

Applying for a CDL

Effective January 30, 2012, Federal Motor Carrier's Safety Regulation 49 CFR 383.71 requires all CDL holders/applicants to have a **valid DOT medical card on file with the Division of Driver Licensing** in order to obtain/retain a valid CDL license/permit.

CDL holders/applicants must provide a legible copy of both front and back of the medical card.

Also, prior to the issuance of an original, renewal or upgrade CDL/CLP all CDL holders/applicants must self certify as to what type driving they are operating in or expect to operate in by completing

 [TC 94-169, Commercial Driver License Self Certification](#) form.

[NOTE: Kentucky school bus drivers should choose "NON-EXCEPTED INTERSTATE-I certify that I operate or expect to operate in interstate commerce"]

The above information must be forwarded to the Division of Driver Licensing and posted to the driver's CDLIS record **prior to applying** for issuance of a CDL/ CLP at the circuit court clerk's office.

Also, 49 CFR 384.206 mandates **new** CDL applicants, renewals, upgrades and CDL transfers to complete a commercial driver license application **10 year history survey**.

Drivers/applicants must provide a list of all states in which they held a license to operate any type vehicle in the previous 10 years.

Failure to disclose the required information subjects the applicant to a possible 60 (sixty) day suspension for falsifying an application.

The  [Commercial Driver Licensing application](#) and the Self Certification form are accessible from the DDL website.

A CDL holder/applicant must forward the required information to the Division of Driver Licensing using one of three methods available.

The information may be mailed to Division of Driver Licensing, 200 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40622, or faxed to 502-564-3250 or scanned and emailed to KYTC.CDL@KY.gov. All CDL holders/applicants will receive written notification within 5-7 business days of information being received in the CDL Section.

Once the driver/applicant has received written notification of their approval they can proceed to the circuit court clerk's office to begin/complete the issuance process.

A supply of the CDL applications and Self Certification forms may be obtained from the Administrative Support Section at 502-564-1257.

All applicants will be required to successfully pass a knowledge test either in written or oral form, and a vision test.

A CDL instruction permit will then be issued that is valid for six (6) months.

You may schedule a road skills test with Kentucky State Police 10 days after the permit has been issued.

[NOTE: Kentucky School Bus Candidates test with KY Third Party Examiners as assigned by KDE]

A permit may only be renewed once in the two (2) year period. If you do not successfully pass the road skills test by the expiration of your CDL instruction permit renewal, you will need to reapply. All fees and written tests will be required prior to a new permit being issued.

Written Skill Test Fees for CDL Permits

If applying for a Class B or C with P & S endorsements only, the application fee will be \$9 and there will be no skill test fee required.

For all others, the application fee will be \$24. Effective September 5, 2006 the new skill test fees for CDL permits, as mandated by House Bill 707, was implemented. HB 707 directs that the skill test fees collected will be placed in the Kentucky State Police CDL skill testing trust fund, and will be used by the State Police to contract with and train civilian CDL skills examiners and to improve the logistics of the CDL skills testing process. It applies only to original CDL permits and will not be levied against duplicate or renewal permits.

- At the time of issuance of a CDL permit requiring a skills test, a driver who has held a Kentucky operator license or permit for 30 days or longer will pay a skills testing fee of fifty dollars (\$50) in addition to the eleven dollar (\$11) CDL permit fee.
- At the time of issuance of a CDL permit requiring a skill test to a driver who has held a Kentucky operator license or permit for less than 30 days, a skill testing fee of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) in addition to the \$11 CDL will be collected.

What's on the Knowledge Test?

The Kentucky State Police will give the knowledge test at the local exam stations. Please check with your local Circuit Court Clerk regarding the days and times the examiner will be available.

The **knowledge test consists of 50 questions** covering a broad range of subjects, including vehicle operations under all kinds of conditions, cargo handling, and vehicle inspection.

Additional knowledge must be shown in the following areas:

- Applicants for Class A license - 20 questions on combination vehicles.
- **Applicants driving vehicles with air brakes - 25 questions on air brakes.**

Endorsements are required for the following vehicles:

- Double/triple trailer - 20 questions
- Tanker - 20 questions
- **Passenger transport - 20 questions**
- Hazardous materials hauling - 30 questions
- **School Bus - 20 questions**

For each test, 80 percent of the questions must be answered correctly to pass. Failure to show basic knowledge of an air brake system will result in a license restriction limiting the driver to operating a vehicle without an air brake system. Applicants may take the basic knowledge test indefinitely without paying retest fees. However, if the applicant fails, the applicant must wait 24 hours prior to re-testing. The skills test may be taken up to 4 times on the 1st \$50 skills test fee. An additional \$50 will be required if a 5th test is required. The combination, airbrake, and endorsement tests require a \$5 re-test fee for each time taken after the initial failure.

