



Questions & Answers on Commercial Vehicle Safety Requirements in Pennsylvania

Questions & Answers

85th Legislative District

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Prepared or Compiled Using
Government Resources

Q: Who must comply with the safety regulations?

A: Anyone who operates a truck, truck tractor or combination vehicle in intra-state commerce with a gross vehicle weight rating, gross combination weight rating, registered gross weight or registered combination weight or actual gross weight of 17,001 pounds or more.

or

Anyone who operates a truck, truck tractor or combination vehicle in inter-state commerce with a gross vehicle weight rating, gross combination weight rating, registered gross weight or registered combination weight or actual gross weight of 10,001 pounds or more.

Q: Where can I find what safety regulations I am subject to?

A: The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) has adopted by reference applicable portions of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in 67 PA Code Chapters 229 and 231. Information may be found at www.fmcsa.dot.gov, www.pacode.com or by calling the Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Patrol, Commercial Vehicle Safety Section at 717-346-7347.

Q: When am I required to have a commercial driver's license (CDL)?

A: A CDL is required for anyone who operates a motor vehicle designed or used to transport passengers or property for any of the following reasons:

- if the vehicle has a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds, or
- or if the vehicle is designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver, or
- if the vehicle is a school bus, or
- if the vehicle is transporting hazardous materials in a quantity that requires placarding.

Q: What class commercial driver's license (CDL) do I need to operate my vehicle?

A: CDL's are divided into three classes: class A, class B and class C.

- A class A CDL is required for a combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds provided the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of the vehicle being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- A class B CDL is required for any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds or any such vehicle towing a trailer not in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- A class C CDL is required for vehicles that do not meet the definition of class A or B but is either designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver, is a school bus or transports hazardous materials in a quantity that requires placarding.

Q: Even though I don't need a CDL to drive my vehicle, do I need a medical card?

A: Medical cards are required for anyone who operates a vehicle of a size that subjects them to the safety regulations (see first question). Medical cards are generally valid for a period of 24 months and require a physical examination by a licensed medical examiner.

Q: Where can I get copies of the medical card to take to my physician?

A: Medical cards and instructions for the medical examiner may be found on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/topics/medical/medical.htm.

Q: Am I required to have a road tax/IFTA decal on my vehicle?

A: Road tax/IFTA decals are required on motor vehicles other than recreational vehicles which are used, designed or maintained for transportation of persons or property and:

- Have two axles and a gross weight or registered gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds.
- Have three or more axles regardless of weight.
- Used in combination, when the gross weight or registered gross weight of the combination exceeds 26,000 pounds.

If there is no registered gross weight, than the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of the motor vehicle will be used.

Q: Where can I get more information about road tax and IFTA decals?

A: Additional information can be found on the Department of Revenue website at www.revenue.state.pa.us or by contacting the Department of Revenue, Bureau of Motor Fuel Taxes at 717-787-5355.

Q: Must I stop at the weigh stations if they are open?

A: In Pennsylvania any vehicle registered as a truck is required to stop at an open weigh station. This includes vehicles as small as a pick-up truck. There is no distinction made between vehicles used for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

Q: How much is my vehicle permitted to weigh in Pennsylvania?

A: Generally a truck, trailer or combination is not permitted to operate with a gross weight in excess of its registered gross weight listed on the registration card. In addition for combination vehicles, trucks or truck-tractors towing trailers, when the trailer is either registered or weighs in excess of 10,000 pounds the entire combination, truck, trailer and load on both, can not exceed the registered weight of the towing (power) unit.

Q: Where can I get additional information about vehicle size and weight limitations?

A: Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation at 717-787-2838 and request a copy of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Trucker's Handbook, Publication 194 or by calling the Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Patrol, Commercial Vehicle Safety Section at 717-346-7347. Additionally the Trucker's Handbook is available online at www.dot.state.pa.us and can be found under the link for Forms and Publications.

Q: Where can I get additional information about registration, driver license and title-related questions?

A: Information can be obtained by contacting the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Customer Call Center at 1-800-932-4600 or the Driver and Vehicle Services website at www.dmv.state.pa.us.

NOTE: These frequently asked questions provide basic guidance to federal and state laws and regulations and is intended to be for general reference purposes only. Specific legal questions should be directed to your attorney.