

COMPLIANCE OVERVIEW



FMCSA Training Requirements for Entry-level CMV Drivers



On Dec. 8, 2016, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued a [final rule](#) that establishes training requirements for individuals applying for a new commercial driver's license (CDL). The final rule also applies to CDL upgrades and certain CDL endorsements, such as hazardous materials, passenger and school bus.

The final rule requires affected individuals to complete a course of instruction provided by a qualified training provider listed, or eligible for listing, in a training provider registry created by the FMCSA.

Although the final rule became effective on Feb. 6, 2017, compliance with it was not required until Feb. 7, 2022. This compliance date was selected to provide sufficient time for the development of the Training Provider Registry (TPR).

Affected Individuals

The rule affects certain individuals who drive, or intend to drive, CMVs in either interstate or intrastate commerce. Specifically, the entry-level driver training (ELDT) rule requires training for all individuals who are applying for:

- A new CMV operating license (entry-level drivers);
- A CMV license upgrade (from a Class B license to a Class A license); or
- A CMV license passenger (P), hazardous materials (H) or school bus (S) endorsement.

The ELDT rule is aligned with existing CDL regulations and does not create any new exceptions. For this reason, any individual exempt from taking a skills test for a Class A or Class B CDL or a P or S endorsement is also exempt from the ELDT rule. In addition, the rule does not apply to CMV drivers who are applying for removal of a restriction.

Compliance with the ELDT is required by Feb. 7, 2022. The phase-in period should give state agencies enough time to prepare their information systems to begin recording the training provider's certification information into the Commercial Driver's Licensing Information System and onto the driver's CDL record.

The ELDT

The final rule replaces existing mandatory training requirements and includes the following:

- A Class A and Class B CDL core curriculum; and
- Training curricula related to hazardous materials (H), passenger (P) and school bus (S) endorsements.

The curricula are divided into theory and behind-the-wheel (BTW) training. The final rule does not provide for a minimum number of hours for theory training, but does require CDL applicants to show basic competency in both their understanding of the theory and their ability to actually operate the type of CMV that corresponds to their CDL application.

The rule does not permit BTW training to be conducted by using a driving simulation device, and a driver-trainee may not use a simulation device to demonstrate proficiency for any of the BTW curricula. However, simulators may be used in theory training.

The TPR

The ELDT rule requires affected individuals to receive their training from approved training providers. To comply with this requirement, individuals must select a training provider from the FMCSA's TPR.

Training providers will self-certify that they meet the applicable eligibility requirements set forth in the rule. The TPR will also provide the electronic interface that will receive and store ELDT certification information from training providers and transmit that information to the State Driver Licensing Agencies (SDLAs).

This means that the FMCSA does not certify or otherwise "approve" a training provider merely because it is listed on the TPR. Therefore, the FMCSA emphasizes that prospective entry-level drivers must perform their own due diligence before selecting a suitable training provider.

Examples of potential TPR entities include training schools, educational institutions, rural electric cooperatives, motor carriers, state and local governments, school districts, joint labor management programs, owner-operators and individuals. Eligible providers may provide training either on a "for-hire" or "not-for-hire" basis. Any training provider meeting the eligibility requirements could be qualified to provide ELDT in accordance with the rule, regardless of whether they fall within a category specifically identified in the rule.

- To qualify as a training provider, an entity must:
- Provide instruction on all elements of the applicable curricula;
- Use facilities that comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws;
- Use vehicles that comply with all applicable federal and state safety requirements;
- Become and stay eligible to be listed on the FMCSA's training provider registry;
- Maintain sufficient documentation to prove compliance with FMCSA standards in case of an audit; and
- Submit electronic certificates of completion for all trainees that complete the training course and achieve at least an 80 percent score in the assessment offered by the training provider.

To meet the instruction requirement, the courses being taught must meet all FMCSA standards for entry-level drivers. They must also meet the requirements related to course curricula, administration, qualifications for instructional personnel, assessments, proficiency assessment, training facilities and training vehicles.

Electronic certificate submissions would need to be provided the following business day, and there would be no limit on the number of training certifications that can be submitted at one time.

LINKS AND RESOURCES

- FMCSA: Entry-level driver training rule [webpage](#)
- FMCSA: [FAQs](#) on entry-level driver training final rule
- FMCSA: Entry-level driver training final rule [presentation](#)

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