, § 390.21(g)(4)(v) – an internet or telephonic database query.



Background

On Dec. 17, 2008, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published the “Requirements for Intermodal Equipment Providers (IEPs) and for Motor Carriers and Drivers Operating Intermodal Equipment (IME)” final rule. The regulations made IEPs subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) for the first time, and called for shared safety responsibility among IEPs, motor carriers and drivers of IME on our nation’s highways. The goal of the IEP rule is to ensure IME is safely maintained, equipped, loaded and operated. The requirements became fully effective on Dec. 17, 2010.

The new rules require that the IEP mark its equipment with its legal name (or a single trade name) and a unique identification number issued by FMCSA (USDOT number) using one of five marking options. By its nature, IME rapidly changes possession and sometimes even ownership in the course of intermodal transport operations. Consequently, documentation, maintenance of equipment and assessment of accountability sometimes can be challenging. The five marking options are described on page 6. This inspection bulletin highlights the fifth option, in particular, which allows an IEP to mark its chassis by including it in an easy-to-use database readily accessible via telephone or the internet.

To provide an efficient database query option, the Intermodal Association of North America (IANA) developed the Global Intermodal Equipment Registry (GIER) under allowance by FMCSA. To use a GIER query, the inspector provides the license plate number or the internationally standardized equipment identification alphanumeric equipment prefix – normally four letters (alpha) followed by a six-digit control number (numeric) – that appears on the left side of the intermodal chassis. Additional information for using GIER is included in this bulletin.

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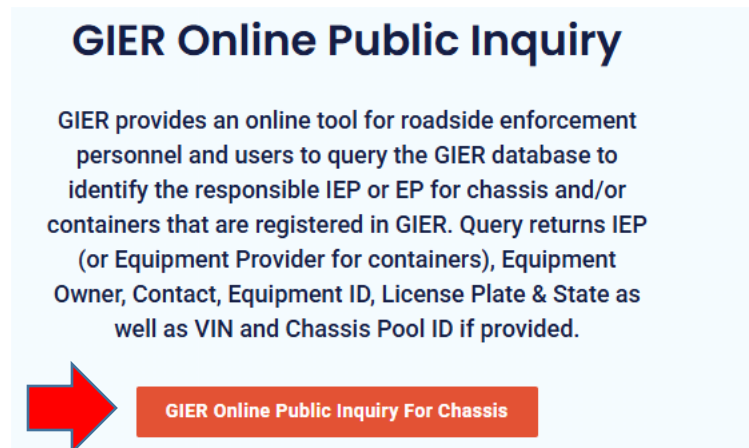
How to Conduct a GIER Query

The GIER can be accessed through one of three query methods: (1) internet query, (2) a telephonic service through a toll-free number or (3) a GIER-integrated version in inspection software on a PC with internet connectivity. Instructions for each are described below.

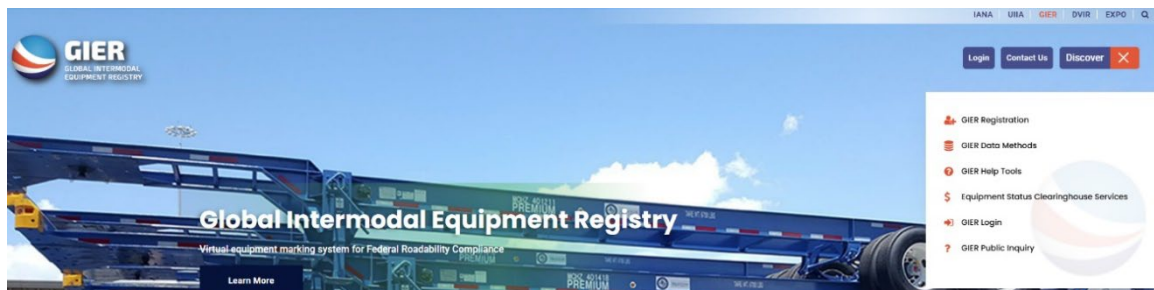
GIER Internet Query

The web-based GIER query is conducted as follows:

1. With a web browser, open <https://intermodal.org/gier>.
2. From the GIER website home page there are two ways to access the online public inquiry:
 - Scroll down the GIER homepage and click on the “GIER Online Public Inquiry for Chassis” button.



