

Glossary

Other relevant terms may be found at [49 C.F.R. § 383.5](#) and [49 C.F.R. § 390.5](#). When viewing from the CDL CD or the internet, underlined words are hyperlinked to their respective web pages. Place your cursor on the underlined word, press Ctrl+Click to follow (access) the link.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

A CDL is a license issued by a State or other jurisdiction, in accordance with the standards contained in [49 CFR Parts 383](#) and [384](#), to an individual which authorizes the individual to operate a class of a commercial motor vehicle.

Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV)

A CMV is a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property if the motor vehicle—

- (a) Has a gross combination weight rating of 11,794 kilograms or more (26,001 pounds or more) inclusive of a towed unit(s) with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds); or
- (b) Has a gross vehicle weight rating of 11,794 or more kilograms (26,001 pounds or more); or
- or
- (c) Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
- (d) Is of any size and is used in the transportation of [hazardous materials](#).

Conviction

A conviction is

1. an unvacated adjudication of guilt, or
2. a determination that a person has violated or failed to comply with the law in a court of original jurisdiction or by an authorized administrative tribunal,
3. an unvacated forfeiture of bail or collateral deposited to secure the person's appearance in court,
4. a plea of guilty or nolo contendere accepted by the court,
5. the payment of a fine or court cost, or
6. a violation of a condition of release without bail, regardless of whether or not the penalty is rebated, suspended, or probated.

Designed

"Designed" is the operative word. If the vehicle was designed by the manufacturer to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver, regardless of whether the vehicle has been modified to accommodate less, a CDL is required.

Disqualification

Disqualification means any of the following three actions:

- (a) The suspension, revocation, or cancellation of a CDL by the State or jurisdiction of issuance.

(b) Any withdrawal of a person's privileges to drive a CMV by a State or other jurisdiction as the result of a violation of State or local law relating to motor vehicle traffic control (other than parking, vehicle weight or vehicle defect violations).

(c) A determination by the FMCSA that a person is not qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle under [49 C.F.R. part 391](#).

Endorsement

An authorization to an individual's CDL required to permit the individual to operate certain types of commercial motor vehicles. [49 C.F.R. § 383.93](#)

A CDL holder must obtain State-issued endorsements to his/her CDL to operate CMVs which are:

- (1) "T" Double/triple trailers;
- (2) "P" Passenger vehicles;
- (3) "N" Tank vehicles;
- (4) "H" Used to transport hazardous materials as defined in [49 C.F.R. § 383.5](#); or
- (5) "S" School buses.

Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR)

GCWR is the value specified by the manufacturer as the maximum safe loaded weight of a combination (articulated) motor vehicle. In the absence of a value specified by the manufacturer, GCWR is determined by adding the GVWR of the power unit and the total weight of the towed unit(s) and any load on the towed unit(s).

Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) and Gross Combination Weight (GCW)

GVW and GCW are the actual single or combination vehicle weight regardless of manufacturer design. It is not a limit or specification and is determined when a fully loaded vehicle is driven onto a scale. It should never exceed the GVWR or GCWR.

For further information on gross vehicle weight, see Benjamin, Scott C.. "How Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) Works" 24 September 2008. HowStuffWorks.com. <http://auto.howstuffworks.com/auto-parts/towing/towing-capacity/vehicle/gvwr.htm> 09 May 2011.

Gross Vehicle Weight Rating-GVWR

GVWR is the value specified by the manufacturer as the maximum safe loaded weight of a single motor vehicle, including passengers and cargo.

Hazardous Material

Is a substance or material which has been determined by the Secretary of Transportation to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce, and which has been so designated.

US Department of Transportation maintains a list of hazardous materials as identified in the *Hazardous Materials Transportation Act* [49 CFR § 172.101 Hazardous Materials Table](#). It includes any material that has been designated as hazardous under [49 U.S.C. 5103](#) and is

required to be placarded under subpart F of 49 CFR part 172 or any quantity of a material listed as a select agent or toxin in 42 CFR part 73.

Motor carrier operations in commerce

Commercial motor vehicle transportation operations either-

- (1) In interstate commerce (including foreign commerce), or
- (2) Affecting interstate commerce (intrastate commerce).

Out-of-service Order

Out-of-service order is a declaration by an authorized enforcement officer of a Federal, State, Canadian, Mexican, or local jurisdiction that a driver, a commercial motor vehicle, or a motor carrier operation, is out-of-service pursuant to 49 CFR [§§ 386.72](#) , [392.5](#) , [395.13](#) , [396.9](#) , or compatible laws, or the North American Uniform Out-of-Service Criteria.

Placardable

A vehicle hauling certain quantities of hazardous materials must be placarded on each side and each end with placards specified for the type of material being transported. Markings should be durable, in English, and not obscured by other markings or labels. [49 CFR part 172](#), subpart F.

Power Unit

The vehicle with the engine that controls the unit's wheels and any towed unit(s).

Rating

Rating weights are the maximum allowable limits set by the manufacturer in the design of the vehicle. Rating numbers cannot be changed.

School Bus

Vehicle used to transport pre-primary, primary, or secondary school students from home to school and school to home. It does not include a bus used as a common carrier.

Truck tractor

A self-propelled commercial motor vehicle designed and/or used primarily for drawing other vehicles.

United States

The 50 States and the District of Columbia.