

CHAPTER 30. SCHOOL FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

SUBCHAPTER 5. TRANSPORTATION

210:30-5-8. School bus driver certification

(a) General criteria.

- (1) Pursuant to the authority granted to the State Board of Education in 70 O.S. § 3-104(6) to regulate school bus drivers and 47 O.S. § 15-109, no board of education shall have authority to enter into any written contract with a school bus driver who does not hold a valid Oklahoma School Bus Driver's Certificate issued by the State Board of Education authorizing said bus driver to operate a school bus within the State of Oklahoma.
- (2) In order to obtain and maintain a standard Oklahoma School Bus Driver's Certificate, the State Board of Education requires all public school bus drivers to:
 - (A) Successfully complete a school bus driver training course approved by the State Department of Education;
 - (B) Possess and maintain a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL), which includes the following endorsements required by 47 O.S. § 6-110.1 in accordance with the qualifications determined by Service Oklahoma:
 - (i) A school bus "S" endorsement; and
 - (ii) For drivers of vehicles designed to transport sixteen (16) or more passengers (including the driver), a passenger "P" endorsement; and
 - (C) Comply with all other health and safety qualifications set forth in this Section.
- (3) No school district board of education shall assign or allow to be assigned any school bus driving duty involving the transportation of students to any employee or volunteer, regardless of contract status (e.g. coach, teacher, mechanic), unless that person has all ~~of the requisite required~~ supporting documentation required for school bus drivers on file with the school district and a valid Oklahoma State Department of Education School Bus Driving Certificate as provided for in this section.
- (4) The State Board of Education recognizes the substantial public interest in safe school bus transportation of children. Therefore, in addition to meeting the vision standards required to obtain a CDL from Service Oklahoma, in order to obtain a standard or emergency Oklahoma School Bus Driver's Certificate, all school bus drivers must have:
 - (A) A visual acuity of not less than twenty-fourty (20/40) (Snellen) in each eye with or without corrective lenses; and
 - (B) Not less than twenty-fourty (20/40) (Snellen) with both eyes with or without corrective lenses; and
 - (C) A minimum field of vision of 70 degrees horizontal median vision in each eye.
 - (D) The measurements in ¶(a)(4)(A)-(C) above must be based on the Snellen eye chart exam.
- (5) The use of tobacco by a school bus driver is not permitted during the operation of the bus while hauling pupils. The use of any intoxicating or non-intoxicating alcoholic beverage by the driver eight (8) hours prior to or during the operation of a school bus is strictly prohibited. The use of any controlled dangerous substance seventy-two (72) hours prior to or during the operation of a school bus is strictly prohibited. The possession of any controlled dangerous substance on a school bus is strictly prohibited.
- (6) All school bus drivers shall have an annual health certificate signed by a physician licensed by any state within the United States of America (U.S.), or a nurse practitioner, or a physician assistant who is licensed to practice in any state within the U.S., ~~and~~ who is working under the supervision of a medical doctor (MD), and who is appropriately qualified, or doctor of osteopathy (DO) licensed by any state within the U.S. A school bus driver who is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces may submit a health certificate signed by a licensed physician of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration. The certificate shall be filed in the office of the chief administrative officer of the local school district or designee of the chief administrative officer attesting that such physician, or other authorized health care professional working under the supervision of a physician, has examined the applicant and that the applicant has no sign or symptoms of ill health, and is otherwise, from the observation of such physician or other authorized health care professional, physically and mentally capable of safely operating a school bus. As an alternative to the annual physical examination requirements for school bus drivers, school districts may adopt a policy that utilizes a biannual physical examination, provided the examination is in compliance with the physical qualifications and examination requirements at Subpart E of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, 49 CFR §§ 391.41 to 391.50.
- (7) Substitute and activity school bus drivers shall meet all the requirements prescribed for regular bus drivers.
- (8) At a minimum, the chief administrative officer of the local school district or designee of the chief administrative officer shall conduct an annual driving record check of all school bus drivers, including substitute and activity drivers. The Oklahoma State Department of Education shall be immediately notified of any violation(s) that make a school bus driver ineligible to hold an Oklahoma School Bus Driver's Certificate.
- (9) The State Board of Education shall revoke the certificate of any bus driver's certificate of any holder who fails to comply with the provisions of this Section for:
 - (A) Any violation of the provisions of this Section; or

(B) A willful violation of a rule or regulation of the State Board of Education, or the United States Department of Education; or

(C) A willful violation of any federal or state law; or

(D) A conviction for any of the offenses or bases for revocation set forth in 70 O.S. §§ 3-104 or 3-104.1; or

(E) For other proper cause, including but not limited to violation of the Standards of Performance and Conduct for Teachers contained in OAC 210:20-29-1, OAC 210:20-29-2, OAC 210:20-29-3, OAC 210:20-29-4, and OAC 210:20-29-5, or for violation of any rule contained in Chapter 20, Subchapter 29 of this Title.

(10) School districts who fail to comply with the provisions of this section shall be subject to penalty pursuant to 210:30-5-2.

(b) School bus driver certificate requirements.