- At the top right of the GIER homepage, click on the hamburger button to open the menu. Click on “GIER Public Inquiry” at the bottom of the menu and then on the next page click on “GIER Chassis Online Lookup.”



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Click below to access the Online Public Inquiry tools for looking up chassis registered in the Global Intermodal Equipment Registry (GIER).

[GIER Chassis Online Lookup](#)

3. The equipment inquiry form opens as follows:

A screenshot of the GIER Chassis Inquiry form. The form has a header with the GIER logo and the text "GLOBAL INTERMODAL EQUIPMENT REGISTRY". Below the header, it says "Chassis Inquiry". A date and time stamp reads "Date : 07/24/2025 | Time (hh:mm) : 10:43". The form contains three input fields: "Search Criteria *" with a dropdown menu showing "Equipment Prefix/Number", "Equipment Prefix *", and "Equipment Number *". At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Back", "Search", and "Clear".

4. Select your search criteria: equipment prefix/number (alpha/six-digit control number) or license plate number.
5. Complete the form date and time of inspection and click the search button. The GIER report window will contain the name and USDOT number for the party responsible for the roadworthiness of the equipment at the time and date entered in the query. A sample GIER results return screen is on the next page of this inspection bulletin.

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Sample GIER Results Return Screen:

The screenshot displays the GIER (Global Intermodal Equipment Registry) Chassis Inquiry interface. At the top, the GIER logo and 'GLOBAL INTERMODAL EQUIPMENT REGISTRY' are shown. Below the logo, the title 'Chassis Inquiry' is present. A date and time stamp indicates the search was performed on 07/24/2025 at 10:43. The search criteria section includes a dropdown for 'Equipment Prefix/Number' set to 'uphz', and an 'Equipment Number' field containing '139000'. Navigation buttons for 'Back', 'Search', and 'Clear' are visible. The search results are displayed under the heading 'Search Results for uphz139000'. The results are organized into three sections: 'Current Intermodal Equipment Provider', 'Previous Intermodal Equipment Provider', and 'Registered Owner'. Each section contains a table with relevant information.

Current Intermodal Equipment Provider					
IEP SCAC DCLZ	IEP US DOT No 1909823	IEP Name Direct ChassisLink Inc	Chassis Pool ID DC04 - DCLI - Domestic Rail Pool	Contact Nicole Bailey	Phone (657)-203-8027
Email nicole.bailey@dcli.com	Date 07/24/2025	Time 10:43	Equipment Prefix UPHZ	Equipment Number 139000	Equipment Category Code 53CH
Note: - party responsible for road worthiness as of date/time entered above					

Previous Intermodal Equipment Provider			Registered Owner		
IEP SCAC UPRR	IEP US DOT No 53433	IEP Name Union Pacific Railroad	IEP SCAC DCLZ	IEP US DOT No 1909823	IEP Name Direct ChassisLink Inc
Contact John Caniglia	Phone (402)544-3648		VIN 3H3CS3253T135001	License Plate No 599613T	License Plate State TN

GIER will return the name and valid USDOT number for the party responsible for the equipment at the time and date entered in the query. If a name and USDOT number are returned, then the equipment is properly marked per the fifth marking option, § 390.21(g)(4)(v). If GIER does not return the name and USDOT number, the inspector (and the IEP) must fall back on the first four marking options to confirm compliance with § 390.21(g)(4).

For technical assistance with the online public inquiry feature, please contact GIER's Information Services Help Desk at 877-523-0225, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Eastern time, or via email at admin@gierregistry.com.

