

# NDE Pupil Transportation Reminders 2023/2024 School Year



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## Nebraska Safety Center Level I, II & ELDT Classes

The Nebraska Safety Center (NSC) will now be providing Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) theory training to schools starting January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The NSC has created a new curriculum which meets Federal guidelines for ELDT theory and state guidelines for level training. NSC will now be teaching Class B, Passenger and School Bus endorsement to those drivers who need CDL training for 16 or more passenger vehicles.

Courses on the database will be based off the categories listed in Rule 91.

Category	Vehicle	Capacity	Minimum DMV License Required
A	Small Vehicle: Car or Van (Routes only)	1-10 passengers	Class O Operator's License
B	Small Bus	Up to 15 passengers	Class O Operator's License
C	School Bus	16 or more passengers	Commercial Driver's License with Passenger and School Bus endorsements

## **Course Structure**

The course structure will be a combination of online and in-person. The Class B and Passenger endorsement will be an online self-paced course of videos and quizzes. The School Bus endorsement will be an in-person 5-hour class that is to be taken after the Class B and Passenger endorsement is completed.

- **Class B** portion is set up in six modules totaling a four-hour video with each module having an end of module quiz requiring an 80%. At the end of the Class B there will be a comprehensive exam; the driver will need an 80% passing score.
- **The Passenger Endorsement** is set up in two modules totaling a two-hour video with each module having an end of module quiz requiring an 80% passing score. At the end of the Passenger endorsement there will be a comprehensive exam and the driver will need an 80% passing score.
- **The School Bus Endorsement** will be a five hour in person class totaling three modules with a comprehensive test of 50 questions. The comprehensive exam will need an 80% passing score. This will be listed in the database as School Bus Category C.  
**\*\*\*Small vehicles (A) and small bus (B) courses will not be changing. They will still stay the same. A level II will still be required within 5 years for all the drivers who complete a level course.**

## **Nebraska Safety Center Driver Database**

- Nebraska Safety Center's database is available for all drivers and schools to utilize. The database will allow the school to do the following:
  - Download a list of Drivers
  - View level dates for all of their drivers
  - Register Drivers for courses
  - Upload Pre-Drive forms
  - Edit driver contact information - ***Level expirations are sent via email from the system, so it is important emails are entered and correct***
  - If you need drivers removed from your list of drivers, please email a list of those drivers to the Nebraska Safety Center to be removed.
- This database be found at <https://nepupiltransportation.com/>
  - If you need access to a school account for database, please email the Nebraska Safety Center at [bus@unk.edu](mailto:bus@unk.edu) with your name, school, email, and phone number to obtain a login. For a password reset, please email us at this same address.

## **Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Reminders**

- Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT)  
Beginning February 7, 2022, new federal regulations will require drivers applying for a new CDL, upgrading class of an existing CDL, or taking the hazardous materials endorsement knowledge test for the first time to complete ELDT. Information and questions regarding ELDT can be found on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) website: <https://tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov/>
- The following is a partial list of requirements that impact school bus drivers. The full list of requirements can be found at <http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/examining/CDL.html>
- To take the skills tests for a CDL, drivers must first have a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) for 14 days. All applicable knowledge tests must be passed to obtain a CLP.

- ALL CLP/CDL applicants are required to show proof of U.S. Citizenship or lawful status. A list of acceptable documents for proof of citizenship, lawful status, identification, and principal address can be found on the DMV website at [www.dmv.nebraska.gov](http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov). Applicants will only have to provide proof of citizenship one time after July 2015 during the licensing process.
- A CDL School Bus Pre-Trip Inspection video is available on the DMV website at [http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/examining/School\\_Bus\\_pretrip\\_video.html](http://www.dmv.nebraska.gov/examining/School_Bus_pretrip_video.html)
- For more information about these requirements, please contact the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) at 402-471-3861
- **Please note:** CDL skills tests are only administered at 22 DMV locations throughout the state and appointments for skills testing must be made in advance. CDL knowledge tests can be taken at all driver licensing service offices *except* for the North Express office (4606 N. 56<sup>th</sup> St. Omaha). Keep in mind that in order to schedule an appointment for the CDL Skills test, drivers must have held a valid Nebraska CLP for 14 days. Contact DMV at 402.471.7983 to find locations for the skills test and make appointments for skills tests. Drivers also have the option to be tested by a CDL Third Party Examiner for a fee.

## Driver Physicals (Medical Exams)

- Medical exams for pupil transportation driver (*school bus and small vehicle routes*) are valid for two years unless the health profession approves the exam for a shorter period of time due to medical issues of the driver.
- Drivers will provide the Medical Examiner's Certificate (last page of medical exam document) to their employer. Only drivers holding a CDL will provide a copy of the Medical Examiners Certificate to DMV when required by Federal CDL Regulations.
- The medical exams must be performed by a health professional that is a "Certified Medical Examiner" who is also listed on the FMCSA's (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) National Registry. For more information and to locate for health professional nearby: <https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov/home>

## DOT Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing

- Schools are *required* by the U.S. DOT Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to implement an Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing Program for their employees who drive school buses requiring a CDL.
- Visit the FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse page for more information <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/>
- If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Bell with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Nebraska Division at 402-437-5980.

## School Bus Driver In-Service Training

- Employers shall annually provide a minimum of two (2) hours of in-service training for all pupil transportation vehicle drivers – *this includes small vehicle activity drivers.*
- **The in-service at a minimum, must include:**
  - Emergency Evacuations
  - Loading/Unloading
  - Student Management
  - Vehicle inspections
  - School's Safe Pupil Transportation Plan

The Nebraska Safety Center provides a pupil transportation driver in-service program for employers. Please contact the Nebraska Safety Center at 308-865-8256 or find the registration link on [unk.edu/bus](http://unk.edu/bus) under 2 Hour In-Service Training.

## Functional Capacity of Pupil Transportation Drivers

- Schools are required to **annually confirm** their driver's ability to conduct the daily tasks of safely transporting students and conduct emergency evacuations.
- Schools can develop their own functional capacity testing procedures **conducted on an annual basis** that is best suited for their district with the intent of always keeping students as safe as possible.
- *This requirement was added in response to the school bus fire in western Iowa in 2017 where a driver and a student were killed because the driver had very limited mobility. The Iowa school district was found to be liable for damages since this driver was allowed to drive one of their pupil transportation vehicles.*

## Emergency Evacuations

- Twice during each school year, schools must provide an opportunity for each student to take part in instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills.
- The instruction and drills must be provided to students whether the school owns the vehicle or transportation is provided by a private contractor and are required to be conducted by a qualified school bus driver per Rule 91. Guidelines are available in the appendix of NDE Rule 91.
- Superintendents verify the emergency evacuations were conducted during the school year through the Pupil Transportation Report located in the NDE Portal within the Consolidated Data Collection (CDC).
- NDE has been receiving reports that some schools or contractors are not conducting emergency evacuation drills for their students. **Please note that this is a statutory requirement and verification of the drills are required in the Pupil Transportation Report.**

## Vehicle Inspections

- Vehicles (*including contracted vehicles*) that transport students must be inspected according to NDE Rules 91 and 92. These inspections include:
  - **Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection** done **before each trip** if an hour has passed since the last trip
  - **80-day inspections** done before school and every 80 days thereafter

- **Post-trip Vehicle Inspection** for any students left on board
- Documentation of the Pre-Trip, 80-day and Post Trip inspections must be kept in school files for a period of at least **five years**. This documentation would be a critical piece of information for the school during an investigation of a school vehicle accident with students involved.

## Contracting for Pupil Transportation

- Private providers of pupil transportation are also required to follow all Rule 91 & Rule 92 regulations for driver qualifications and vehicles to transport students.
- **Be aware that the responsibility is yours as the administrator to assure these contractor-owned vehicles have been documented as safe pupil transportation vehicles.** Like with any pupil transportation vehicle, you must have completed documentation for the inspection(s) of any contracted vehicles on file at the district.
- **Require the vehicle identification numbers (VIN) be included on all invoices from the contractor.** In the past, some contractors may not have been forthcoming with that information. Since schools are required to submit this information on the Pupil Transportation Report every spring, we have instructed many schools to hold payment until accurate VINs have been provided. Please *do not* accept a list of VINs for vehicles that may or may not have been actually used by your school.

## Licensing Drivers

- School Bus Permits no longer exist since they were eliminated in statute effective January 1, 2019.
- A description of requirements for pupil transportation drivers are available at <https://www.education.ne.gov/fos/pupil-transportation/requirements-to-drive-a-pupil-transportation-vehicle/>

## Driver Records

- Each year, schools must verify or obtain a record of satisfactory driving from DMV **for all drivers**. Policy established by local governing boards determines each school's definition of "satisfactory driving." (*NDE Rule 91 – 003.03A3*) This does include drivers of activity trips.
- A criminal background check is required before a driver is hired and for **every** driver during the calendar year that coincides with the expiration of the individual's motor vehicle operator's license (every five years). Contact the Nebraska State Patrol for more information. (*NDE Rule 91 – 003-03A5*) This does include drivers of activity trips.

## Contents of Pupil Transportation Driver Files:

- The following documents should be included in **each** of the driver's files:
  - Documentation of Level Training – *valid for 5 years* (small vehicle activity drivers exempt)
  - Medical Certificate – *valid for 2 years* (small vehicle activity drivers exempt)
  - Criminal Background Check – *valid for 5 years*
  - DMV Driving Record

- Records must be updated annually.
- Retention of Pupil Transportation Records
  - Schools need to keep all pupil transportation records for at least ***five years***.
  - This includes driver physicals, driver driving records and background checks, driver training documentation, and all vehicle inspection records.

### **Hiring Out-of-State Drivers**

- Drivers residing in bordering states (Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Iowa, and Missouri) may be eligible to become a qualified pupil transportation driver without holding a current Nebraska License after completing the licensing process.
- A driver from a state other than the bordering states must first receive a Nebraska Driver's License prior to registering for a Level I Training Course.
- Contact the Department of Motor Vehicles at 402-471-3861 for more information.

### **“Need a Driver Today!”**

- If a situation arises where students must be transported in an emergency situation, a School Bus Permit is not required “when approved by the school administrator or person designated by the governing school board.” (*NDE Rule 91 - 003-01A*)
- *This only applies to small vehicles such as a car or van...it does not include school buses because a CDL is required.*
- Emergency situations should be carefully defined in local policy. These situations could include that the parent of a sick child has no transportation available, and their child needs to be taken home and no drivers are available.

### **Questions; please contact:**

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Bryce Wilson at [bryce.wilson@nebraska.gov](mailto:bryce.wilson@nebraska.gov) 402-471-4320