(1) The chief administrative officer of the local school district or designee of the chief administrative officer shall certify to the State Department of Education that each applicant submitted for Standard Five-Year Certification:

(A) Is at least 18 years of age;

(B) Has successfully completed a special school bus drivers' course approved by the State Department of Education;

(C) Holds a valid Commercial Drivers license (CDL) appropriate for the type of vehicle driven with the proper endorsements required by Service Oklahoma;

(D) Has not been convicted of a felony, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to a felony during the last ten years; and

(E) Has passed a driving record check, and no certificate shall be issued to any person who, within the preceding three (3) years:

(i) Has had a license suspended or revoked, canceled or withdrawn pursuant to the Implied Consent Laws at 47 O.S. § 751 et seq.;

(ii) Has a conviction for a violation of 47 O.S. § 11-902 which includes driving, operating or being in actual physical control of a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicating drug;

(iii) Has been convicted or pled guilty to a violation of 47 O.S. § 761, operating a motor vehicle while impaired by consumption of alcohol;

(iv) Has been convicted of any municipal violation of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs or operating a motor vehicle while impaired or being in actual physical control of a motor vehicle while impaired; or

(v) Has had four (4) or more traffic violations (excluding parking violations).

(2) The chief administrative officer of the local school district or designee of the chief administrative officer shall certify to the State Department of Education that the applicant for an Emergency One-Year School Bus Driver Certificate (Not Renewable):

(A) Is at least 18 years of age;

(B) Holds a valid Commercial Driver's License with the proper endorsements required by Service Oklahoma; and

(C) Has passed a driving record check and meets the requirements set forth in (1)(D)-(E) of this subsection.

(3) Requirements for Renewal of the Standard Five-Year Certificate include:

(A) Every five (5) years, each driver shall have successfully completed four (4) hours per year of inservice training approved by the State Department of Education;

(B) The chief administrative officer of the local school district or designee of the chief administrative officer shall certify to the State Department of Education that the applicant meets all requirements for standard certification; [47 O.S. § 15-109]

(C) Each applicant has a health certificate on file signed by a licensed physician, or a nurse or physician assistant who is licensed to practice in any state within the U.S. and who is working under the supervision of a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO), and meets all vision requirements;

(D) Each applicant has not been convicted or pled guilty to a felony in the last ten (10) years;

(E) The applicant's driving record has been checked and meets all other State Board of Education requirements for certification; and

(F) Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, in order to renew any school bus driver certificate which has been expired for more than one year, a driver must successfully complete a renewal course approved by the State Department of Education. Such a course must, at a minimum, include topics on:

(i) Railroad crossings;

(ii) Emergency evacuation procedures;

(iii) Mirror placement;

(iv) Pick-up and drop-off procedures;

(v) Sound driving practices; and

(vi) Accident procedures.

(4) During the period that the application for issuance of a new or renewed school bus driver certificate is pending, applicants must immediately notify the State Department of Education Transportation Section of any arrest, citation, or conviction of any disqualifying offense set forth in (1)(E) of this subsection; any moving violation; or any involvement in a traffic accident.

(c) Certification of drivers with a monocular vision condition.

(1) Individuals who wish to obtain an Oklahoma School Bus Driver's Certificate and meet all other requirements of this Section, but cannot meet the vision requirements in (a)(3) of this Section in both eyes due to the presence of a monocular vision condition, may obtain an exemption from the vision requirements of (a)(3) of this Section by providing evidence showing that Applicant is exempt from the requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 391.41, has fully adapted to the monocular vision condition, and is capable of safely operating a school bus for the purpose of transporting school children. Such evidence must consist of documentation for each one of the following:

(A) Documentation establishing that Applicant's vision condition has been present and unchanged for three years or more prior to the application for an exemption from the vision requirements of (a)(3) of this Section;

(B) Documentation establishing that Applicant has experience in safely operating a Commercial Motor Vehicle with the monocular vision condition within the three (3) year period immediately preceding the date of the application for an exemption from the vision requirements of (a)(3) of this Section; and

(C) One of the following:

(i) An authority letter issued by the Applicant's CDL licensing jurisdiction qualifying the individual as exempt from the vision requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 391.41; or

(ii) A letter or waiver issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) documenting that the applicant has received a waiver from the vision requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 391.41.

(2) Documentation of the evidence required by (1)(A) of this subsection shall consist of documentation for each one of the following:

(A) Applicant must have been examined by a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist within sixty (60) days prior to obtaining the Commercial Driver License and within one year of applying for the State Department of Education monocular vision exemption. Applicant must provide the State Department of Education a copy of official documentation of the vision examination from the Applicant's CDL licensing jurisdiction.

(B) In addition, if not included on the official documentation of the vision exam, Applicant must submit additional documentation, in which a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist identifies and describes:

(i) The nature of the vision deficiency, including how long the individual has had the deficiency;

(ii) The date of the examination;

(iii) Whether the applicant's vision is stable;

(iv) The visual acuity of each eye, corrected and uncorrected;

(v) The field of vision of each eye, including central and peripheral fields, testing to at least 120 in the horizontal. (Formal perimetry is required. The doctor must submit the formal perimetry test for each eye and interpret the results in degrees of field of vision.);

(vi) Whether the applicant has the ability to recognize the colors of traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber; and

(vii) The ophthalmologist/optometrist's medical opinion as to whether the individual has sufficient vision to perform the driving tasks required to operate a school bus.

