

# Virginia Supplement to the Commercial Driver License Manual

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles





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# Virginia Supplement to the Commercial Driver License Manual

**This publication contains information that Virginia commercial motor vehicle operators must know, in addition to the information in the national standard CDL manual.**

## Who are Commercial Drivers?

Commercial drivers are all persons, paid or volunteer, who operate commercial motor vehicles. Volunteer drivers of church buses, private or public school buses and mechanics who test drive commercial vehicles must meet commercial driver's license requirements.

Commercial driver's license requirements **don't** apply to:

- ▶ operators of emergency vehicles, such as firefighters
- ▶ active duty military personnel operating military vehicles
- ▶ operators of farm vehicles when:
  - ▶ used by farmers
  - ▶ used to move farm goods, supplies or machinery to or from their farm
  - ▶ not used as a common or contract motor carrier, and
  - ▶ used within 150 miles of the farm
- ▶ vehicles operated by persons only for personal use, such as recreational vehicles and rental moving vans.
- ▶ Operators of Covered Farm Vehicles that are registered in Virginia or another state as a farm vehicle with a license plate or other designation that allows it to be identified as a farm vehicle when:
  - ▶ Operated by the owner or operator of a farm or a ranch or by an employee or family member of an owner or operator of a farm or ranch;
  - ▶ Used to transport agricultural commodities, livestock, machinery, or supplies to or from a farm or ranch;
  - ▶ Not used in for-hire motor carrier operations;
  - ▶ Not used in transporting hazardous materials requiring placarding;
  - ▶ Operated only inside of Virginia or, if crossing state lines, within 150 air miles of the farm or ranch if the vehicle's gross vehicle weight or gross vehicle weight rating, whichever is greater, is more than 26,001 pounds OR, without mileage limitations if the vehicle's gross vehicle weight or gross vehicle weight rating, whichever is greater, is 26,001 pounds or less.

## Eligibility for a Commercial Permit or License

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires that applicants for a commercial driver's license or

learner's permit be either a U.S. citizen or a Legal Permanent Resident of the U.S. As a result, you are required to present one of the following to DMV when applying. If you previously presented one of these documents to DMV, you will not be asked to present it for subsequent applications:

- ▶ Valid, unexpired, U.S. passport
- ▶ Certified copy of a U.S. state, jurisdiction, or territory
- ▶ Consular Report of Birth Abroad issued by the U.S. Department of State
- ▶ U.S. Certificate of Naturalization
- ▶ U.S. Certificate of Citizenship
- ▶ Valid, unexpired U.S. Permanent Resident Card

If you are temporarily authorized to be in the U.S. you may apply for a non-domiciled commercial license or permit. In addition to meeting Virginia's requirements for licensing, you will also be required to present either a valid, unexpired Employment Authorization Document or a valid, unexpired foreign passport and approved I-94 form from your most recent admittance into the U.S. However, individuals domiciled in Mexico or Canada are not eligible for a Virginia non-domiciled commercial license or permit because your country's commercial motor vehicle operator licensing standards have been determined by the FMCSA Administrator to meet FMCSA standards.

## CDL Age Requirements

You must be at least 18 years of age to hold a CDL. Under federal law, you must be a commercial driver at least 21 years of age to drive across state lines, transport hazardous materials or transport interstate freight (e.g., mail) within the state. If you are under 21 years of age, you may be issued a CDL with a "K" restriction. This restriction indicates that your driving privileges are valid only in Virginia.

## Commercial Learner's Permit

If you want to learn to drive commercial motor vehicles, you must get a commercial learner's permit. To obtain a commercial learner's permit, you must pass the CDL general knowledge exam and the other knowledge exams for the vehicles that you want to drive. Your permit will be valid for one year.

The commercial learner's permit allows you to drive a commercial vehicle of the class and type shown on the permit **only** when a person licensed to drive the same type of vehicle is with you.

If you have never held a CDL, you will be required to obtain and hold a commercial learner's permit for a minimum of 14 days and you may be required to complete entry-level driver training before taking the road skills test(s).

