Driver Qualifications

Commercial Drivers License (CDL)

Commercial Motor Vehicle
[625 ILCS 5/6-500] & [49 CFR 383.5]
With some exceptions, a CDL must be obtained by the driver of any of the following vehicles:

- Any **combination** of vehicles with a Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, providing the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of the vehicle being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- Any **single** vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing another not in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- Any vehicle regardless of size, designed to transport **16 or more persons**, including the driver.
- Any vehicle required by federal regulations to be **placarded** while transporting hazardous materials.

[Note: This definition of "Commercial Motor Vehicle" differs from that used for the Medical Card requirement.]

Farm Exemption *[625 ILCS 5/6-507(c)]*
CDLs are not required to operate vehicles (other than semis*) which are:

- Controlled and operated by a farmer, a member of the farmer's family or an employee;
- Used to transport farm products, equipment or supplies to or from a farm (including nurseries and aquacultures);
- Not operated in for-hire carriage;
- Used within 150 air miles of the farm (in-state or out-of-state); and
- Used in nursery or agricultural operations.

Farm Semi*
In addition to the five conditions above, farm semi operators must also meet the following four conditions for a CDL exemption. (Since all tests and penalties are the same as the CDL, the only benefit for farm semi drivers is an exemption from the requirement to submit to drug and alcohol screening.)

- Semi must be "farm" plated;
- Driver must be age 21 or older;
- Semi is not operated outside of Illinois; and
- "Employee" must be a family member (parent, spouse, sibling, or child – in blood or in law.)

Classification
Whether operating with a CDL or a Non-CDL, drivers must have a properly-classified driver's license for the vehicle size and type they are operating.

- **Class A** – Combination vehicles, 26,001 pounds or more GCWR, providing the GVWR of the vehicle being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- **Class B** – Single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing another not in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- **Class C** – Single vehicle with a GVWR or at least 16,001 pounds but less than 26,001 pounds.
- **Class D** – Single vehicle with a GVWR of less than 16,001 pounds.

Endorsements
Special testing is also done for drivers required to have a CDL if they will be driving a vehicle:

- With double or triple trailers;
- With a tank of 1,000 gallons or more liquid capacity (any liquid, even water);
- Placarded because of the hazardous materials carried; or
- With capacity for 16 or more passengers.

An air brake **restriction** will also have to be removed through additional testing.

Medical Card

Requirement *[49 CFR 391.1]*
Drivers of commercial vehicles generally must undergo a DOT Driver Physical once every two years and carry a card signed by the examining physician indicating he/she is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle.

With some exceptions, a medical card must be obtained by a driver if they:

- Operate a commercial vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 10,001 pounds or more in the furtherance of a commercial enterprise (includes farming); or
- Operate a passenger vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
- Operate any vehicle required by federal regulations to be placarded while transporting hazardous materials.

[Note: This definition of "Commercial Vehicle" differs from that used for the CDL.]

Farm Exemption *[49 CFR 391.2(c)]*
Custom harvesting operations, apiarian industries and certain farm vehicle drivers operating commercial vehicles may be eligible for an exemption from the requirement to have a bi-annual physical and carry a medical card.

Certain farm vehicle drivers may be exempt if they are operating a single vehicle that is:

- Controlled and operated by a farmer, a member of the farmer's family or an employee;
- Used to transport farm products, equipment or supplies to or from a farm (including nurseries and aquacultures);
- Used within 150 air miles of the farm (in-state or out-of-state);
- Used in nursery or agricultural operations;
- Not operated in for-hire carriage;
- Not required by federal regulations to be placarded while transporting hazardous materials; and
- Not an articulated vehicle (semi or truck and trailer combination) over 10,000 pounds

Drug & Alcohol Screening

Requirement *[49 CFR 382.103]*
Generally, if a driver is required to have a CDL he/she is also required to submit to drug & alcohol screening.

The screening involves pre-employment, random, post-accident, reasonable suspicion and return to duty testing requirements. Several other factors are worthy of note.

- Having a CDL when not required to generally does **not** trigger the screening requirement.
- The employer is responsible for providing the screening program.
- An employer who employs himself/herself as a driver (as many farmers do) must comply with both the requirements that apply to employers and the requirements that apply to drivers.
- Individual drivers must be pooled with a larger group to ensure random selection.

Farm Exemption *[49 CFR 382.103(d)]*
Drug and alcohol screening is not required of drivers who have been exempted from the requirement to have a CDL (which is often the case for Illinois farmers.)

More Information

- Illinois Farm Bureau®
  309-557-3274
  www.ilfb.org
- Illinois State Police
  217-782-6267
  http://www.isp.state.il.us/
- Illinois Department of Transportation
  217-782-6271
  (Medical Card and Drug Testing)
  http://www.dot.state.il.us/dobuisns.html
- Secretary of State
  217-524-1350
  (Commercial Drivers License)
  http://www.sos.state.il.us/

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