
FMCSA SET TO ISSUE TWO-YEAR DELAY OF NEW ENTRY LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING RULE

FMCSA Entry Level Driver Training Rule Delay

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is set to announce a two-year delay to its Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) Rule scheduled to go into effect February 7, 2020.

The ELDT rule is controversial in the petroleum marketing industry because it requires rigorous new training requirements for both CDL license applicants and current CDL holders seeking a license upgrade. The new requirements will make it more difficult to obtain and renew a CDL, discourage new applicants from applying for a CDL and as a result, contribute to the shortage of CDL drivers already occurring nationwide.

The delay is due to the failure of state driving licensing authorities to align their electronic database with the new FMCSA's nationwide online repository for unified CDL data collection. Initially, the FMCSA planned to allow the two-year compliance delay to apply only to state CDL licensing agencies. Medical review professionals, certified training vendors and drivers would have still been required to comply by the February 7, 2020 deadline. However, the lack of certified trainers and other system glitches convinced the agency that a two-year across-the-board delay would be required. The delay is good news for petroleum marketers because the system failures would have added additional delay for new applicants and current CDL drivers seeking an upgrade.

ELDT Online National Database

The ELDT is an online, centralized licensing database that will be available to state and federal CDL agencies and enforcement authorities which will provide licensing and enforcement authorities real-time information of CDL drivers operating status. FMCSA certified training providers will use the database to upload certificates of completions for the knowledge test and behind the wheel practical skills testing.

CDL Driver and CDL Applicants Subject to the ELDT Requirements

The ELDT rule establishes new minimum training standards for individuals applying for;

- Class A or Class B commercial driver's license (CDL) for the first time;
- Upgrade of current CDL (e.g., a Class B CDL holder seeking a Class A CDL);
- Hazardous materials (H), endorsement on their CDL for the first time.
- Individuals who obtain a CDL learners permit (CLP) before the February 7, 2020 compliance deadline (now extended by two years) are not required to comply with the new ELDT rule as long as they obtain the CDL or endorsement before the CLP (or renewed CLP) expires.

This compliance document was created by VFDA with assistance from Mark Morgan, Regulatory Counsel for the New England Fuel Institute (NEFI) and the Petroleum Marketers Association of America (PMAA).

New Knowledge and Behind the Wheel Testing Requirements

The new ELDT requirements include an expanded and more difficult written theory (knowledge) test, and for the first time, requires new applicants and current CDL drivers seeking upgrades to complete both private lot and public highway behind the wheel practical skills testing. Applicants must obtain at least an 80% score on the written knowledge test to pass. There are no minimum hours required for behind the wheel practical skills testing but requires the demonstration of proficiency in all driving skills before a certificate of completion is awarded by a certified FMCSA training vendor.

Training Providers Must be FMCSA Certified

To comply with the entry-level driver training (ELDT) rule, CDL applicants and those CDL drivers seeking and upgrade must select a training provider listed on the FMCSA Training Provider Registry (TPR). FMCSA certified trainers are the only entities that can provide ELDT training.

CDL applicants subject to the rule must complete a prescribed program of instruction presented by an entity listed on FMCSA's Training Provider Registry (TPR), prior to taking the State-administered CDL skills test, or for the HAZMAT endorsement, prior to taking the knowledge test.

The final rule was mandated by Congress under the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" (MAP-21).