2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

Created: Aug. 15, 2012
Revised: Dec. 6, 2017
Revised: Oct. 22, 2018

Summary

This Inspection Bulletin clarifies the five marking options available to intermodal equipment providers (IEPs) for identifying intermodal chassis per 49 CFR 390.21(h)(4), and provides guidance for identifying the IEP using the fifth marking option, 49 CFR 390.21(h)(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 intermodal equipment (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 will need to provide the license plate number or the internationally standardized equipment identification alpha numeric 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.

2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

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 of ASPEN 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 **http://GIERregistry.com**

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 **GIER ONLINE PUBLIC INQUIRY FOR CHASSIS** button.
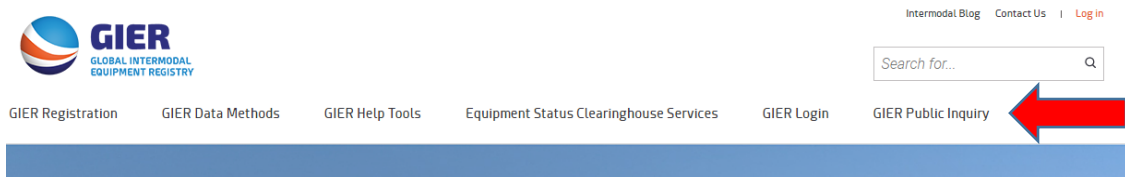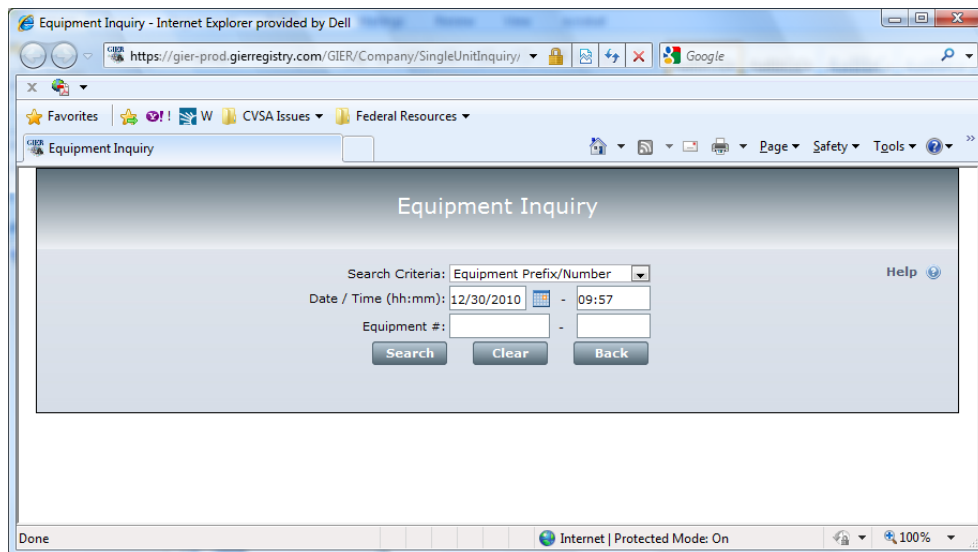

   - At the top of the **GIER homepage** click on **GIER PUBLIC INQUIRY** from the menu at the top of the page and then on the next page click on **GIER CHASSIS ONLINE LOOKUP**.

2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

3. The Equipment Inquiry form opens as follows:

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. GIER will output in its report window 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.

Inspection Bulletin

North American Standard Inspection Program

2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

Sample GIER Results Return Screen:

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, 49 CFR 390.21(h)(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 49 CFR 390.21(h)(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.*

2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

To use the toll-free access to GIER:

