

# Requirements to Drive a Public School Bus in Alabama

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 Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) and certification to drive an Alabama school bus through the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

## HOW TO GET A CDL

In order to receive a CDL to drive a school bus, a prospective school bus driver must secure a Commercial Learner Permit (CLP). The CLP can be secured from any CDL office in Alabama. The CLP 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 a CLP, 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. CLPs must be obtained 14 days prior to class attendance.

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 by ALSDE Examiners. Upon passing these written tests, the prospective driver will be issued a CLP. **The prospective driver must bring their CLP to the ALSDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class, along with their other Driver's License.**

## 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. Establish an AIM account and be put on a class roster.
2. Receive a minimum of 15 hours of training from local school system transportation officials *before* enrollment in the ALSDE 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 ALSDE 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.

All four tests must be passed in consecutive order, beginning with the written test and ending with the on-the-road driving skills test. Once a test is passed, it will not have to be retaken in order to gain initial certification.

**All prospective drivers will be allowed only one failure during the process of these four tests.** If any of these four tests are failed, the prospective driver will have an opportunity to start again with whichever test they fail. They will have the opportunity to be retrained and attempt the failed test, along with all remaining tests, at a later date. **If the driver fails any of the tests on their second attempt, they will not be allowed to continue, and will not be eligible to become an ALSDE Certified School Bus Driver.**

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 ALSDE Examiners.**