ILLINOIS RULES OF THE ROAD

NON-CDL VEHICLES

JESSE WHITE
SECRETARY OF STATE

NON-CDL RULES OF THE ROAD

This booklet is provided to inform and guide motorists who operate large vehicles on Illinois roadways that do not require a commercial driver's license (CDL) to drive. Please use this booklet as a supplement to the primary *Illinois Rules of the Road* booklet, which contains information on safe driving habits, Illinois traffic laws and all you need to know to pass your driver's license exam. For more information on commercial driver's license requirements, please consult the *CDL Study Guide* at www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

I hope you find this booklet helpful in operating your larger vehicle safely on Illinois roads.

Jesse White

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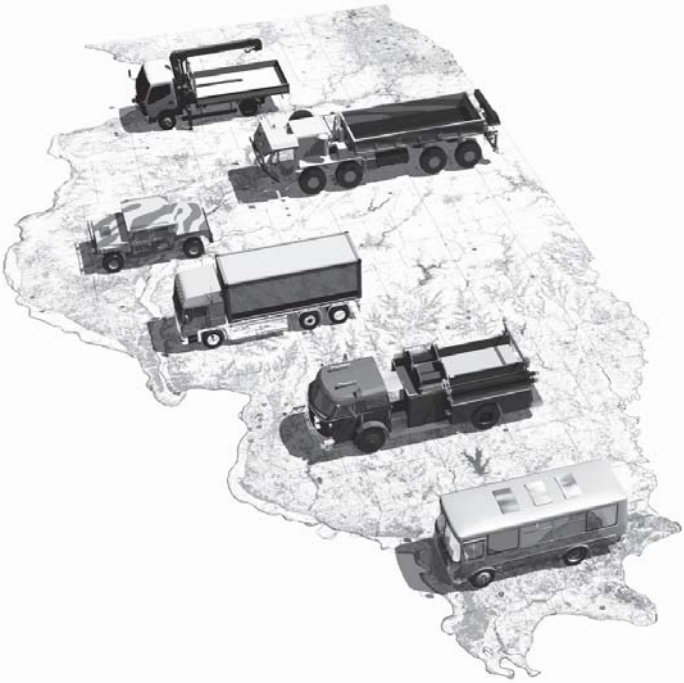
Secretary of State



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Licensing Requirements

Operators of recreational vehicles, firefighting equipment, military vehicles and certain farm vehicles are not subject to the requirements of the Commercial Driver's Licensing (CDL) program. This section will help you determine whether or not you are required to obtain a CDL or a Non-CDL classified license to operate your vehicle.

Operators Required to Obtain a CDL

The Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 requires an operator of a commercial motor vehicle to obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL). By federal rule, a commercial motor vehicle is defined as:

- ✗ Any combination of vehicles with a Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR) of 26,001 pounds or more, providing the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of the vehicle being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- ✗ Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more, or any such vehicle towing another not in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- ✗ Any vehicle, regardless of size, designed to transport 16 or more persons, including the driver.
- ✗ Any vehicle, regardless of size, required by federal regulations to be placarded while transporting hazardous materials.

If your vehicle meets one of the above definitions and does not fall into one of the exempt categories outlined below, you must obtain a CDL. *CDL Study Guides* are available at all Driver Services facilities or at www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

Operators Exempt from Obtaining a CDL

If your vehicle meets one of the following definitions, you are not required to obtain a CDL.

Recreational Vehicle

When using a recreational vehicle primarily for personal use, you do not need to obtain a CDL.

Firefighting Equipment Operator

Because most firefighting organizations have extensive initial training and retraining requirements for their equipment operators, Illinois waives the CDL requirements for operators of firefighting equipment owned or operated by or for a governmental agency.

Military Vehicle

Operators of military vehicles for military purposes are exempt from obtaining a CDL.

Farm Equipment Operator

This exemption covers legitimate farm-to-market operations by farmers, not commercial grain haulers. CDLs are not required to operate vehicles that are:

- ✗ controlled or operated by a farmer, a member of the farmer's family or an employee;
- ✗ used to transport farm products, equipment or supplies to or from a farm;
- ✗ used within 150 air miles of the farm, including nurseries and aquacultures;
- ✗ not used in the operations of a common or contract carrier; and/or
- ✗ used in nursery or agricultural operations.

The farmer, his or her spouse and their children, parents on both sides, brothers and sisters on both sides and their spouses operating a truck-tractor semitrailer and meeting the above criteria also are exempt from the CDL Program. These drivers must be age 21 or over, and the vehicle must have Farm plates. In order to be licensed, these drivers are still required to pass the appropriate CDL written and road skills tests.

Emergency Snow Removal Vehicles

An employee of a township or road district with a population of less than 3,000 who is operating a vehicle to remove snow or ice from roadways within the township or district does not have to have a CDL while operating the vehicle because the employee who ordinarily operates the vehicle is unable to do so or is in need of additional assistance due to a snow emergency.