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

2. A customer service representative will ask enforcement personnel to provide the alpha/numeric 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 alpha numeric 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. <u>Never use information found on the intermodal container.</u>***
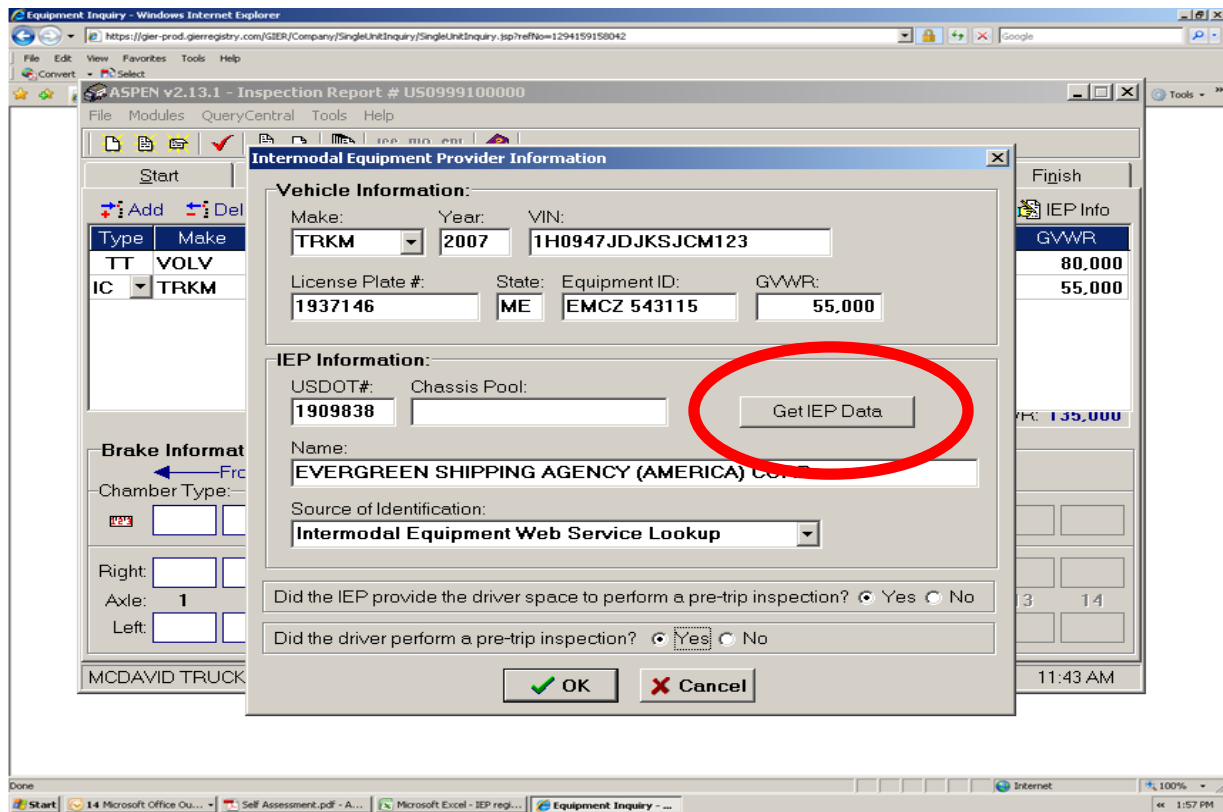
2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

GIER Access via Integrated ASPEN Query

For jurisdictions that use ASPEN software for recording results of roadside inspections, inspectors may use ASPEN 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 ASPEN. The steps are outlined below.

When the vehicle type "IC" is selected, the "Intermodal Equipment Provider Information" box will appear. Complete the "Vehicle Information" section, which includes the make, year, VIN, license plate number, state, equipment ID and gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR). After the information is completed, click the "Get IEP Data" button and the information for the IEP responsible for the chassis being inspected will populate in the "IEP Information" section.

Screenshot of ASPEN with Get IEP Data button:

Inspection Bulletin
North American Standard Inspection Program

2012-06 – Identifying Intermodal Equipment Providers for Intermodal Chassis

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 (h)(4)(i).

2. Mark each unit it plans to interchange, using a label 390.21 (h)(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 (h)(4)(iii).

4. Include identifying information on the trailer documentation kept in a weatherproof compartment on the chassis 390.21(h)(4)(iv).

5. Maintain identifying information in an electronic database that is available via real-time internet or telephonic access 390.21(h)(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 49 CFR 390.21 (h)(4)(v).