

FMCSA's ELDT Program: Ensuring Safer Roads for Commercial Drivers

The Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCSA), in order to ensure the safety of Americas Roadways enacted the Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) program in February 2022. Anyone desiring to be a commercial motor vehicle operator must successfully complete the mandated FMCSA ELDT program.

Summary of Vehicles Requiring a Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) is required to operate specific types of heavy and specialized vehicles. CDLs are divided into three main classes—Class A, Class B, and Class C—each covering different vehicle types and endorsements for specialized transport.

Class A CDL

Class A CDL is required for drivers operating combination vehicles with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 pounds or more, provided the towed vehicle exceeds 10,001 pounds.

Examples: Tractor-trailers (semi-trucks), truck and trailer combinations, tankers, livestock carriers, and flatbeds.

Class B CDL

Class B CDL is necessary for operating single vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more or a vehicle towing a trailer that does not exceed 10,001 pounds.

Examples: Box trucks, straight trucks, dump trucks, large buses (such as city and school buses), and cement mixers.

Class C CDL (with Endorsements)

Class C CDL is required for smaller commercial vehicles that:

Transport hazardous materials (Hazmat - H Endorsement) requiring a placard, such as fuel trucks, chemical transport vehicles, or certain delivery trucks carrying hazardous substances.

Carry 16 or more passengers (P Endorsement), including the driver, such as shuttle buses, small passenger vans, and certain types of school buses.

Each class of CDL may require additional endorsements for specific cargo or passenger transport, including Tanker (N), Double/Triple Trailers (T), Passenger (P), and Hazardous Materials (H) endorsements. Drivers must pass written and skills tests for the appropriate class and endorsements to legally operate these vehicles.

6 Steps to Get Your CDL

1

Complete Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) Theory

Enroll in a certified training program that meets the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requirements.

2

Pass a Department of Transportation (DOT) Physical

Undergo a DOT medical examination to ensure you meet the physical requirements for commercial driving.

3

Obtain a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP)

Pass the required written exam at your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to receive your CLP.

4

Enroll in a Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) CDL Training

Find a FMCSA registered CDL training school that provides ELDT BTW driving instruction.

5

Demonstrate Proficiency in ELDT BTW Training Units

Successfully complete all FMCSA-mandated ELDT BTW training units and receive instructor approval for proficiency.

6

Pass Your State's CDL Skills Exam

Take and pass your state's CDL road skills test to earn your official Commercial Driver's License.



WHEN A CDL IS NEEDED TO DRIVE A VEHICLE:

Is the GCWR* 26,001 pounds or more?

*Gross Vehicle Weight Rating

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Power Unit} \\ \text{GVWR} \\ + \\ \text{Towed Unit} \\ \text{GVWR} \\ = \\ \text{Total} \\ \text{GVWR} \end{array}$$

Is the GCWR of the towed unit 10,001 pounds or more?

NO

CLASS A CDL



Is the GCWR of the power unit 26,001 pounds or more?

NO

CLASS A CDL



Does the vehicle require a HAZMAT placard?

NO



CLASS C HAZMAT ENDORSEMENT

Including the driver, can the vehicle carry 16 or more passengers?

NO



CLASS C PASSENGER ENDORSEMENT

CDL NOT NEEDED