If you currently hold a CDL and wish to upgrade to a higher class, add an endorsement that requires a skills test, or remove a restriction, you will need to obtain the appropriate commercial learner's permit and hold for a minimum of 14 days before taking the skills test. A skills test is required to obtain a passenger endorsement and a school bus endorsement. You may be required to complete entry-level driver training before taking the road skills test(s) to add a passenger and/or school bus endorsement. A skills test is required to remove the following restrictions: no air brakes, no full air brakes, no tractor trailer, no manual transmission, operation of a passenger bus restricted to a Class B passenger vehicle, and operation of a passenger bus restricted to a Class C passenger vehicle.

### **Commercial Learner's Permit Endorsements and Automatic Restrictions N Endorsement with an X Restriction**

You may only operate an empty tank vehicle and may not operate a tank vehicle that previously contained hazardous materials that has not been purged of any residue.

### **P Endorsement with a P Restriction**

You may not operate a commercial motor vehicle carrying passengers. Exceptions include federal or state auditors and inspectors, test examiners, other trainees, and the commercial driver's license holder accompanying the commercial learner's permit holder.

### **S Endorsement with a P Restriction**

You may not operate a school bus vehicle carrying passengers. Exceptions include federal or state auditors and inspectors, test examiners, other trainees, and the commercial driver's license holder accompanying the commercial learner's permit holder.

### **Commercial Learner's Permit Restrictions**

- L** You may not operate a vehicle with air brakes.
- K** You may not operate a commercial motor vehicle outside of Virginia or in interstate commerce.
- M** Operation of a passenger vehicle is restricted to a Class B or Class C passenger vehicle.
- N** Operation of a passenger vehicle is restricted to a Class C passenger vehicle.
- V** You may not operate a commercial motor vehicle without your medical variance/waiver/skill performance documentation.
- X** You may not carry cargo in a commercial motor vehicle tank.

### **CDL Classifications**

You should get your CDL for the class vehicle you plan to drive plus you may need additional endorsements.

### **Class A**

Any combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more if the vehicle(s) being towed have a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds. Vehicles in this class include:

- ▶ tractor-trailer
- ▶ truck and trailer combinations
- ▶ tractor-trailer buses

If you hold a class A license and you have the correct endorsements, you may also operate vehicles listed in classes B and C.

### **Class B**

Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more. Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more towing another vehicle with a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or less. This class includes:

- ▶ straight trucks
- ▶ large buses
- ▶ segmented buses
- ▶ trucks towing vehicles with a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or less

If you hold a class B license and you have the correct endorsements, you may also operate vehicles listed in class C.

### **Class C**

Any vehicle that is not included in classes A or B that carries hazardous materials requiring placards or is designed to carry 16 or more passengers, including the driver.

Remember, the class of a vehicle is determined by its gross vehicle weight rating and the manufacturer's design. The vehicle's class determines the type of CDL and endorsements that you need. If you drive a redesigned or altered vehicle, the vehicle's original class determines the type of CDL and endorsements that you need. The type of CDL that you need is not determined by the class that the redesigned vehicle falls within.

### **CDL Endorsements**

- H** Permits you to drive a vehicle that transports hazardous materials.
- N** Permits you to drive a tank vehicle.
- P** Permits you to drive a passenger-carrying vehicle.
- S** Permits you to drive a school bus.
- T** Permits you to drive a double or triple trailer.
- X** Permits you to drive a tank vehicle and one that carries hazardous materials.

If DMV cancels any endorsement displayed on your CDL, you will be required to return to DMV to have a new CDL issued that does not display the cancelled endorsement. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of your CDL.

## CDL Restrictions

- B** You must wear corrective lenses when operating a commercial motor vehicle.
- E** You may only operate a commercial motor vehicle that has an automatic transmission.
- J** You may only operate a school/activity bus. You may not operate any other type of commercial motor vehicle.
- K** You may not operate a commercial motor vehicle outside of Virginia or in interstate commerce.
- L** You may not operate a vehicle with Full Air or Air over Hydraulic brakes. If you plan to operate a vehicle with either of these types of air brakes, you must take the air brakes knowledge test. You also must take the road test in a vehicle equipped with Full Air or Air over Hydraulic brakes.
- M** Operation of a passenger bus restricted to a Class B or Class C passenger vehicle.
- N** Operation of a passenger bus restricted to a Class C passenger vehicle.
- O** You may not operate a tractor-trailer.
- Q** You are prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle to transport children to or from activities sponsored by a school or by a child day care facility licensed, regulated, or approved by the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- V** You may not operate a commercial motor vehicle without your medical variance/waiver/skill performance documentation.
- Z** You may not operate a vehicle with Full Air brakes.

## Compliance with Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

All CDL/permit applicants must certify that they are in compliance with the federal and Virginia motor carrier safety regulations. Virginia law requires that all CDL/permit applicants who certify that they will operate a commercial motor vehicle in non-excepted interstate or intrastate commerce shall provide the Department of Motor Vehicles with an original or certified copy of a medical examiner's certificate prepared by a qualified health professional listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners. Any commercial driver who fails to comply with these requirements will not be eligible for a commercial driver's license. To find a qualified health professional listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners and obtain a medical examiner's certificate, visit [nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov). CDL/Permit holders who certify that they will operate a commercial motor vehicle in either excepted or non-excepted intrastate commerce will have a "K" restriction added to their CDL/Permit restricting them to intrastate commerce.

## Vision Standards

To operate commercial motor vehicles, you must have:

- ▶ 20/40 or better vision in each eye with or without corrective lenses, and
- ▶ 140 degrees or better horizontal vision.

These vision requirements must be met without the aid of a telescopic lens. Additionally, you must be able to recognize traffic signs and devices showing standard red, green or amber indicators. Some drivers may be granted waivers from these vision requirements.

For information concerning waivers for intrastate travel, contact DMV. For information concerning waivers for interstate travel, contact the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration at Vision Program, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

## Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT)

Effective February 7, 2022, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration implemented minimum training requirements for entry-level drivers applying to:

- ▶ Obtain a Class A or Class B commercial driver's license for the first time
- ▶ Upgrade an existing Class B to a Class A commercial driver's license
- ▶ Obtain a hazardous material endorsement (HME), a passenger (P) or school bus (S) endorsement for the first time

## ELDT Exemptions

ELDT requirements do not apply to:

- ▶ Individuals who already hold a CDL, unless they are upgrading a CDL classification or endorsement after February 7, 2022
- ▶ Individuals who hold a valid, unexpired commercial learner's permit (CLP) issued prior to February 7, 2022; however, they must obtain a CDL before the CLP expires
- ▶ Individuals who obtain a CDL under the Troops to Trucks<sup>SM</sup> program

For more information, visit [dmvNOW.com/ELDT](http://dmvNOW.com/ELDT).

## Testing

- ▶ You may take the CDL knowledge exam(s) only once per business day. Passed knowledge test results are valid for one year. If you apply for your commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license longer than one year after passing a test, you will need to successfully complete the test again before obtaining your permit or CDL.
- ▶ If you fail the commercial driver's license general knowledge exam three times, prior to February 7, 2022, you will not be permitted to take it a fourth time until you successfully complete the knowledge component of driver instruction at a driver training school approved by DMV. You must complete the driver instruction after the third unsuccessful attempt to pass the test. Upon completion of the knowledge component and presentation of your certificate of completion, DMV will allow you to take the knowledge test again.
- ▶ If you fail the commercial driver's license behind-the-wheel test administered by DMV three times prior to,

February 7, 2022, in the same Class of commercial motor vehicle, you will not be permitted to take the test a fourth time in that Class of commercial motor vehicle until you successfully complete the in-vehicle component of driver instruction at a driver training school approved by DMV. You must complete the driver instruction after the third unsuccessful attempt to pass the test. Upon completion of the in-vehicle component and presentation of your certificate of completion, DMV will allow you to take the behind-the-wheel test again.