GIER Query via Toll-Free Telephonic Service

The toll-free telephonic access to GIER information is available 24 hours a day at 855-801-6252. *Note: the telephonic service only provides the IEP information current at the time the call is made. Users should use the online public inquiry if they wish to obtain the current IEP for a specific date and time.*

To use the toll-free access to GIER:

1. Call the toll-free number 855-801-6252 to access GIER Equipment Inquiry Desk.

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2. A customer service representative will ask enforcement personnel to provide the alphanumeric equipment ID number (normally a four-letter alpha prefix followed by six-digit numeric) found on the intermodal chassis. Do not use information found on the container (see example in figure below). Alternatively, enforcement personnel may provide the customer service representative the license plate/license state.
3. The customer service representative will check the GIER database for the chassis based on the information provided by the enforcement personnel. If found, the customer representative will identify the IEP company name and the IEP USDOT number.

Sample alphanumeric intermodal equipment identification number:



*Note: In this example, the four-letter alpha prefix is ZCSZ (alpha equipment prefix), followed by a six-digit number, 400002 (six-digit control number). **Remember: Use only information found on the chassis itself. Never use information found on the intermodal container.***

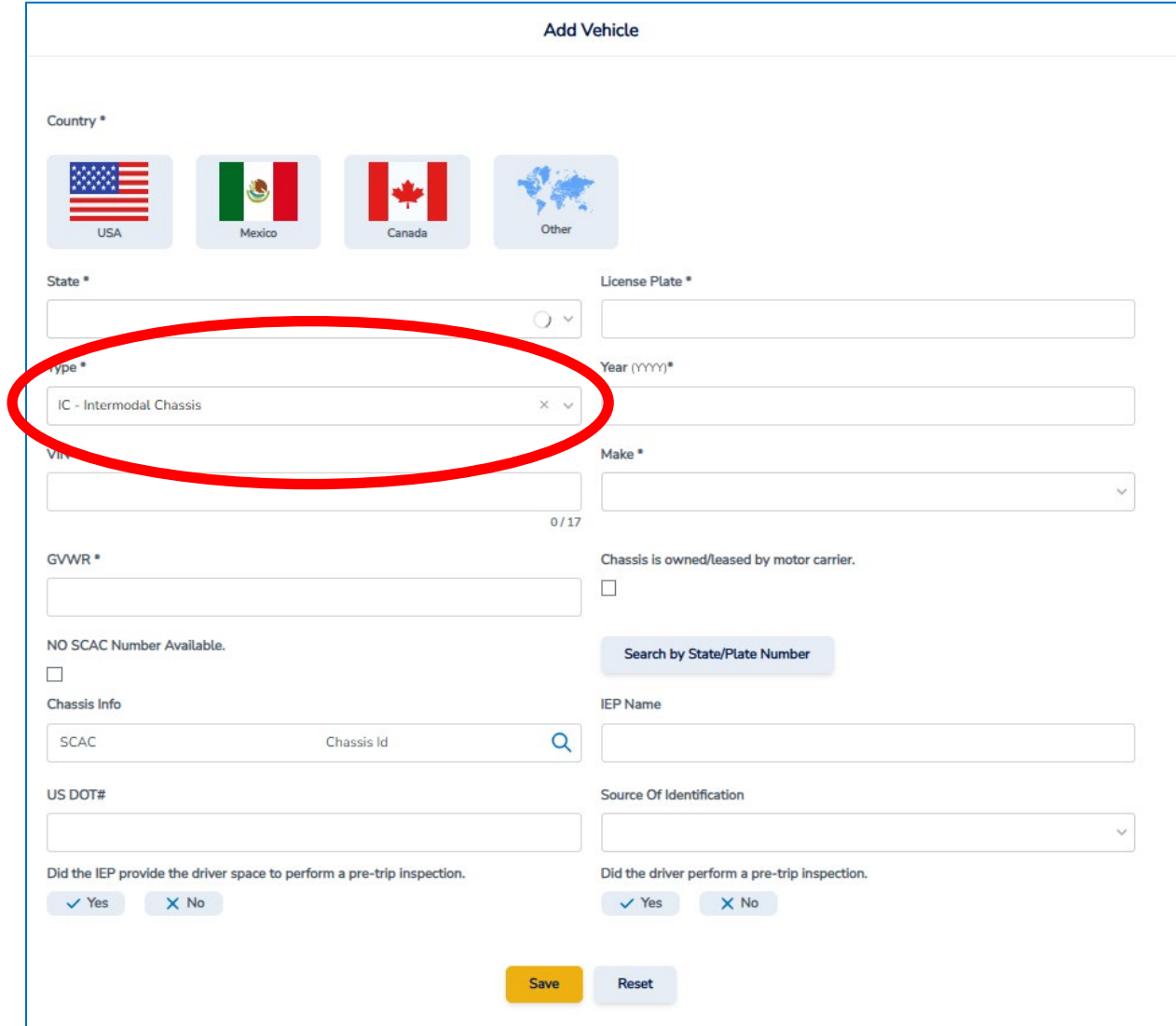
GIER Access via Integrated Inspection Software Query