(3) Documentation of the evidence required by (1)(B) of this subsection shall consist of each of the following:

(A) Applicant must provide documentation of experience in operating a commercial motor vehicle (as defined by 47 O.S. §§ 1-107.1, 1-107.2, or 1-107.3) while the Applicant has a monocular vision condition for the three (3) year period immediately preceding the date of this application which includes the following information:

(i) For any applicant employed as a driver of a commercial motor vehicle, the DOT # or ICC# of Applicant's employer(s); for any applicant with driving experience as an independent motor carrier, a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of customers for whom Applicant performed transportation services through the operation of a commercial motor vehicle on public highways;

(ii) A list of all dates (month/date/year) during the three (3) year period for which Applicant performed services driving and/or operating a commercial motor vehicle, and the number of hours driven per week; and

(iii) A list of all types of commercial motor vehicles operated by Applicant and gross vehicle weight rating ("GVWR") of each vehicle operated by Applicant;

(B) Acceptable forms of required documentation of the Applicant's driving experience described in (3) of this paragraph may include either:

(i) A signed, notarized statement from the individual's present or past employer(s) on company letterhead; or

(ii) An affidavit by the Applicant.

(C) Applicant shall provide the State Department of Education with a Motor Vehicle Report demonstrating that applicant's driving record during the three (3) year period prior to the date the application is filed:

(i) Contains no suspensions or revocations of Applicant's driver's license for the operation of any motor vehicle (including Applicant's personal vehicle);

(ii) Contains no record of involvement in an accident involving negligence attributable to the monocular vision condition;

(iii) Contains no record of a serious traffic offense attributable to the monocular vision condition (e.g., erratic unsafe lane changes, following too closely, etc.)

(4) Individuals who receive the vision exemption to drive a bus for an accredited school in Oklahoma must submit to their employer a copy of the documentation required by (1)(C) of this subsection.

(d) Certification of drivers with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

(1) Any person with diabetes mellitus requiring insulin by injection shall not be eligible for a school bus certificate unless the individual meets all other requirements of (a) and (b) of this Section, and the individual possesses and maintains either:

(A) An authority letter issued by Applicant's CDL licensing jurisdiction qualifying the individual as exempt from the physical requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 391.41; or

(B) A letter or waiver issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) documenting that the applicant has received a waiver from the physical requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 391.41.

(2) Upon hire, exempted individuals will be required to agree to and comply with the following conditions:

(A) Blood glucose levels shall be self-monitored one (1) hour prior to driving and at least once every four (4) hours while driving a school bus or on duty by using a portable glucose monitoring device with a computerized memory, and take corrective action if necessary;

(B) The individual shall maintain blood glucose logs, three months from the current date (or the date that insulin use began, whichever is shorter).

(i) If the employing district has cause to require a medical evaluation as authorized by (5) of this subsection, logs maintained pursuant to this subsection must be provided to the board certified medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) treating the individual.

(ii) Blood glucose logs must be created by an electronic blood glucose meter that stores every reading, records date and time of reading, and from which data can be downloaded and printed.

(C) The individual shall carry a source of rapidly absorbable glucose at all times while operating a school bus; and

(D) The individual shall meet the annual physical examination requirements for drivers with metabolic diseases set forth by Service Oklahoma in OAC 260:135-5-50.

(E) The individual shall notify the Department of Public Safety and the State Department of Education of any changes in physical or mental ailments or conditions which may cause loss of control or partial control or may otherwise render the individual incapable of properly controlling a school bus.

(3) Superintendents or their designees who hire individuals who hold a diabetes exemption certification must keep on file in a separate medical record:

(A) A current copy of the diabetes exemption certificate of the individual;

(B) The contact information of the board certified medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) who is treating the individual;

(C) Record of the annual medical certification issued by the board certified medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) pursuant to (1)(B) of this subsection; and

(D) Copies of any medical certifications obtained pursuant to (5) of this subsection.

(4) An individual holding a diabetes exemption certificate shall immediately notify the superintendent (or the superintendent's designee) of the school district in which the individual is employed if the individual's blood glucose level is outside of a range of 100 mg/dl to 400 mg/dl one (1) hour prior to driving. Upon receipt of such notice, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall not allow the individual holding the diabetes exemption certificate to drive. If the individual's blood glucose level is below 100 mg/dl or above 400 mg/dl, then the driver cannot operate a school bus or transport school children as an employee of any school district until the blood glucose measure is within the target range.

(5) In the event an individual holding a diabetes exemption is involved in an incident directly caused by the individual's diabetic condition, the individual cannot operate a school bus or transport school children as an employee of any school district until the individual has been certified in writing as medically able to safely resume work related duties by the certified medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) by whom they are being treated.