



REQUIREMENTS TO DRIVE A SCHOOL BUS IN ALABAMA

HOW TO GET CERTIFIED TO DRIVE AN ALABAMA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS



Anyone twenty-one years old or older wishing to drive a school bus in the state of Alabama must obtain a Commercial Driver License (CDL) issued by the Alabama Department of Public Safety (DPS) and certification to drive an Alabama school bus through the Alabama Department of Education (SDE).

HOW TO GET A CDL

In order to receive a CDL to drive a school bus, a prospective school bus driver must secure a Third Party Tester Form and/or a permit. This form/permit can be secured from any CDL office in Alabama. The form/permit is given to drivers who do not currently hold a CDL, need to upgrade their CDL, or need to add passenger (P) or school bus (S) endorsements. In order to be issued this form/permit, prospective school bus drivers must pass four written CDL tests at the CDL office. These tests include General Knowledge, Air Brakes, Transporting Passengers, and School Buses.

Study materials for these four tests can be found in the Alabama Commercial Driver License Manual. This manual can be secured from any local driver license office or any CDL office. In preparation for the four tests noted above, the prospective driver should study sections 1-5 and section 10 in the CDL manual. There is a fee for taking the written tests. There is no fee for performance testing. Upon passing these written tests, the prospective driver will be issued the Third Party Tester Form. **The prospective driver must bring this form/permit to the SDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class.**

HOW TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION TO DRIVE AN ALABAMA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS

In order to receive certification to drive an Alabama public school bus, a prospective school bus driver must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete an Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate application and discuss with local supervisor.
2. Receive a minimum of 4 hours of training from local school system transportation officials *before* enrollment in the SDE School Bus Driver Certification Class. Only drivers who receive this training and produce a properly signed training certification form will be scheduled for performance testing.
3. Attend a 12-hour SDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class taught over a period of three days. Normally, a portion of a fourth day is required for performance testing.
4. Score at least 80% on a written test given at the conclusion of the three-day class.
5. Pass a three-part performance test including:
 - (A) Pretrip inspection of a school bus.
 - (B) Basic Control Skills Tests. These are straight-backing, off-set backing, and alley docking.
 - (C) On-the-road Driving Skills Test with at least 80% mastery.

In order to enroll in an SDE class and be performance tested, all prospective drivers must be assigned to the SDE new driver class by a local school system transportation supervisor. **All CDL performance testing for public school bus drivers is done by the SDE.**

HOW TO KEEP YOUR ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION

In order to maintain their school bus driver certification, school bus drivers are required to participate in a 4-hour recertification class. These classes are scheduled in all school systems and are taught between January 1 and November 15 annually. **All bus driver certificates expire annually on December 31.** Drivers who have attended a recertification class are issued are certified for the next calendar year. Drivers who fail to attend a recertification class must repeat the new driver training. An Alabama school bus driver may have his/her Alabama School Bus Driver Certification suspended and/or revoked when there is a danger to the public safety or welfare of school children or when the certification holder has been guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, confirmed improper drug use, criminal convictions, failure to use the driver seat belt, unsafe driving history, inability to pass or maintain a current *Alabama School Bus Driver Physical Examination Report*, being uninsurable, or other just cause as determined by the state superintendent of education.

WHO TO CONTACT: Anyone wishing to drive a school bus in Alabama should contact the local system transportation supervisor. A listing of these supervisors can be found at www.alsde.edu under "Offices/Office of Supporting Programs" or by contacting the Alabama Department of Education, Pupil Transportation Section at 334-242-9730