Requirements for Special Vehicles

If you drive a commuter vehicle for profit, a religious organization bus or a vehicle transporting senior citizens, you must:

- ✗ Be age 21 or older.
- ✗ Have a valid and properly classified driver's license issued by the Illinois Secretary of State. Depending on the size of the vehicle you operate, a CDL may be required.
- ✗ Have had a valid driver's license, not necessarily of the same classification, three years prior to the date of application.
- ✗ Demonstrate your ability to exercise reasonable care in the safe operation of the vehicle.
- ✗ Not have been convicted within three years of the date of application of any of the following offenses involving the operation of a motor vehicle:
  - ✓ Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs (DUI)
  - ✓ Reckless driving
  - ✓ Leaving the scene of an accident involving death or personal injury
  - ✓ Drag or street racing
  - ✓ Manslaughter
  - ✓ Reckless homicide
  - ✓ Reckless conduct

If you drive a child care vehicle, you must:

- ✗ Be age 21 or older.
- ✗ Have a valid and properly classified driver's license issued by the Illinois Secretary of State. Depending on the size of the vehicle, a CDL may be required.

- ✗ Have had a valid driver's license, not necessarily of the same classification, for three years prior to the date of application.
- ✗ Demonstrate physical fitness to operate vehicles by submitting the results of a medical exam.
- ✗ Not have been convicted of two or more serious traffic offenses within a one-year period.
- ✗ Demonstrate your ability to exercise reasonable care in the safe operation of the vehicle.
- ✗ Not have been convicted within three years of the date of application of any of the following offenses involving the operation of a motor vehicle:
    - ✓ Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs (DUI)
    - ✓ Reckless driving
    - ✓ Reckless homicide

School Bus Requirements

If you drive a school bus designed to transport 16 or more persons, you must have a CDL with the correct classification, endorsements and a valid school bus permit. The Secretary of State's office is responsible for regulating all school bus drivers. If you want to drive a school bus, please obtain a copy of the rules from: **Illinois Secretary of State, Driver Services Dept., 2701 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield, IL 62723 or print a copy from our website.** Information on school bus driving also is available from a regional superintendent of schools.

Federal Regulations for Second Division Vehicles

A second division vehicle is:

- ✗ designed to carry more than 10 persons;
- ✗ designed or used for living quarters;
- ✗ designed for pulling or carrying freight or cargo;
- ✗ a first division vehicle remodeled for use as a second division vehicle; or
- ✗ a first division vehicle used and registered as a school bus.

Operators of a second division vehicle with a gross motor vehicle weight of 10,001 pounds or more are required to carry a Medical Examiner's Certificate with them at all times while operating the vehicle. In addition, drivers are required to maintain a file containing a written test verification, road test verification and other records.

The Secretary of State's office is not responsible for regulating or enforcing these regulations and does not have the necessary forms for compliance. Enforcement is the responsibility of Illinois State Police. For forms and informational materials, please contact one of the following organizations:

J.J. Keller and Assoc., Inc.
3003 W. Breezewood Ln.
Neenah, WI 54956
800-327-6868

Mid-West Truckers Association
2727 N. Dirksen Pkwy.
Springfield, IL 62702
217-525-0310

Illinois Trucking Association
700 S. Adams St., Ste. 130
Willowbrook, IL 60527
630-654-0884

Illinois Trucking Association
932 S. Spring St.
Springfield, IL 62704
217-789-6017

Driver's License Classifications

Illinois driver's licenses are classified by the GVWR of a vehicle (and any towed vehicles):

Class A — Any combination of motor vehicles with a GCWR of 26,001 pounds or more, providing the GVWR of the vehicle being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. Also allows for operation of Class B, C and D vehicles.

Class B — Any single motor vehicle with a GCWR of 26,001 pounds or more or any such vehicle towing another not in excess of 10,000 pounds. Also allows for operation of Class C and D vehicles.

Class C — Any motor vehicle with a GVWR of more than 16,000 pounds, but less than 26,001 pounds or any such vehicle towing another not in excess of 10,000 pounds. Also allows for operation of Class D vehicles.

Class D — Any motor vehicle with a GVWR of 16,000 pounds or less. Does not include A. B, C, L or M vehicles.

Class L — Any motor-driven cycle with less than 150cc displacement.

Class M — Any motorcycle or motor-driven cycle.

Mechanical Safety Tests

Most second division and medical transport vehicles must have a Certificate of Safety before being driven on Illinois highways. Safety inspections are required every six months. Garages or service stations licensed by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) may conduct safety inspections. Second division vehicles not required to pass safety inspections include:

- ✗ vehicles with a gross weight of 8,000 pounds or less, provided any trailer being towed is 8,000 pounds or less.
- ✗ farm tractors, machinery and other implements.
- ✗ vehicles owned or operated by the city of Chicago that display proof of ownership.

- ✗ vehicles owned or operated by the federal government that display proof of ownership.
- ✗ trailers with a gross weight of 5,000 pounds or less.
- ✗ vehicles registered as recreational vehicles that display proper plates.
- ✗ properly licensed antique vehicles.
- ✗ specialized vehicles as defined by statute.
- ✗ vehicles properly registered in another state.

When a vehicle passes inspection, the operator is issued a Certificate of Safety windshield decal and an inspection report. This decal must be displayed on any vehicle using public roadways.

Required Identification

Registration ID Cards

Registration ID cards for second division vehicles, except pole trailers or semitrailers, must be in the vehicle, carried by the driver or carried by the person in control of the vehicle at all times. Vehicles weighing more than 12,000 pounds registered in another state must carry an Apportionment ID Card, an appropriate registration from their base jurisdiction (Reciprocity Agreements), and/or appropriate trip permit in place of the registration ID card.

When required by the Motor Fuel Tax Law, a valid Motor Fuel Tax ID Card or an authorized reproduction of it must be carried in the cab of the vehicle or carried by the driver. The driver must display or surrender the card upon request of a law enforcement officer or agent of the Illinois Department of Revenue.

