

Commercial Driver's License Learner's Permit Procedures Frequently Asked Questions

PennDOT Commercial Driver Licensing procedures have been developed to improve safety by ensuring that all Commercial Driver's License (CDL) applicants have the required knowledge and understanding to operate a commercial motor vehicle **before** the driving skills are practiced on our public roadways.

How do I apply for a CDL Learner's Permit?

Applicants must first complete a Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-31CD), a Self-Certification Form (DL-11CD) and pay the required fees. Drivers who will be engaging in "Non-excepted" transportation will also be required to submit a valid Medical Examiner's Certificate prior to the issuance of a learner's permit. When the learner's permit application is processed, PennDOT will issue a Knowledge Test Authorization (KTA) for each CDL class, endorsement and restriction removal requested. The KTA is the applicant's authorization to appear at a Driver License Center for knowledge testing. As each knowledge test is passed, the applicant is issued a learner's permit, which will allow the driver to begin practicing the driving skills, and then schedule and complete skills testing.

After receiving my CDL permit, how long must I wait before I can take the skills test?

A minimum waiting period of 15 days is required from the date the permit is issued until the scheduled date of your class A, B, or C skills test. You may, however, contact PennDOT immediately after passing knowledge testing to schedule the skills test. You have three tries on that particular permit to pass the skills test(s). Knowledge and skills tests are valid for one year from the date the test is passed.

What is a Knowledge Test Authorization?

A Knowledge Test Authorization (KTA) is a document similar in appearance to a learner's permit. However, the KTA itself cannot be used like a learner's permit to operate a vehicle. The sole purpose of the KTA is to indicate the CDL classes, endorsements and restriction removals requested by an applicant, and provide the applicant the opportunity to take their knowledge test(s) at a Driver License Center. This document must be presented when taking the knowledge test(s). It is only after knowledge testing is successfully completed, that an actual CDL Learner's Permit is issued. A Knowledge Test Authorization is not a driving permit and cannot be used to practice driving skills.

Do I have to take the knowledge test first?

Yes. You must pass the required knowledge testing before practicing your driving skills or attempting the skills test.

What if I have lost my Knowledge Test Authorization?

A replacement Knowledge Test Authorization can be issued. You will need to complete and submit a notarized Application to Replace/Correct Commercial Driver's License (DL-80CD) with the required fee. Once this information is received, a duplicate KTA will be issued.

What if the information on my Knowledge Test Authorization is incorrect?

To correct information on your KTA you will need to complete and submit a notarized Application to Replace/Correct Commercial Driver's License (DL-80CD). Once this information is received, a new KTA will be issued.

When I receive my Knowledge Test Authorization, how long must I wait to take the knowledge test?
You are eligible to take the knowledge test the same day the KTA is issued; however, the availability of the Driver License Centers varies across the Commonwealth.

How long is the Knowledge Test Authorization valid?

The KTA is valid for one year from the date of issuance and gives you three tries on that particular KTA to pass the knowledge test(s). The applicant has one year to pass all knowledge and skills tests in order to obtain their CDL. (If you have been unsuccessful in passing the required knowledge and skills tests, you will need to complete a DL31CD to obtain an extension.)

What happens if I pass my knowledge test but fail my skills test and my learner's permit expires? Do I need to retake the knowledge test?

Yes. If the one-year time period has passed and your CDL learner's permit has expired, you will need to reapply for a learner's permit by again completing the Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-31CD). Another KTA will be issued by PennDOT, requiring knowledge testing when results are more than a year old.

Does the Commercial Learner's Permit process apply to school bus endorsements?

Yes. The process is the same for all commercial classes, endorsements and restrictions. All school bus applicants must begin with a permit application, a Self-Certification Form (DL-11CD), and a qualified school bus driver's physical (DL-704). School bus applicants who will be engaging in "Non-excepted" transportation will also be required to submit a valid Medical Examiner's Certificate prior to the issuance of a learner's permit. Eligible applicants will receive the Knowledge Test Authorization (KTA), and are required to pass all applicable knowledge testing before being eligible to take the skills test. When applying for the school bus endorsement, in addition to receiving the KTA, you will also be issued a school bus learner's permit that authorizes you to begin the mandatory school bus driver in-bus training. This is a driving document only and does not authorize you to test. Once you pass all applicable knowledge tests, you will be issued a second school bus learner's permit which authorizes skills testing.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are applying to add or upgrade the commercial class, you will be required to wait a minimum of 15 days before you are eligible to take the skills test in a school bus; however, the mandatory 15-day wait begins when the KTA is issued.

Where can I find more information regarding the CDL learner's permit procedures?

More information regarding CDL learner's permit procedures can be found on the Driver and Vehicle Services website at www.dmv.state.pa.us. Click on Commercial Driver's Info Center.

**Information regarding driver and vehicle services is available
on the Driver and Vehicle Services website at
www.dmv.state.pa.us**

or

through our CUSTOMER CALL CENTER

24 hours if using a touchtone (pulse-tone) telephone.

Service Representatives are available between the hours of
8 a.m. and 5 p.m. - Monday through Friday

For direct assistance except on major holidays:

In-State

1-800-932-4600

TDD 1-800-228-0676

Out-of-State

1-717-412-5300

TDD 1-717-412-5380