For jurisdictions that use inspection software for recording results of roadside inspections, inspectors may use inspection software to identify the IEP responsible for the piece of equipment they are inspecting by gathering the identifying information on the chassis and capturing that information in the inspection software. The steps are outlined below.

When the vehicle type “IC” is selected on the Add Vehicle screen, the form will expand to include the IEP information.

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Screenshot of inspection software with Get IEP Data button:



The screenshot shows the 'Add Vehicle' form in the inspection software. The form includes fields for Country, State, License Plate, Year, Make, VIN, GVWR, Chassis Info, US DOT#, and Source Of Identification. A red circle highlights the 'Type' dropdown menu, which is set to 'IC - Intermodal Chassis'. The 'Search by State/Plate Number' button is also visible.

There are two ways to populate the form with the IEP information. Under “Chassis Info,” enter the SCAC chassis ID and click the magnifying glass or enter the state and plate number and click the “Search by State/Plate Number” button. The information for the IEP responsible for the chassis being inspected will populate in the form.

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Add Vehicle

Country *

USA

Mexico

Canada

Other

State *

Maine

×

▼

License Plate *

3432715

Type *

IC - Intermodal Chassis

×

▼

Year (YYYY) *

VIN *

0 / 17

Make *

▼

GVWR *

Chassis is owned/leased by motor carrier.

☐

NO SCAC Number Available.

☐

Chassis Info

ZCSZ

400002

Q

Search by State/Plate Number

IEP Name

Ccm Southeast Enterprises Llc

US DOT#

4198347

Source Of Identification

Global Intermodal Equipment Registry

×

▼

Did the IEP provide the driver space to perform a pre-trip inspection.

☒ Yes

☐ No

Did the driver perform a pre-trip inspection.

☒ Yes

☐ No

Save

Reset

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Overview of Five Marking Options for Intermodal Equipment

IME marking requirements apply to each IEP. All units of IME being interchanged to a motor carrier must identify the IEP. The IEP must be identified by its legal name or a single trade name and its USDOT number. The IME must be identified using any one of the following methods:

1. Permanently mark each unit it plans to interchange – § 390.21(g)(4)(i).
2. Mark each unit it plans to interchange, using a label – § 390.21(g)(4)(ii).
3. Ensure identifying information appears on the interchange document (or interchange receipt provided by the IEP or facility to the driver) that must be on board the power unit – § 390.21(g)(4)(iii).
4. Include identifying information on the trailer documentation kept in a weatherproof compartment on the chassis – § 390.21(g)(4)(iv).
5. Maintain identifying information in an electronic database that is available via real-time internet or telephonic access – § 390.21(g)(4)(v). (The GIER reviewed in this document is the principal example.) The regulation effective date was Dec. 17, 2010.

Guidance

A successful database query using the GIER to obtain the IEP name and USDOT number for a piece of intermodal equipment at the roadside is considered a valid marking of the equipment, per regulation § 390.21(g)(4)(v).