Second division vehicle registration fees are based on the type of operation and the gross weight of the vehicle and load. The fee schedule is printed on the application and may be obtained from the Secretary of State's office.

Interstate/Intrastate Carriers

Interstate/Intrastate carriers may not operate any motor vehicle on Illinois highways without a sign painted on or affixed to both sides of the vehicle. The trade name, permit number and registration number of the carrier must be visible. The letters on the sign must be at least 2 inches high with a 1/2-inch brush stroke. Interstate/Intrastate carrier vehicles must show the registration or authority number of the carrier on both sides of the unit.

Tow Trucks

All tow trucks, except those owned by governmental agencies, must display a sign on each side. The sign must have letters at least 2 inches high that contrast with the background. The sign must include the name, address and telephone number of the owner or operator.

Movement Documents

A movement document ensures only vehicles licensed in Illinois do intrastate business within the boundaries of Illinois. All trucks, truck tractors and buses registered in another state must carry one or more movement documents that indicate:

- ✗ the vehicle's point of origin and destination and its cargo or passengers,
- ✗ whether the trip is for-hire or not-for-hire, and
- ✗ whether the trip is interstate or intrastate as defined by the *Illinois Vehicle Code*.

Interstate drivers must observe certain federal regulations. Drivers interested in interstate service may obtain a copy of *Motor Carrier Safety Regulations* from the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety, Federal Highway Administration: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Size and Weight Limitations

Drivers must obey all posted signs regarding maximum truck width, length, height and weight limits. They must be aware that some highways prohibit truck travel entirely. Others allow truck travel on a limited basis. For example, only very small trucks may cross certain township bridges and the highways leading to and from these bridges. Higher limits are allowed on state highways designated by IDOT, and on local streets and highways designated by local government officials.

Heavier and larger vehicles and combinations are allowed to travel on non-designated streets or highways in the state highway system for up to 5 miles to gain access to a designated roadway. These vehicles are prohibited on all streets and highways under local jurisdiction, unless designated by local officials. To obtain a map of state highways on which these vehicles may operate, please call IDOT at 217-782-6271.

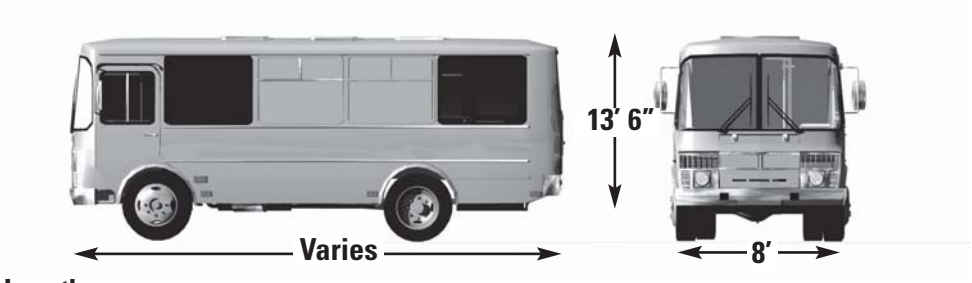
- ✗ **Class I designated state and local highways:** No overall length limit.
- ✗ **Class II designated state and local highways:** No overall length limit; however, the maximum allowable wheelbase is 55 feet for truck tractor-semitrailer combinations and 65 feet for truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer (double-bottom) combinations.
- ✗ **Class III highways and remainder of state highway system:** Maximum allowable wheelbase is 55 feet for the truck tractor-semitrailer combinations. All other types of vehicle combinations are limited to an overall length of 60 feet including load.
- ✗ **Non-designated local streets and highways:** Maximum overall length is 55 feet, including loads for truck tractor-semitrailer combinations, and 60 feet for all other types of vehicle combinations.

A combination of vehicles specially designed to transport motor vehicles may have an overall length of 65 feet plus a front overhang of 3 feet and a rear overhang of 4 feet on Class I and II highways. On all other highways and streets, the maximum overall length is 60 feet including load.

Width

The maximum width for most vehicles is 8 feet, except on designated Class I and II state highways and designated local roads where a width of 8 feet, 6 inches is allowed. Exemptions to maximum widths are:

- ✗ Loads of farm products or implements of husbandry being transported during the period from one-half hour after sunrise to one-half hour before sunset in times of good visibility. These vehicles are not exempt when there is not enough light, during bad weather conditions, or when persons or vehicles on the roadway cannot be clearly seen from 1,000 feet away.
- ✗ Buses operating within the limits of cities and villages located in counties with populations of 500,000 or more. Maximum widths may be up to 9 feet; however, no vehicle wider than 8 feet, 8 inches may be operated on interstate highways in those counties.



Length

No vehicle with or without a load, other than a semitrailer, shall exceed a length of 42 feet. Exceptions are vehicles hauling pipes, poles, machinery or other structural objects that cannot be quickly taken apart. However, the length of these objects may not exceed 80 feet, except for public utility emergency repairs or for those holding special permits. These vehicles are not allowed to operate when it is dark or on Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays.

Height

The maximum height for all vehicles on all highways is 13 feet, 6 inches, including load, from the underside of the tire to the top of the vehicle.

Weight

The maximum weight limit on designated state and local streets and highways is 20,000 pounds on a single axle; 34,000 pounds on a tandem; and up to 80,000 pounds on a 5-axle combination, depending upon axle spacings.