- ▶ Passed CDL skills test results are valid for six months. If you apply for your commercial driver's license six months or more after passing your CDL skills test, you will need to successfully complete the test again before obtaining your CDL.
- ▶ If you fail to show up for a scheduled CDL skills test without notifying the examiner in advance, DMV will charge you a \$50 fee.

### Important Notes

- ▶ If the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) notifies DMV that you have been determined to be an imminent hazard and have been disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle, the information will be noted on your driving record. Also, any disqualification imposed by DMV will run concurrently with the disqualification imposed by FMCSA.
- ▶ Virginia law prohibits the court from allowing drivers of commercial motor vehicles, or persons holding a CDL or commercial learner's permit and operating a non-commercial motor vehicle, to attend a driver improvement clinic in lieu of a conviction, or to reduce or defer a conviction.
- ▶ If you are convicted of a felony sexual offense involving a minor, you must register with the Virginia State Police. You must re-register within 30 days of moving.

### Alcohol Warnings

All CDL drivers are subject to Virginia's controlled substance and alcohol testing laws. If you operate a commercial vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs, refuse to take a blood alcohol test or are found to have a BAC of 0.04 percent or greater, your CDL or commercial learner's permit will be disqualified. The disqualification period ranges from one year to life, but does not necessarily affect your privilege to drive a non-commercial vehicle.

If you operate a vehicle on Virginia's roadways, you agree to take a chemical test upon request to determine if you are driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This is called implied consent.

Any person who possesses or consumes an alcoholic beverage while operating a school bus transporting children is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A person convicted of this offence is punishable by confinement in jail for up to 12 months and/or a fine of up to \$2,500.

If the police have probable cause to stop you and suspect that you have been drinking or using drugs, they will ask you to take a breath test. This test analyzes the amount of alcohol and drugs in your body. Under implied consent laws, if you operate a motor vehicle on Virginia's public roads, you agree to take a chemical test upon request.

You are required to take the test. If you refuse, your license will be immediately suspended for seven days and it may be suspended for one year, whether or not you are convicted of driving under the influence. If you are convicted of DUI, the suspension period for refusing the test will be added to the DUI revocation period.

### Virginia School Bus Drivers

To drive a school bus, you must be at least 18 years of age. You must also hold a valid commercial driver's license. Depending on the weight and size of the bus that you will drive, you will be issued a Class B or Class C license. Additionally you must have a passenger bus endorsement and a school bus endorsement on your CDL. Individuals required to register with the Virginia State Police Sex Offender and Crimes Against Children registry are prohibited from obtaining a school bus endorsement during any period in which registration is required.

If you plan to drive a school bus designed to carry fewer than 16 passengers, including the driver, you do not need to obtain a CDL, or the passenger bus endorsement. However, you must have the school bus endorsement on your driver's license. Therefore, you will need to pass the school bus knowledge and skills tests. You will be restricted to driving buses designed to carry fewer than 16 passengers including the driver and this restriction will be printed on your license. If you plan to drive a vehicle designed to carry fewer than 16 passengers, including the driver, that does not meet the definition of a school bus (designed for transport of pupils to and from school, is yellow with black letters, and has warning devices), you do not need to obtain a CDL, passenger bus endorsement, or school bus endorsement.

Fees are not charged for a school bus endorsement on the driver's license or the commercial driver's license. The fee for a driver's license with a school bus endorsement is \$4.00 per year.

If you wish to operate a school bus that is designed to carry 16 or more passengers, you must obtain a commercial driver's license. You will need to pass the CDL general knowledge test, the passenger knowledge test, school bus knowledge test, and the air brake knowledge test if the vehicle is equipped with air brakes. In addition to the written tests, you must pass the road skills test in a commercial vehicle representative of the type you propose to operate. You may be required to complete entry-level driver training before taking the road skills test(s).

If you operate only a school and/or activity bus, you may have commercial license privileges restricted for this purpose and pay only the driver's license fee of \$4.00 per year or \$32.00

for an 8-year license. However, if you intend to operate commercial vehicles other than the school or school activity bus, or if you have a class A CDL or add other endorsement(s), you will have to pay the fees for the CDL and the additional endorsement(s).

