1. **INTRODUCTION**

At the April 2015 meetings of the Entry Level Driver Training Advisory Committee (ELDTAC or Committee), the Committee discussed instructor qualification requirements. The Committee considered the following instructor qualification requirements:[[1]](#footnote-1)

* On-road trainers\*\* must have at least [one] year of experience driving with a CDL of the appropriate (or higher) class and with all endorsements necessary to operate the CMVs for which training is to be provided. On-road trainers must maintain a driving record that meets applicable state/provincial requirements, school policy, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.
* Trainers\*\* must have a state/provincial teaching license or permit, if required.
* Theory/classroom] trainers\*\* [, if any,] who are not CDL holders must have audited or instructed that portion of the driver-training course that he/she intends to instruct. [Accepted.]

To further inform the discussion, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) agreed to review state law requirements and report its finding to the Committee.

This memorandum summarizes the requirements for 43 states.[[2]](#footnote-2) The review of statutes and regulations revealed that postsecondary education agencies (education agencies) license CDL schools in 18 states [[3]](#footnote-3) Transportation-related agencies are responsible for licensing CDL schools and instructors in 21 states. In the four remaining states, transportation-related and a postsecondary education agencies jointly license CDL schools. In states where an education agency licenses postsecondary private schools, the requirements are more general because they are applicable to all postsecondary private schools licensed subject to the statute. In states where a transportation-related agency is the licensor, the requirements are more prescriptive. In a few of these states the same statute applies to CDL schools and conventional driving schools, and often application forms differentiate between CDL instructor and conventional driving instructor requirements.

This analysis was limited to instructor education and experience requirements. They are as follows:

* Age requirement;
* Instructor must hold a CDL at a level equal to or greater than the level of instruction;
* Education;
* Continuing education;
* Instructor test;
* Instructor experience.
1. **Age Requirements**

In those states where education agencies evaluate instructor qualifications, only three set a minimum age requirement (i.e., 21). However, all of these states require instructors to hold a license or certificate in the occupation in which they are providing instruction (i.e., a CDL), and it is reasonable to assume that 21 is a minimum age in all of these states. In those states where licensing is performed by a transportation-agency or by transportation and education agencies, the minimum age is 21, with the exception of Alaska (25) and Delaware (18). When education and occupational experience requirements are added to the minimum age, requirements for all 43 states range from 23 to 26.

1. **Instructor Must Hold CDL equal to or Greater than the Level of Instruction**

Twenty-seven of the 43 states require instructors to hold a license at or above the level of instruction. This is a more generalized requirement in those states where an education agency is reviewing instructor qualifications. In six of the eighteen states in which education agencies are the licensor, instructors are required to hold a license or certificate in the occupation he/she is providing instruction. In 21 of 25 states, where licensing is performed by a transportation-related agency, or where licensing responsibility is jointly shared by a transportation-related agency and an education agency, instructors are required to hold a Class A CDL or a CDL at or above the level of Instruction. Illinois and Vermont also require the instructor to have endorsements applicable to their program of instruction. Maine allows an instructor with a Class B license to provide behind the wheel training in Class B programs. North Dakota and Georgia do not require classroom instructors to hold a CDL.

1. **Education**

With few exceptions, all states explicitly require a high school diploma or GED. In addition, 13 states require driving instruction and/or education techniques training. Examples of driver specific education requirements are as follows:

* Massachusetts requires instructor applicants to complete a 65 hour instructor training course;
* Minnesota requires instructor applicants to take training for Class A, B and C. Instruction;
* Virginia requires that instructor applicant to have completed a 160-hour CDL program or hold a Class A CDL for 1 year;
* North Dakota requires instructor applicants to take an instructor training program at either a licensed truck driving school or community college;
* New York requires instructor applicants to take a 60 hour course split evenly between classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction;
* Pennsylvania requires a bachelor’s of arts degree or two years occupational experience; and
* Texas requires 40 hours of instructional development.
1. **Continuing Education**

