

CDL Learner's Permit

Congratulations!
Your new
Commercial Driver License
Learner's Permit
is a big first step.

Before you move on toward your full CDL, please carefully review the information in this brochure. It will help you follow the correct procedure and avoid future problems.



1. Check Your CDL Medical Certification

Make sure you pass your CDL physical and have your federal DOT medical card before you go on with your training. You must be medically certified before getting behind the wheel of a Commercial Motor Vehicle, even to practice. The only exceptions are for government CMV operators and students driving vehicles used strictly for training that do not cross state lines.

- The Florida Division of Driver Licenses does not provide medical certifications. If you do not have your medical certification already, we suggest contacting your doctor, your employer, or other companies operating trucks to learn the best options for you.
- Information on the federal medical standards for CMV drivers may be found at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/topics/medical/medical.htm
- A copy of the form used by medical professionals to conduct a CDL physical exam may be found at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/Safetyprograms/Medical-Report.pdf

2. Practice driving with your CDL Learner's Permit

Your CDL Learner's Permit allows you to practice in Commercial Motor Vehicles that would be legal to drive with the CDL class, endorsements, and restrictions as shown on the permit. Vehicles with lower licensing requirements may also be driven. If you are unsure what types of vehicles your CDL Learner's Permit covers, visit www.flhsmv.gov/ddl/dlclass.html or ask a driver license examiner.

- Your permit allows you to practice driving CMVs on public roads when another person who is at least 21 years old and fully licensed for that vehicle is in a passenger seat beside you.
- When driving CMVs with your CDL Learner's Permit, you must also carry your regular driver license.
- Your Florida CDL Learner's Permit expires six months (180 days) from the date issued. You are expected to complete training and testing to obtain a full CDL within that time. If you cannot, your Learner's Permit may be re-issued for one additional six-month period.

3. When you are ready, take your CDL Skills Test

The Skills Test for Classes A and B and any school bus is a three-part test of your practical ability to safely operate a vehicle representing the CDL you plan to obtain. The test is described in Section 1.1.2 of the Florida CDL Handbook. One of the most important decisions to make in getting your CDL is who will test you. CDL Skills Tests may be taken from state driver license examiners at Division of Driver Licenses CDL test sites or from third party CDL testers at many businesses and government agencies around the state.

Option 1: Division of Driver Licenses CDL Test Sites

The Florida Division of Driver Licenses (DDL) offers the CDL Skills Test free of charge at five sites, which are located in Miami (Coral Reef), West Palm Beach, Sarasota, Gainesville and Marianna. You can find the addresses and make appointments at www.flhsmv.gov/ddl/cdlsites_state.html.

- Applicants testing at DDL-operated sites must bring their test vehicles to the site.
- Bring proof of insurance and registration for your test vehicle. These must be verified before the vehicle may be used for the test.
- Remember that driving to the test site requires a driver properly licensed for your test vehicle in the seat beside you, just as when practicing. You may also need that driver on the way back if you cannot be issued your full CDL at the end of the test.

Option 2 - Third Party CDL Test Sites

Another option is to take your CDL Skills Test from a CDL Third Party Tester at one of the private businesses and government agencies authorized to administer the test. Third Party Testers give the same skills test you would get from a state CDL examiner. In most cases, they can furnish your test vehicle.

- Contact information for certified CDL Third Party Administrators that offer the CDL Skills Test to the general public is available online at www.flhsmv.gov/ddl/cdlsites.html. You can expect to pay a fee for this service.



The Department certifies third party testers, but does not make referrals or recommendations. Call the organizations listed at the phone numbers provided for information on fees, available test vehicles and other arrangements.