Re-Testing

If a CDL driver surrenders his commercial driving privileges, he has a year to return to the clerk's office and be re-issued the CDL without re-testing. If the CDL is ever expired for one (1) year or more, the written tests must be taken prior to a new license being issued. An application fee will be charged. If applying for a CDL reinstatement, and the commercial privilege has been suspended for one (1) year or more, **all** tests are required.

What does the road test cover?

Drivers will be required to take this test in the class of vehicle they intend to drive. The test includes a pre-trip inspection, off-road maneuvering, and on-road driving test. The applicant will be required to furnish a vehicle for testing.

After the CDL permit is issued, applicants must wait 10 days before contacting Kentucky State Police for a skills test appointment. If you passed the written test for air brakes, you will need to skills test in an air brake vehicle, otherwise, you will receive a K restriction.

Pre-trip Inspection

Purpose: To see if you know the vehicle is safe to drive.

Test Procedure: You may be asked to do a pre-trip inspection of your vehicle or to explain to the examiner what you would inspect and why. The examiner will mark on a scoring form each time that you correctly inspect or explain.

A manual explaining what you need to inspect is available through the Kentucky State Police or the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Division of Drivers Licensing website.

Basic Control Skills Test

Purpose: To evaluate your basic skills in controlling the vehicle.

Setup: The test setup consists of various exercises marked out by lines, traffic cones, or something similar. The exercises may include moving the vehicle forward, backward, and turning maneuvers.

The examiner will explain to you how each exercise is to be done. You will be scored on how well you stay within the exercise boundaries and how many pull-ups you make.

Road Test

Purpose: To evaluate your ability to drive safely in a variety of on-the-road situations.

Test Procedures: The test drive is taken over a route specified by the examiner. It may include left and right turns, intersections, railway crossings, curves, up and down grades, rural or semi-rural roads, city and multi-lane streets, and expressway driving.

You will drive over the test route following instructions given by the examiner. The examiner will score specific tasks such as turns, merging into traffic, lane changes, and speed control, at specific places along the route. The examiner will also score whether you correctly do tasks such as signaling, searching for hazards, controlling speed, and lane positioning.

What does the CDL cost?

- CDL application - \$24 (**except Class B/C with P & S endorsements only - \$9**)
- **CDL instruction permit - \$11**
- Original CDL - up to \$40 (prorated fees according to current operator's expiration)
- Renewal CDL - \$47/**Class B or C with P & S endorsements only - \$32.00**
- Transfer CDL - \$60; with motorcycle - \$70.

Upgrades in Class

- Class B or C to A - application, permit and license fees, for a total of \$47 plus skill test fee, if applicable.
- Class C to B - application, permit and license fees, for a total of \$47 plus skill test fee, if applicable.

Add Endorsements/Drop Restrictions

\$5 for tanker, doubles/triples, and hazardous materials. The new license will cost \$12, for a total of \$17.

The following license actions will require an application fee, CDL instruction permit fee, skills test fee and a new license fee, for a total of \$97:

- Add passenger endorsement;
- Drop K restriction;
- Drop O restriction; and
- Drop J restriction

The following license action will require an application fee, a permit fee and license fee with a total cost of \$32-\$47, depending on class license wanted or held at the time of upgrade/add-on.

- **Add school bus endorsement**

CDL Transfers

Permits

The state of Kentucky does not transfer commercial instruction permits from other states. If you currently hold a commercial instruction permit and wish to transfer to Kentucky, you will have to surrender the out of state permit and take the written knowledge tests in Kentucky. Upon passing those tests, you will be issued a Kentucky commercial instruction permit.

Hazardous Materials Endorsement

If you have a hazardous endorsement, you will be required to take the written hazmat test prior to transferring it to Kentucky. There is a \$5.00 fee to take the written test.

If your hazmat threat assessment will not cover the life of your new Kentucky commercial license, you will be required to undergo a new threat assessment. This will cost \$115.00. In some cases, you may be eligible for a ninety (90) day extension to complete your threat assessment. This will be determined by the CDL section at the Division of Driver Licensing.