On non-designated streets and highways the limit is 20,000 pounds on a single axle; 34,000 pounds on a tandem; and up to 80,000 pounds on a 5-axle combination. However, any single axle of a 2-axle motor vehicle weighing 36,000 pounds or less and not a part of a combination of vehicles may carry an axle load of up to 20,000 pounds. Exceptions for certain vehicles are allowed by statutes and local city ordinances.

Overweight Vehicles

All vehicles weighing 16,000 pounds or more gross weight must stop at any official weighing station. Refusal to allow a load to be weighed after being directed to do so by an officer may result in a fine.

Drivers or owners are responsible for overweight vehicles. The weight allowed on an Illinois plate is shown on the registration card. This card must be in the cab of the truck or bus, carried by the driver or carried by the person in control of the vehicle. If a vehicle is overweight:

- ✗ the driver must stop the vehicle in a suitable place.
- ✗ the truck must remain standing until a part of the load is removed or shifted to comply with the law.
- ✗ any material unloaded shall be the responsibility of the owner or operator.
- ✗ the driver or owner shall be arrested by the officer who finds the vehicle overweight. No arrest ticket will be issued if the overweight is 2,000 pounds or less and the driver or owner shifts or removes the excess. This arrest tolerance is reduced to 1,000 pounds for vehicle combinations having a registered weight in excess of 80,000 pounds. Special permission to move those vehicles exceeding maximum size and weight limits may be obtained from IDOT.

The rules for width, length, height or weight do not apply to:

- ✗ firefighting equipment or snow and ice removal vehicles owned or operated by governmental agencies.
- ✗ public utility vehicles transporting equipment required for emergency repair of public facilities.
- ✗ certain farm machinery; however, farm tractors must not be operated on highways except when in connection with farming operations.

Special Equipment

Second division or combination vehicles longer than 25 feet or wider than 80 inches (excluding mirrors, bumpers and other safety devices) must have certain equipment.

Lights and Reflectors

The following lighting equipment is required on vehicles operated outside the limits of cities, towns or villages between sunset and sunrise:

- ✗ two yellow or amber lights on the front of the vehicle; one light must be on each upper-front corner and visible for 500 feet.
- ✗ three red lights on the rear of the vehicle, which must be in a horizontal line and visible for 500 feet.

- ✗ two yellow or amber reflectors on the front of the vehicle; one reflector must be on each lower corner.
- ✗ two red reflectors on the rear of the vehicle; one reflector must be no more than 12 inches from each lower corner.

Second division or combination vehicles longer than 20 feet and weighing more than 3,000 gross pounds must have special reflectors when operated outside the limits of cities, villages or towns between sunset and sunrise. The required reflectors, which must be approved by IDOT, include:

- ✗ two amber reflectors on each side of the vehicle, no more than 5 feet above the road and placed at approximately one-third the length of the side of the vehicle.
- ✗ one amber reflector on each side of the vehicle, no more than 12 inches from the front and no more than 5 feet above the road.
- ✗ one red reflector on each side of the vehicle, no more than 12 inches from the rear and no more than 5 feet above the road.

Special equipment required on trailers with a gross weight of 3,000 pounds or less includes:

- ✗ two red reflectors on the rear of the vehicle, no more than 12 inches from each lower corner and visible for 300 feet in headlight beams.
- ✗ right and left electric turn signals on the front and rear visible from 300 feet.

Warning Flags and Flares

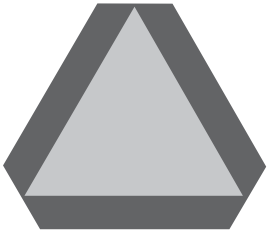
No person may operate any second division motor vehicle weighing more than 8,000 pounds; or 8,000 pounds or less towing a trailer; or any motor vehicle towing a house trailer upon a highway outside an urban district at any time unless the vehicle is equipped with the following equipment:

- ✗ **Flares, lanterns or reflectors** — Each vehicle must carry three liquid-burning flares, three red electric lanterns or three portable red emergency reflectors, which are visible for 500 feet in the dark.
- ✗ **Fusees** — Three red-burning, 15-minute fusees are required if red electric lanterns or portable red emergency reflectors are not carried.
- ✗ **Flags or reflectors** — Two red cloth flags at least 12-inches square with standards for support flags, or two portable red emergency reflectors approved by the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 125.

Motor vehicles transporting explosives, flammable liquids or compressed gas must carry three red electric lanterns or three portable red emergency reflectors. These vehicles are prohibited from carrying flares, fusees or signals produced by flame.

Slow-Moving Vehicles

A red and orange slow-moving vehicle emblem must be displayed on the rear of certain slow-moving farm vehicles, construction equipment and vehicles drawn by animals. Combinations of farm tractors and towed farm implements also must have a slow-moving emblem. If the towed unit blocks the towing vehicle, the emblem must be mounted on the rear of the towed unit. Special mobile equipment is exempt when operated in construction or maintenance areas where traffic control devices are used to warn motorists.



Slow-Moving Vehicle Emblem

Following are laws that apply to vehicles requiring slow-moving emblems:

- ✗ **Emblems** — A slow-moving emblem must be placed at the rear of the vehicle 4 feet to 12 feet above the road surface. The emblem must meet IDOT specifications.
- ✗ **Rear light** — When lights are required, a flashing amber signal must be mounted as high as possible to the base of the vehicle and be visible for at least 500 feet in normal sunlight. The flashing amber signal light also may be lighted during daylight hours.
- ✗ **Lane usage** — Vehicles with slow-moving emblems must drive in the right-hand lane.

Advertising and other markings are not permitted on slow-moving emblems. Displaying the emblem does not replace or eliminate the need for displaying other signals or warning devices required by law.

Traffic Safety Laws

Speed Limits

The maximum speed limit in Illinois is 70 mph on interstate highways where posted. The maximum speed limit on most other highways is 55 mph. The maximum speed limit for vehicles with a gross weight of 8,000 pounds or more is 70 mph. For safety reasons, a minimum speed limit may be posted along certain roadways.

The driver must use caution and slow down when approaching and crossing an intersection. Caution also must be taken when going around a curve, approaching the top of a hill or traveling on a narrow and winding roadway. Special attention also must be paid when pedestrians are present, in heavy traffic, during inclement weather and hazardous road conditions.

Railroad Crossings

The driver of any second division vehicle carrying passengers for hire, any bus that meets all the special requirements for school buses, and second division vehicles required to be placarded by federal and state law for carrying hazardous materials must stop at all railroad crossings in the following manner:

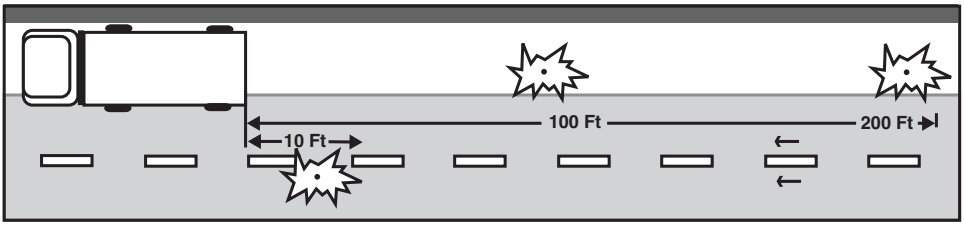
- ✗ Stop within 50 feet, but not less than 15 feet, from the nearest rail.
- ✗ Listen and look for the approach of a train. Do not proceed until such movement can be made safely.
- ✗ Proceed only in a gear not requiring a change of gears during the crossing. Do not shift gears while crossing the track or tracks.

Disabled Vehicles

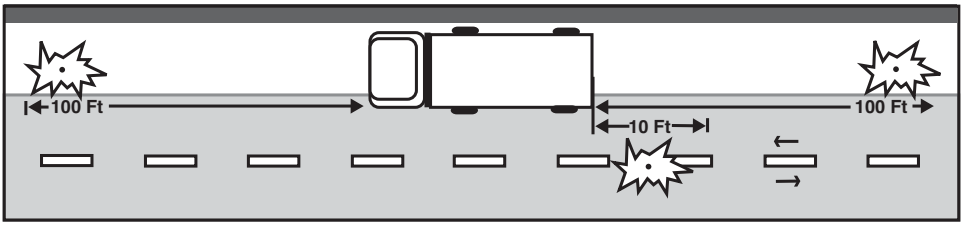
Second division vehicles or vehicles towing another vehicle may break down on the roadway. If this happens, you must display flags, flares or approved warning devices. When putting out triangles, hold them between yourself and oncoming traffic so you can be seen.

When Lights Are Required for Safety

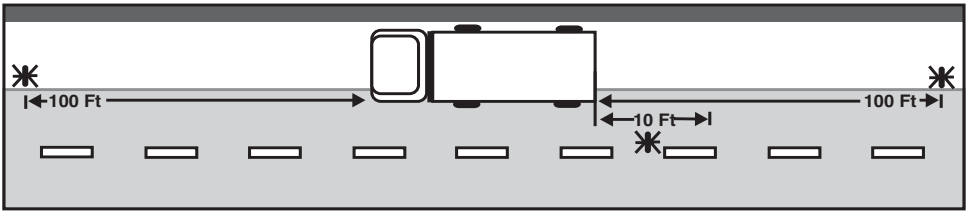
Disabled vehicles must immediately display a lighted fusee, red electric lantern or portable red emergency reflector on the traffic side of the vehicle. Three liquid-burning flares, three red electric lanterns or three red emergency reflectors must be displayed in the following manner:



- ✗ **Divided highways** — One must be placed 10 feet from the disabled vehicle on the traffic side in the direction of the nearest approaching traffic. A second one must be placed 100 feet from the disabled vehicle in the center of the lane or on the shoulder in the direction of the approaching traffic. A third must be placed 200 feet from the disabled vehicle in the center of the lane or on the shoulder in the direction of approaching traffic.



✗ **All other roadways** — One must be placed at least 10 feet from the disabled vehicle on the traffic side in the direction of the nearest approaching traffic. A second one must be placed 100 feet from the disabled vehicle toward traffic approaching in that lane. A third must be placed 100 feet in the opposite direction from the disabled vehicle in the center of the lane or on the shoulder.