- Your employer or truck driving school may be a certified Third Party Administrator. If so, they will be able to give your CDL Skills Test at the end of your training.
- Third Party Testers submit the results of your test and information describing the vehicle to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' electronic records system. Your tester may give you a printout of the information entered. It is a good idea to confirm this information and have the tester make corrections to your electronic test record if needed. Mistakes, such as mistyping your driver license number or errors in the vehicle description, can cause problems later when you go to the driver license office to get your full CDL.
- If you choose to test with a third party, please note that you may be required to retest for your CDL if the Department finds reason to doubt that your tester followed proper procedure. To help avoid this, know in advance what to expect. A properly administered skills test for a Class A or Class B CDL should take from one to two hours or more for all three parts, including:
 - A pre-trip inspection covering approximately 30 to more than 100 items should take between 30 minutes to an hour or more.
 - A series of three selected exercises that demonstrate basic maneuvers on an off-street range. This part of the test should take between 15 to 30 minutes or more.
 - An on-road driving test that should take between 45 minutes to an hour or more. Skills tests for Class C vehicles without airbrakes include only the on-road driving (except Class C school bus).
 - Your test times may fall outside these guidelines for reasons such as your own performance or the site's road test route. However, if you believe the test you were given does not meet this general description, please help the Department keep up the high quality of third party testing by calling (850) 617-2770.

Interpreters are not permitted during a CDL Skills Test

Use of an interpreter to translate scored portions of your CDL Skills Test is prohibited. The testers themselves are allowed to speak to you and conduct the test in your own language if they are able.

CDL Skills Test Vehicles

The vehicle you use for your CDL Skills Test must represent the CDL you are seeking.

Check this web page <http://www.flhsmv.gov/ddl/dlclass.html> or Figure 1.1 of the Florida CDL Handbook to see what basic license class (A, B, or C) your test vehicle would require.

If you plan to drive Commercial Motor Vehicles with air brakes, your test vehicle must be equipped with an air-brake system.

If you plan to obtain a CDL Passenger endorsement to transport 16 or more people, including the driver, your test vehicle must be a passenger vehicle designed for at least that number.

If you plan to drive a school bus, your test vehicle must have the stop arms, lighting and other special features of a school bus in addition to being a passenger vehicle designed for 16 or more people.

If you plan to get a Class A CDL for driving tractor/semi-trailer combinations, your test vehicle must be a truck tractor with full-size fifth wheel hitch and the type of trailer representing a true "semi." Other vehicle combinations, such as heavy duty pickups and trailers with high enough Gross Vehicle Weight Ratings, may also be used to test for Class A CDLs but will cause the CDL to be restricted from tractor-trailer operation.

CDL Skills Test vehicles must be unloaded during the test.

4. Return to the driver license office for your full CDL

After you have passed your CDL Skills Test, you will be eligible for issuance of a full CDL. When you return to the driver license office for issuance, bring your regular driver license and medical certification card (if not exempt). Please be sure to visit www.GatherGoGet.com for information on other documents you may need. Your vision will be tested.

If you took your CDL Skills Test from a Third Party Tester, the examiner will retrieve the results of your testing from an electronic records system. The vehicle class, endorsements and restrictions on your new CDL will be based on information your tester entered in this system along with records of knowledge tests passed in a driver license office.

Residency

You must live in the Sunshine State to be eligible for a Florida CDL. When you apply for your full CDL, you will be declaring your Florida residency under oath. False information when discovered will result in the cancellation of your CDL.

Adding Endorsements

You may wish to take additional knowledge tests for CDL endorsements that were not passed when you got your Learner's Permit. CDL Tank Vehicle and Double/Triple Trailer endorsements may be added to your CDL by passing only the knowledge tests. Passenger and School Bus endorsements may not be added to your CDL until you have passed the knowledge tests and the complete CDL Skills Test in those types of vehicles.

Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Endorsements

Drivers who hold CDL Learners Permits may not transport hazardous materials.

If you plan to apply for a Hazmat endorsement when you get your full CDL, go to one of the Florida driver license offices equipped to process Hazmat applications. Details of the Hazmat application process and applicable office locations are available online at www.flhsmv.gov/hazmat.



www.flhsmv.gov