

1. INTRODUCTION

Credentials Administration is one of the three key capability areas in Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks (CVISN) Level 1. The CVISN Guide to Credentials Administration provides reference information and offers advice about implementing credentials administration functions in CVISN.

This is one in a series of guides. The other guides (please see, for example, References 8–10) will be available from the CVISN Web site <http://www.jhuapl.edu/cvisn/>. The CVISN Glossary (Reference 1) provides definitions of terms and abbreviations used in this document.

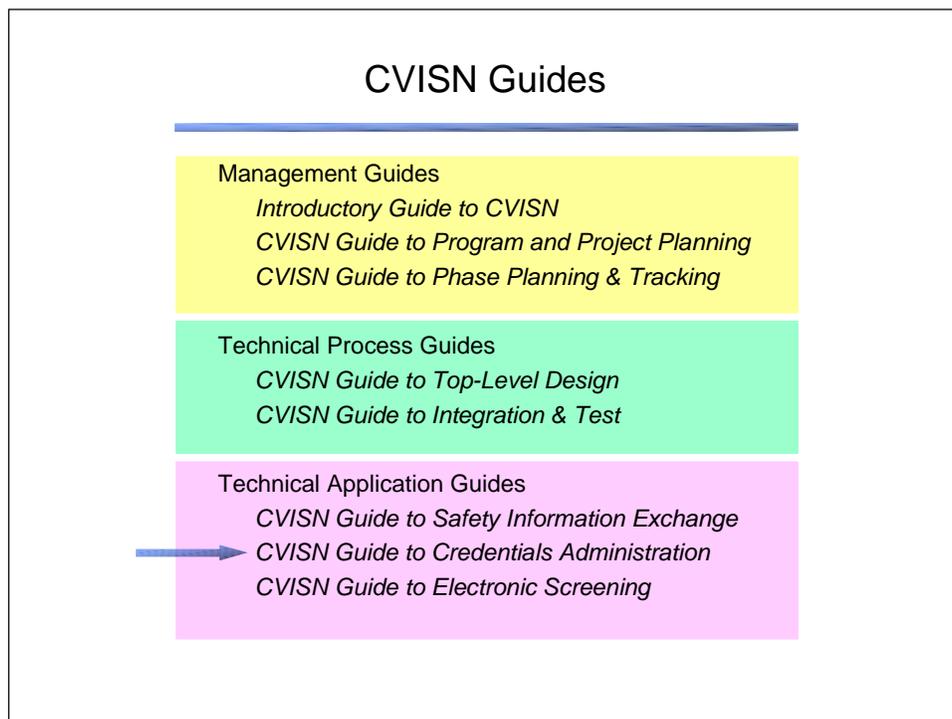


Figure 1–1. The CVISN Guide Series

Subsequent chapters of this guide discuss the concepts, systems, development processes, and issues associated with Credentials Administration.

Factors to Consider in Credentials Administration

Some factors that should be considered when working in the credentials administration area are:

- The most critical interface is that between the motor carrier and the state. The state must provide either a person-to-computer interface, such as a Web browser-based interface, or a computer-to-computer interface.
- If a computer-to-computer interface is chosen, an open, X12 Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) interface should be used, unless the state has evidence that customers support another approach, such as eXtensible Markup Language (XML).
- Different types and sizes of motor carriers will have different needs and preferences. It is likely that your state will need to provide both a Web browser-based interface and a computer-to-computer interface to meet all their needs.
- When the CVISN architecture was baselined in 1996, it focused on the use of ANSI ASC X12 EDI transaction sets for carrier – state credentialing interactions. With the explosion of Web services and Internet popularity over the past few years, FMCSA has reviewed its EDI policy and surveyed CVO stakeholders on electronic credentialing preferences (Reference 59). The new policy will be that FMCSA requires that states implement either a person-to-computer or a computer-to-computer interface. FMCSA also recommends that, in the near term (over the next ~2 years), carriers and states use X12 EDI for computer-to-computer interfaces unless the state has evidence that customers support another approach. FMCSA encourages the exploration of XML as an alternative to EDI.
- The area consists of several somewhat independent sub-areas corresponding to each credential. These may be integrated in the state's Credentialing Interface (CI) software, but are generally handled by independent processing systems within the state.
- The development process adopted will need to accommodate the characteristics of legacy systems that process credentials currently. If these systems are commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) products (as opposed to custom state systems), close cooperation with the product vendors is essential to success. Procurement and subcontract management will be very important components of a successful credentials administration program.
- As time goes on, there should be more solutions readily available off-the-shelf.
- One of the reasons the cost of implementing electronic credentialing remains high is that states do not follow uniform business processes. Even though the International Registration Plan (IRP) and International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) promote some level of uniformity, there is still a lot of room for individual state variation. Joining with other states and associations to standardize credentialing processes and data will help to reduce the cost for all states. This can be done at one level by simply studying and adopting the processes of another state that has already implemented electronic credentialing. Hopefully as time goes on, state associations like the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), IFTA, Inc. and IRP, Inc. will set up mechanisms to allow states to come together for the purpose of defining more uniform credentialing processes.

- It is important for states to establish the habit of monitoring external events as the project proceeds. The CVISN Deployment Workshops are intended to provide a snapshot of the “CVISN world status”, but time marches on and things change. The project manager should identify useful Web sites and points of contact to monitor key external factors that may benefit (or harm) the project. Some examples of these are:
 - Status of EDI standards and implementation guides
 - IRP and IFTA Clearinghouse status
 - Status of vendor credentialing products
 - Development of new technologies and related implementations such as the eXtensible Markup Language (XML)
 - Progress of credentialing efforts in other states
 - Activities of state associations such as AAMVA, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), IFTA, Inc. and IRP, Inc.
 - Reports such as the National Governors Association’s State Fiscal Implications of ITS/CVO Deployment (Reference 51) and Booz-Allen & Hamilton’s ITS Field Operational Test Cross-Cutting Study Commercial Vehicle Administrative Processes (Reference 52)

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