Special Situations

Additional laws that apply to disabled vehicles in special situations include:

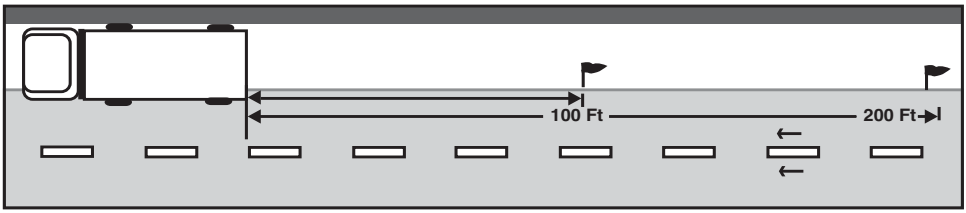
✗ **Explosives** — Motor vehicles using compressed gas as a fuel, and vehicles carrying explosives, flammable liquids or compressed flammable gas may become disabled. When this occurs, the driver must immediately display three red electric lanterns or portable red emergency reflectors. One must be placed 10 feet from the disabled vehicle on the traffic side. It must be in the direction of the nearest approaching traffic. A second one must be placed 100 feet to the front of the disabled vehicle in the center of the lane or on the shoulder. A third one must be placed 100 feet to the rear of the disabled vehicle in the center of the lane or on the shoulder. **Flares, fusees or signals produced by flame should not be used for vehicles carrying explosives or flammable cargos**.

✗ **Curves, hills and other obstructions** — When a vehicle is disabled within 500 feet of a curve, hillcrest or other obstruction, the warning signal must be placed in a location that will warn oncoming drivers. It must be between 100 feet and 500 feet from the disabled vehicle.

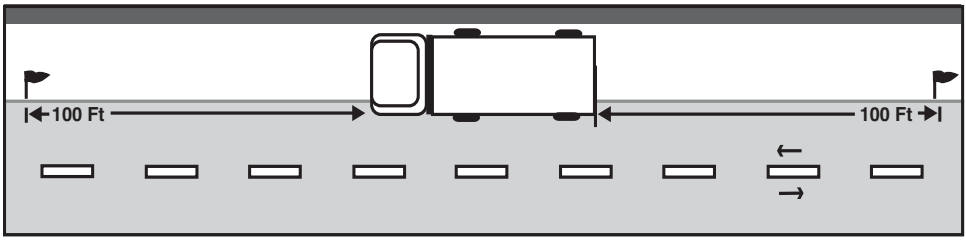
When Lights Are Not Required For Safety

Disabled vehicles must display nonflammable red flags or portable emergency reflectors in the following manner:

✗ **Divided highways** — One must be placed 200 feet to the rear of the vehicle. A second one must be placed 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle.



✗ **All other roadways** — One must be placed 100 feet to the front of the vehicle and a second one must be placed 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle.



Towed Vehicles

Following are laws that apply to a vehicle towing another vehicle:

- ✗ The drawbar or other connections must be strong enough to pull all the weight of the vehicle being towed.
- ✗ The drawbar or other connections may not exceed 15 feet from one vehicle to the other. This does not include the connection between two vehicles transporting poles, pipes, machinery or other objects that cannot be taken apart easily.
- ✗ A drawbar must be used to tow a vehicle on any controlled-access highway or on a roadway outside a business, residential or suburban district.
- ✗ Each towed vehicle must be coupled with two safety chains or cables to the towing vehicle. Chains and cables must be large and strong enough to prevent the towed vehicle from parting with the towing vehicle. This is necessary in case the drawbar breaks.
- ✗ A passenger may not occupy a trailer, semi-trailer, farm wagon or other vehicle while being towed on public highways. Exceptions apply when the vehicle does not exceed 15 mph and is used in connection with a parade or farming activity, or the passenger is over age 18.

Secured Loads

A vehicle driven or moved on a street or highway must be constructed or loaded to prevent any part of the load from dropping, shifting, falling, blowing, leaking or escaping. The load and its covering must be securely fastened.

The Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Board have special rules for securing loads. These apply to steel coils and other objects that are bonded and handled as a single unit weighing more than 2,000 pounds.

Projecting Loads/Protruding Equipment

Projecting loads extending 4 feet or more to the rear of a vehicle must display a red light to the rear of the load. The red light must be seen for at least 500 feet when it is dark. At

all other times there must be a red flag or red cloth not less than 12-inches square at the end of the projecting load. When it is dark the vehicle must be equipped with:

- ✗ two lamps with a white light that can be seen 1,000 feet to the front of the vehicle.
- ✗ two lamps with a red light that can be seen 1,000 feet to the rear of the vehicle.

This applies to vehicles not otherwise required to have headlights or taillights.

Any protruding equipment on vehicles must be fastened to prevent shifting, bouncing or moving.

Drowsiness/Drugs/Alcohol

Always drive alert. Take short breaks and naps before you become drowsy. Amphetamines and other drugs taken to keep you awake are dangerous because they make you think you are wide awake when you really are not. They may impair your muscle coordination and disrupt your ability to think clearly.

Alcohol also affects judgment and self-control. It will make you less alert and reduce your ability to drive safely. Everyone is affected by alcohol. Only time will help a drinker sober up. Your Non-CDL will be suspended if your blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) is .08 or greater.

Distracted Driving

Effective January 1, 2014, Illinois law prohibits the use of hand-held cellphones, texting or using other communications while operating a motor vehicle. Hands-free devices or Bluetooth technology is allowed for persons over age 18. Even using hands-free technology is considered a distraction while driving and can be dangerous. If you must make a phone call, even with hands-free technology, it is recommended that you pull off to the side of the road before making the call. Illinois drivers are exempt from using a cellphone or text messaging while driving only when:

- ✗ Reporting an emergency situation.
- ✗ Using the device hands-free or in voice-activated mode.
- ✗ Parked on the shoulder of a highway.
- ✗ Stopped due to normal traffic being obstructed and the vehicle is in neutral or park.

DRIVERS WHO ARE IN A CRASH RESULTING FROM DISTRACTED DRIVING MAY FACE CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND JAIL TIME.

Television or Video

Televisions or video monitors that can be seen from the driver's seat are prohibited while the vehicle is in motion.

Driving Safely — Basic Vehicle Control

Driving a larger vehicle requires special skills. Follow these guidelines to ensure your safety on the road as well as that of other motorists who are sharing the road with you.

Backing Safely

Because you cannot see everything behind your vehicle, backing is always dangerous. Avoid backing whenever you can. When you park, try to park so you will be able to pull forward when you leave. When you have to back, follow these safety rules:

- ✗ **Look closely at your path** — Look at your line of travel before you begin. Get out and walk around the vehicle. Check your clearance to the sides and overhead in and near the path your vehicle will take.
- ✗ **Back slowly** — Always back as slowly as possible. Use the lowest reverse gear so you can easily correct steering errors. You also can stop quickly if necessary.
- ✗ **Back and turn toward the driver's side** — Back to the driver's side so you can see better. Backing toward the right side is very dangerous because you cannot see as well. If you back and turn toward the driver's side, you can watch the rear of your vehicle by looking out the side window. Use driver-side backing, even if it means going around the block; the added safety is worth it.
- ✗ **Use a helper** — There are blind spots you cannot see. That is why a helper is very important. The helper should stand near the back of your vehicle where you can see him or her. Before you begin backing, work out hand signals you both understand; agree on a signal for "stop."

Shifting Gears

Correct shifting of gears is important. If you cannot get your vehicle into the right gear while driving, you will have less control. Following are special conditions when you should downshift:

- ✗ **Before starting down a hill** — Slow down and shift down to a speed you can control without using the brakes hard; otherwise the brakes can overheat and lose their braking power. Downshift before starting down the hill. Make sure you are in a low enough gear, usually lower than the gear required to climb the same hill.
- ✗ **Before entering a curve** — Slow down to a safe speed and downshift to the right gear before entering the curve. This lets you use some power through the curve to help the vehicle be more stable while turning. It also lets you speed up as soon as you are out of the curve.

Turning

The space around a truck or bus is important in turns. Because of wide turning and off-tracking, large vehicles can hit other vehicles or objects during turns. Following are rules to help prevent right-turn crashes:

- ✗ Turn slowly to give yourself and others more time to avoid problems.
- ✗ If you are driving a truck or bus that cannot make the right turn without swinging into another lane, turn wide as you complete the turn (Figure 1). Keep the rear of the vehicle close to the curb; this will stop other drivers from passing you on the right.
- ✗ Do not turn wide to the left as you start the turn (Figure 2). A following driver may think you are turning left and try to pass on the right. You may crash into the other vehicle as you complete your turn.
- ✗ If you must cross into the oncoming lane to make a turn, watch out for vehicles coming toward you. Give them room to go by or to stop. However, do not back up for them, because you might hit someone behind you.

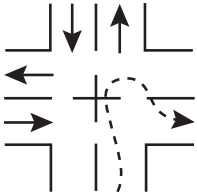


Figure 1 — Correct

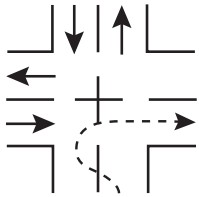


Figure 2 — Incorrect

Braking

When going downhill, the brakes always heat up, caused by the brake shoes or pads rubbing against the brake drum or disks to slow the vehicle. Brakes are designed to take a lot of heat. However, brakes can fail from excessive heat by attempting to slow down from too high a speed too many times or too quickly. Brakes will fade (have less stopping power) when they get very hot, and they can get to the point where they will no longer slow the vehicle.

The use of brakes on a long and/or steep downgrade is only a supplement to the braking effect of the engine. Once the vehicle is in the proper low gear, follow these proper braking techniques:

- ✗ Apply the brakes just hard enough to feel a definite slowdown.
- ✗ When your speed has been reduced to approximately 5 mph below your safe speed, release the brakes. This brake application should last about three seconds.
- ✗ When your speed has increased to a safe speed, repeat both of the prior proper braking techniques.

Inspections

Check your vehicle's operation regularly, including the following:

- ✗ instruments
- ✗ air-pressure gauge (if you have air brakes)
- ✗ temperature gauges
- ✗ pressure gauges
- ✗ ammeter/voltmeter
- ✗ mirrors
- ✗ tires
- ✗ cargo covers

If you see, hear, smell or feel anything that might mean trouble, check it out immediately.

Hazardous Situations

Hazardous situations usually come on suddenly and put you and other drivers at risk. Staying calm and knowing how to quickly deal with these situations will reduce the risk of an accident.

Tire Failure

Quickly knowing you have a tire failure will give you more time to react. Following are warning signs of possible tire failure and what you should do:

- ✗ **Hold the steering wheel firmly** — If a front tire fails, it can twist the steering wheel out of your hands. The only way to prevent this is to keep a firm grip on the steering wheel with both hands at all times.
- ✗ **Stay off the brake** — It is natural to want to brake in an emergency. However, braking when a tire has failed could cause loss of control. Unless you are about to run into something, stay off the brake until the vehicle has slowed down. Then brake very gently, pull off the road and stop.
- ✗ **Check the tires** — After you have come to a stop, get out and check all the tires. Do this even if the vehicle seems to be handling all right.

