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Entry-Level Driver Training

Who is required to complete Entry Level Driver Training?



An individual who is obtaining a Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for the first time



An individual who is upgrading an existing Class B CDL to a Class A CDL



An individual who is obtaining a hazardous materials (H), passenger (P), or school bus (S) endorsement for the first time

Based on the above, individuals who obtain a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) on or after February 7, 2022 will be required to meet ELDT requirements.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Theory Instruction:



Trainees must receive an overall score of at least 80 percent during assessment. No minimum hours. Training topics include:

- Basic Operation
- Safe Operating Procedures
- Advanced Operation Procedures
- Vehicle Systems and Reporting Malfunctions
- Non-Driving Activities (e.g., Hours of Service)

Behind the Wheel (BTW) Training:



- Actual operation of a CMV
- Takes place on a range or public road
- May not use a simulator to meet requirements
- Basic vehicle control skills and mastery of basic maneuvers
- No minimum hours; student must demonstrate proficiency through repetitive successful completion of all the required BTW skills including range and road driving.

Theory and BTW topics are discussed in detail in Appendices A through F to 49 CFR Part 380.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MINIMUM HOURS:

Are there specific hours of training mandated for the theory curricula?

No. There is no minimum number of hours that driver-trainees must spend on the theory (i.e., knowledge) portions of the curricula. The regulations prescribe specific topics for each of the five theory curricula, require the training provider to cover all topics, and require that driver-trainees demonstrate their understanding of the material by achieving an overall minimum score of 80 percent on the written (or electronic) theory assessment.

Are there specific hours of behind-the-wheel (BTW) training mandated for the various curricula?

No. The entry-level driver training (ELDT) regulations do not require a minimum number of hours for the completion of BTW training (e.g., Class A, Class B and the passenger (P) and school bus (S) endorsements). The proficient completion of the BTW portions of the various curricula is based solely on the training instructor's assessment of each driver trainee's performance of the required elements of BTW training on the range and public road. All BTW training must be conducted in a vehicle representative of the commercial driver's license (CDL) class or endorsement being sought.

TRAINING PROVIDERS:

Who can provide entry-level driver training?

Training providers listed on the Training Provider Registry (TPR) are the only entities that can provide training required by the ELDT regulations. To comply with the ELDT regulations, drivers must select a training provider from those listed in the TPR.

What types of entities can apply to be listed on the Training Provider Registry?

Training schools, educational institutions, rural electric cooperatives, motor carriers, State and local governments, school districts, joint labor-management programs, owner-operators, and individuals may be listed on the TPR. Eligible providers may provide training either on a "for-hire" or "not-for-hire" basis. Other training providers that meet the eligibility requirements could be qualified to provide entry-level driver training, regardless of whether they fall within a category specifically identified in the regulations.

Entry-Level Driver Training



MYTH VS. FACT



MYTH: Motor carriers will no longer be able to offer in-house training programs.

FACT: Motor carriers that have provided training to entry-level drivers in the past, are able to continue training new drivers as long as they meet the requirements of a training provider listed in 49 CFR §380.703 and register online with FMCSA's Training Provider Registry.



MYTH: New drivers are required to pay thousands of dollars to complete the training program and will need to go to a professional truck-driving school.

FACT: A driver wishing to complete the ELDT program can do so by going to any entity listed on FMCSA's Training Provider Registry. This includes, motor carriers, educational institutions, rural electric cooperatives, State and local governments, school districts, joint labor-management programs, owner-operators, and individuals listed on the training provider registry. Although permissible, a driver does not need to go to a truck driver training school.



MYTH: Training required by the ELDT rule will take much longer to complete than what is required today.

FACT: There are no required minimum instruction hours for theory training. Training providers must use assessments to determine if trainees are proficient in all units of the theory curriculum. There are also no required minimum instruction hours for BTW training. Training is complete when the training provider determines that a trainee is proficient in all elements of the BTW curriculum.



MYTH: Most training providers will have to completely change their training programs to comply with ELDT requirements.

FACT: FMCSA estimates that approximately 85% of entry-level drivers already receive pre-CDL training that meets or exceeds ELDT requirements.



MYTH: The new ELDT rule will make it more difficult to hire new drivers and will further exacerbate supply chain challenges.

FACT: Establishing consistent and effective training requirements will help reduce the failure rates for the SDLA-administered skills test, thereby helping drivers to obtain CDLs more efficiently and improve the supply chain. Most training programs already meet or exceed ELDT requirements and will be able to continue training new drivers without disruption. Additionally, the TPR will make it easier for new drivers to find qualified training providers, increasing the likelihood that a prospective driver actually signs up for and completes training.



MYTH: Drivers who have had their CDL for years will need to complete the entire ELDT program just to add an endorsement.

FACT: A driver who held a CDL prior to February 7, 2022 and applies for an upgrade to a higher class of CDL or an S, P, or H endorsement for the first time after February 7, 2022 will only need to complete the required entry-level driver training for the class of CDL to which the driver is upgrading or the endorsement(s) for which the driver is applying.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: FMCSA has a website dedicated to ELDT and the Training Provider Website. This website includes frequently asked questions and information for training providers. For more information, visit tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov