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NEWS

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White Establishes New Policy to Strengthen CDL Testing

Springfield — Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that he is implementing a new policy April 1 that requires all commercial drivers in Illinois to take their written exams on automated testing machines that scramble the questions.

White has installed the new testing machines for truck drivers at 20 regional CDL facilities throughout the state. All drive tests will also be administered at the regional CDL facilities starting April 1 as well.

The new testing procedures are the latest step White is taking to ensure all truck drivers in Illinois are held to the highest standard for testing and training. White has already implemented a dozen changes to improve the Illinois Commercial Drivers License (CDL) system.

"We want to have the most qualified truck drivers of any state in the country," said White. "Our automated testing machines eliminate any opportunity for cheating and ensure that commercial drivers have demonstrated the necessary knowledge to operate a truck."

Under the new system, all written and drive exams for CDLs must be taken at one of the regional CDL locations. Commercial drivers who are not required to take the written portion of the exam may continue to renew their licenses at any driver services facility. The Secretary of State's office has spent approximately \$100,000 to equip each of the 16 downstate Regional CDL facilities and about \$200,000 for each Metropolitan Chicago CDL facility.

The testing machines randomly select test questions from a pool of 900. A different test with varying questions is generated for each applicant. The computer immediately grades the test and enters the results, removing the human element from the grading process.

White said the new regional facilities would also provide greater uniformity in testing as well as improved oversight and control of the CDL program. Employees at the regional CDL facilities have gone through additional training recently.

To make the testing process more convenient, commercial driver applicants may now schedule their drive tests in advance. To schedule tests at the four Metropolitan Chicago facilities, applicants should call (630) 293-1191. To schedule a test at any of the other CDL facilities, applicants should call (217) 785-3013.

All automated written and drive exams for CDL's would be administered at the following locations:

Metropolitan Chicago

Elk Grove Village, Libertyville, South Holland and West Chicago

Downstate

Bradley, DeKalb, East St. Louis, Effingham, Marion, Morris, Olney, Peoria, Princeton, Quincy, Rantoul, Rockford, Salem, Silvis, Springfield and Tilton

White has already implemented a dozen reforms to ensure only qualified applicants obtain commercial drivers licenses in Illinois. Those changes include:

- Requiring commercial drivers from out-of-state to pass the Illinois Commercial Drivers License (CDL) test prior to licensure.
- Enacting a three-fail rule, which ends the policy that allowed unqualified drivers infinite chances to pass the CDL test.
- Ensuring that CDL applicants have the necessary reading comprehension skills to do their job safely by prohibiting assistance in reading CDL applications or tests in drivers license facilities.
- Ensuring that an applicant pass all relevant written tests in order to be licensed to drive a combination vehicle.

Prior to this change, a person could receive a permit to drive a basic 18-wheel semi even though they failed the written test that covered the operation of those combination vehicles.

- Discontinuing the process whereby applicants continually renew learning permits for CDL's as a way to continue driving legally while avoiding the rigors of the actual CDL test. Under the new regulations, a CDL permit will be valid for no more than one year without complete retest.
- Regularly changing both questions and the word order of the answers on the CDL test.
- Installing automated testing machines in facilities to replace written CDL tests.
- Requiring commercial driver license applicants to hold a valid instruction permit for a period of two weeks prior to being skills tested and certified by a third party.
- Requiring commercial driver license applicants to obtain from the Secretary of State an instruction permit for the specific vehicle classification in which they intend to be licensed - and requiring that the applicant produce the instruction permit before the skills test and certification by a third party entity.
- Requiring a minimum training period for commercial drivers who receive certification through a third party entity.
- Requiring third party entities to notify the Secretary of State's office of a driver's termination of employment if the driver's employment lasted for less than six months.
- Requiring third party testing entities to maintain a rating issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation of at least satisfactory or conditional. Any third party entity that has received an unsatisfactory rating from U.S. Department of Transportation shall be prohibited from conducting third party testing pending a subsequent U.S. Department of Transportation rating of satisfactory or conditional.