

Training Required for Entry–Level Drivers

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has issued a final rule, requiring training for entry level–drivers who are subject to the commercial driver’s license (CDL) requirements.

Drivers who are required to hold a CDL and have less than one year’s experience in operating commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) in interstate commerce are subject to the training requirements.

Training Areas

The training must include instruction in the following four areas:

- driver qualification;
- hours of service;
- driver wellness; and
- whistleblower protection.

Driver qualification — Training in this area must cover the federal rules on medical certification and examination procedures, general qualifications, responsibilities, and disqualifications based on various offenses, orders, and loss of driving privileges. (Part 391, Subparts B and E)

Hours of service — Instruction on this topic must include the limitations on driving hours, the requirement to be off duty for a certain periods of time, record of duty status preparation, and exceptions. (Part 395)

Fatigue countermeasures as a means to avoid crashes must also be included in the hours of service training.

Driver wellness — Training in this area must include information on basic health maintenance including diet and exercise as well as the importance of avoiding excessive use of alcohol.

Whistleblower protection — The right of an employee to question the safety practices of an employer without risk of losing his/her job or being subject to reprisals for stating a safety concern must be included in the training. (29 CFR Part 1978)

Proof of Training

An employer who uses an entry–level driver must ensure the driver has received the training and has received a training certificate or diploma verifying that he/she received the training.

The certificate or diploma must include the following information:

- date of certification issuance;
- name of training provider;
- mailing address of training provider;
- name of driver;
- a statement (in accordance with that listed in the final rule) that the driver has completed training in the mandated requirements;
- the name (printed) of the person attesting that the driver received the training; and
- the signature of the person attesting that the driver received the training.

A copy of the certificate or diploma must be placed in the driver’s personnel or qualification file.

Compliance Time Line

An entry–level driver who first began operating a CMV in interstate commerce requiring a CDL between July 20, 2003, and July 20, 2004, must receive the training by October 18, 2004.

An entry–level driver who will begin operating a CMV in interstate commerce on or after July 21, 2004, must receive this training before driving a CMV.

For More Information

To view the entire final rule, visit the J. J. Keller website: www.jjkeller.com/tmc.