Virginia law requires all school bus drivers to wear safety belts. Virginia law prohibits the use of hand-held or hands-free cell phones or other wireless devices while operating a school bus. The only exceptions are in an emergency situation or when the vehicle is lawfully parked and for the purposes of dispatching. School bus drivers may use two-way radio devices or wireless telecommunications devices that are used hands-free to allow live communication between the driver and school or public safety officials.

## Hazardous Materials

Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) endorsements are not transferable from other states. All tests must be taken. HAZMAT tests cannot be given orally or in a language other than English. The federal USA Patriot Act requires all applicants for HAZMAT endorsements to be fingerprinted for a background check. The HAZMAT background check may be transferred from another state or credit may be given for a valid Transportation Workers Identification Credential (TWIC) as long as it is valid for at least one year and five days from the DMV application date. The background check fee is \$83.00. See the CDL application (DL 70) for fingerprinting locations.

Applicants for hazardous materials endorsements must comply with Transportation Security Administration requirements in 49 C.F.R. Part 1572. A lawful permanent resident of the United States requesting a hazardous materials endorsement must also provide his U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) alien registration number.

Compliance with federal motor carrier safety regulations: "...a motor carrier or other person to whom this part is applicable must comply with the rules in parts 390 through 397, inclusive, of this subchapter when he/she is transporting hazardous materials by a motor vehicle which must be marked or placarded" in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations.

## Troops to Trucks<sup>SM</sup>

Through the Troops to Trucks<sup>SM</sup> program, DMV is helping service members obtain tools for future employment in the transportation industry. If you have military truck driving experience and a military CDL, testing may be waived for a Virginia CDL. Once credentialed, complete an employment questionnaire to be provided to Virginia-based transportation companies.

### Eligibility

To eligible for knowledge and/or skills test waivers, applicants must be Virginia residents; serving Guard or Reserve member, active duty personnel or discharged in the last 12 months;

and have a Virginia driver's license or be eligible for one. An applicant's commanding officer or designee must certify that the applicant has had driving experience for the past two years in the military, operating the same type of vehicle that the applicant plans to drive using a Virginia CDL. Drivers may need additional tests to obtain endorsements on their CDL.

## Military Skills Test Waiver Program

Applicants with two years' experience safely operating heavy military vehicles may be eligible to obtain a CDL without taking the skills test. You will only need to take the CDL knowledge exam and any other knowledge exams required for the commercial vehicle class and endorsements you would like to obtain.

## Even Exchange Program (Knowledge Test Waiver)

When used with the Military Skills Test Waiver, qualified military drivers may be exempt from the CDL knowledge test. To qualify for a knowledge test waiver, applicants must meet the criteria for the skills test waiver and must have held (within the last year) a Military Driver's License with an approved Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Code.

Eligible MOS Codes:

- ▶ U.S. Army: 88M Motor Transport Operator; 92F Fueller; 14T Patriot Launching Station Operator
- ▶ U.S. Marine Corps: 3531 Motor Vehicle Operator
- ▶ U.S. Navy: EO Equipment Operator
- ▶ U.S. Air Force: 2T1 Vehicle Operator; 2F0 Fueller; 3E2 Pavement and Construction Equipment Operator

Even Exchange does not eliminate or replace the skills test waiver. Program applicants who do not qualify for the Even Exchange Program may still qualify for the skills test waiver.

## Application Process

Applicants need:

- ▶ a downloadable DMV waiver form (DL13) signed and notarized by the applicant's commanding officer or designee
- ▶ Virginia driver's license or be eligible for one
- ▶ a completed Application for a Virginia Commercial Driver's License (DMV form DL2P)
- ▶ DD-214, DD-256, NGB-22 or a U.S. Active Duty/Reservist Military ID Card
- ▶ If operating either non-excepted interstate or non-excepted intrastate commerce, a valid CDL medical certificate issued by a medical examiner on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners ([nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov)).

Get all of the Troops to Trucks<sup>SM</sup> program details at [www.dmvNOW.com/T2T](http://www.dmvNOW.com/T2T).

