

Minimum training requirements for entry-level Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) operators

Risk Control Services

On May 21, 2004, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published a final rule establishing minimum training requirements for entry-level CMV drivers. Entry-level drivers are defined as drivers with less than one year of experience operating a CMV with a commercial driver's license (CDL) in interstate commerce.

Purpose of the rule

The entry-level driver training requirements were developed in response to a 1995 study that concluded that the heavy truck, motorcoach, and school bus segments of the CMV industry were not providing adequate entry-level driver training. The entry-level driver training requirements have been designed to address topics that do not fall within the CDL training and testing program. The FMCSA believes requiring entry-level driver training will help create a safety foundation for new drivers.



Required training

Entry-level driver training must include the following four elements.

- **Driver qualification** - This training must focus on the federal medical certification rules, medical examination procedures, general qualification requirements, driver responsibilities, and disqualification based on various offenses, orders, and loss of driving privileges.
- **Hours-of-service** - This training is to include instruction on the limitations of driving hours, off-duty requirements, completing records of duty status, exceptions, and fatigue management.
- **Driver wellness** - This training should address basic health maintenance including diet and exercise, as well as avoiding excessive use of alcohol. The FMCSA also

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suggests that additional driver wellness topics could include stress, sleep apnea, the importance of periodic health monitoring and testing, and how to maintain healthy blood cholesterol, blood pressure, and weight.

- **Whistleblower protection** - Covers the employee's right to question the safety practices of an employer without the employee's risk of losing a job or being subject to reprisals simply for stating a safety concern.

The FMCSA calculates that providing adequate training in these areas will take approximately 10 hours.

Training certification

Employers must ensure that entry-level drivers have received the required training. Whether they provide the training, use a third-party training organization, or hire drivers who have received training elsewhere, employers must obtain a training certificate as proof that the required training was completed. This certificate must be kept with the driver's personnel or qualification records for as long as the driver is employed and for one year thereafter. The certificate must contain the following information:

1. Date of certificate issuance
2. Name of training provider
3. Mailing address of training provider
4. Name of driver
5. A statement that the driver completed the four areas of training required
6. The name and signature of the person attesting that the driver received the required training

What should carriers do?

Motor carriers that hire entry-level drivers should implement a driver training program to ensure compliance with the rule, or obtain a certificate of training from the driver that verifies training was provided by another carrier or training organization.

From a "best practices" perspective, motor carriers should consider providing entry-level training to all drivers, since even drivers with years of professional CMV driving experience have never received substantial training in the areas addressed by these rules.



THE State Auto Group

Corporate Headquarters Address:

518 E. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Middle Market Insurance Office Address:

580 N. Fourth Street, Fifth Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: (614) 464-5000