Sixteen of the 43 states reviewed have continuing education requirements. The six states in which education agencies are the licensing entities require continuing education applicable to the instructors’ field of instruction. The 10 remaining states where transportation-related agencies are the licensor, including two states where licensing is performed jointly, require either annual or periodic continuing instruction in driver education and/or teaching techniques. Examples include:

* Virginia requires an annual 1 day course sponsored by the Department of Motor Vehicles;
* New York requires continuing education in the event of a change in the program of instruction of state law requirements;
* Michigan requires biennial refresher training at the Michigan Center for Truck Safety, or other approved programs;
* Minnesota requires periodic training sponsored by the Department of Safety;
* Maine requires instructors take a biennial refresher course, and a driver education course once every three years; and
* Florida requires a refresher course once every five years.
1. **Instructor Test**

Fifteen states require instructor applicants to pass a test as a condition of licensing. Transportation-related agencies are the licensor in 13 of these. For the two remaining states (Florida and Kentucky) the transportation-related agency shares authority with an education-related agency. Massachusetts and Georgia require only a written test.

**VIII. Instructor Driving Experience**

As shown in Table 1, 24 states require some level of driving experience in years or hours. In those states where an education agency is the licensor, years of occupational experience are treated as years of driving experience. A number of states accept a minimum level of driving experience accumulated over a number of years prior to the application (e.g., 5 years within the past 7 years), as opposed to consecutive years prior to the application. Colorado and South Carolina accept either specified years or miles of experience. Minnesota requires 3,000 hours within 5 years immediately prior to the application and driving vehicles classified at or above the level of instruction. As shown in Table 1, the average number of years of driving experience is 3.3. Three years is the most common level of experience required (8 out 22 states), followed by 2 years (7 out of 22 states).

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| **Table 1State-Specific Instructor Driving Experience** |
| **State** | **Years** | **Miles** | **Other Applicable Conditions** |
| Alaska | 5 |  | Within 7 years prior to application |
| Colorado | 2 |  4,000  | Either/Or |
| Florida | 3 |  | With CDL A |
| Illinois | 3 |  | With CDL at or above level of instruction |
| Kentucky | 2 |  |  |
| Louisiana | 4 |  | Occupational experience |
| Maryland | 2 |  | Occupational experience |
| Maine | 2 |  | With CDL A within 10 years prior to application |
| Massachusetts | 2 |  | Occupational experience |
| Minnesota | 0 | 3,000 | Within 5 years prior to application at class of vehicle equal or above level of instruction |
| Nevada | 5 |   | Within 7 years prior to application |
| New Hampshire | 5 |  | Tractor trailer within 5 consecutive years prior to application |
| New Jersey | 0 | 500 | For behind the wheel supervisory instructor |
| North Dakota | 3 |  | Equal to or above level of instruction |
| Ohio | 3 |  | Within 10 years prior to application |
| Oklahoma | 3 |  |  |
| Oregon | 2 |  | Occupational experience |
| Pennsylvania | 2 |  | Occupational experience |
| Rhode Island | 5 |  | In the absence of state requirement for the occupation |
| South Carolina | 3 | 100,000 | Either/Or |
| Texas | 3 |  |  |
| Tennessee | 3 |  | Occupational experience within 7 years prior to application |
| Vermont | 5 |  |  |
| Virginia | 5 |  |  |
| Average | 3.3 |  |  |

1. The three requirements were taken from 4th Mtg.02a.Certification Checklist for Institutional Providers, which is posted on the ELDTAC web site.

\* Training Provider refers to a training organization.

\*\* Trainer refers to an individual. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. All 50 states license private postsecondary CDL schools. Based on the review it was determined that neither Montana nor South Dakota license CDL schools. The FMCSA has not yet completed its review of the remaining 5 states and the District of Columbia, which are not included in this analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Texas CDL schools are licensed by the Texas Work Force Commission, which has oversight of adult professional postsecondary education and work force retraining programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)