Skids

By far the most common skid is one in which the rear wheels lose traction through excessive braking or acceleration. Skids caused by acceleration usually happen on ice or snow. They can be easily stopped by taking your foot off the accelerator. If it is very slippery, push the clutch in. Otherwise, the engine can keep the wheels from rolling freely and regaining traction.

Rear-wheel Skids

Rear-wheel braking skids occur when the rear drive wheels lock. Because locked wheels have less traction than rolling wheels, the rear wheels usually slide sideways in an attempt to "catch up" with the front wheels. In a bus or straight truck, the vehicle will slide sideways in a "spin out." With vehicles towing trailers, a drive-wheel skid can let the trailer push the towing vehicle sideways, causing a sudden jackknife.

Follow these procedures to correct a drive-wheel braking skid:

- ✗ **Stop braking** — This will let the rear wheels roll again and keep them from sliding any farther. If on ice, push in the clutch to let the wheels turn freely.
- ✗ **Turn quickly** — When a vehicle begins to slide sideways, quickly steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go down the road. You must turn the wheel quickly.
- ✗ **Countersteer** — As a vehicle turns back on course, it has a tendency to keep turning. Unless you turn the steering wheel quickly the other way, you may find yourself skidding in the opposite direction.

Learning to stay off the brake, turning the steering wheel quickly, pushing in the clutch and countersteering in a skid takes a lot of practice. The best place to get this practice is on a large driving range or "skid pad."

Front-wheel Skids

Most front-wheel skids are caused by driving too fast for conditions. Other causes are lack of tread on the front tires and cargo loaded so there is not enough weight on the front axle. In a front-wheel skid, the front end tends to go in a straight line regardless of how much you turn the steering wheel. On a very slippery surface, you may not be able to steer around a curve or turn.

When a front-wheel skid occurs, the only way to stop the skid is to let the vehicle slow down. Stop turning and/or braking so hard. Slow down as quickly as possible without skidding.

Fires

Knowing how to fight fires is important. Study the instructions printed on the extinguisher before you need it. Fires have been made worse by drivers who did not know what to do. The following steps should be followed in case of fire:

- ✗ **Pull off the road** — The first step is to get the vehicle off the road and stop. Park in an open area, away from buildings, trees, brush, other vehicles or anything that might catch fire. **Do not pull into a service station**. Notify emergency services of your problem and your location.
- ✗ **Keep the fire from spreading** — Before trying to put out the fire, make sure it does not spread any further. With an engine fire, turn off the engine as soon as you can. Do not open the hood if you can avoid it. Shoot extinguishers through louvers or radiator or from the underside of the vehicle. For a cargo fire in a van or box trailer, keep the doors shut, especially if your cargo contains hazardous materials. Opening the van doors will supply the fire with oxygen and can cause it to burn very fast.
- ✗ **Use the right fire extinguisher** — The B:C-type fire extinguisher is designed to work on electrical fires and burning liquids. The A:B:C-type is designed to work on burning wood, paper and cloth as well. Water can be used on wood, paper or cloth, but do not use water on an electrical fire (you could get shocked) or a gasoline fire (it will just spread the flames). A burning tire must be cooled. Lots of water may be required. If you are not sure what to use, especially on a hazardous materials fire, wait for qualified firefighters.
- ✗ **Extinguish the fire** — Only try to extinguish a fire if you know what you are doing and it is safe to do so. When using the extinguisher, stay as far away from the fire as possible. Aim at the source or base of the fire, not up in the flames. Position yourself upwind and let the wind carry the extinguisher to the fire rather than carrying the flames to you. Continue until whatever was burning has been cooled. Absence of smoke or flame does not mean the fire is completely out or cannot restart.

Hazardous Materials

You should be able to recognize hazardous cargo, and you must know whether or not you can haul it without having a CDL.

Shippers write the name of the hazard class of hazardous products in the item description on the shipping papers. Similar words should show on 4-inch, diamond-shaped labels on the containers of hazardous materials. If the diamond label will not fit on the container, shippers put the label on a tag. For example, compressed gas cylinders that will not hold a label will have tags or decals.

Drivers must use placards to warn others of their hazardous cargo. Placards are placed on the outside of a vehicle to show the hazard class(es) of products on board.

For more information on hazardous materials, please obtain a *CDL Study Guide* from your local Secretary of State facility or at www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

Study Questions

1. Name the lighting equipment required for second division or combination vehicles longer than 25 feet and/or wider than 80 inches.

2. What is the maximum width for most vehicles?

3. What is the proper method of braking on long downhill grades?

4. What are the laws that apply to one vehicle towing another?

5. What are the maximum weights for single, tandem and 5-axle combinations?

6. What is the maximum length allowed for second division vehicles, empty or loaded? What are the exceptions?

7. At what distance must warning flags, flares or other approved warning devices be visible?

8. What are the requirements for reducing overweight on vehicles?

9. What types of vehicles are required to stop at railroad crossings?

10. What is the maximum height, including load, for all vehicles?

11. How do you mark a load that projects 4 feet or more to the rear of the vehicle?

12. On a two-lane roadway, what is the maximum legal speed limit for trucks with a gross weight of 8,000 pounds or more?

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