

# Under-the-Hood School Bus Waiver FACT SHEET

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has created a long-term waiver extension that allows a state to modify the Commercial Driver's License test for commercial driver's license (CDL) applicants seeking the school bus (S) and passenger (P) endorsements and the intrastate only (K) restriction. Drivers issued a CDL pursuant to this waiver are restricted to intrastate operation of school buses only.

The FMCSA issued this waiver in response to multiple requests that the Agency provide regulatory relief to address the growing shortage of school bus drivers, which has been exacerbated by the Coronavirus 2019 public health emergency. This waiver is intended for individuals who will operate school buses in intrastate commerce exclusively.

On August 28, 2023, PennDOT will implement the waiver granted by FMCSA, and potential school bus drivers may no longer need to take the portion of the CDL test that identifies engine components "under the hood." Under the current federal waiver, the "under the hood" portion of the test may be waived for school bus driver applicants through November 27, 2024.

## **1. What is the purpose of the waiver?**

The purpose of the waiver is to increase the number of school bus drivers by allowing persons to obtain a CDL to operate school buses only in intrastate commerce. An individual licensed under this waiver is not allowed to operate in interstate commerce or operate any commercial motor vehicle other than a school bus.

## **2. Who can use the under-the-hood school bus waiver?**

First-time CDL applicants are the only individuals permitted to use this waiver. Current CDL holders are not eligible.

## **3. Should drivers who currently hold a CDL be tested in accordance with this waiver?**

No. This waiver is intended for individuals who do not currently hold a CDL and seek to operate only school buses in intrastate commerce. Individuals who currently have a CDL and are looking to add a school bus endorsement to an existing CDL are not covered by this waiver and should be tested with the "under the hood" components.

## **4. If a driver already has a Class A or Class B CDL and decides to pursue a school bus and passenger endorsement under this waiver, do the K and school bus-only restrictions only apply to the driver's school bus operations? Could the driver still operate a Group A property-carrying vehicle in interstate commerce?**

No. This waiver is intended for individuals who do not currently hold a CDL and are seeking only to operate school buses in intrastate commerce. Individuals who currently hold a CDL and are looking to operate a school bus or commercial passenger vehicle are not covered by this waiver.

## **5. How will drivers who are issued CDLs under this waiver get the 'school bus only and 'K' restrictions removed?**

If a State issues CDLs under the waiver, the State can develop its own procedures for removing the school bus only restriction in the future. For example, the SDLA may require the driver to retake the full CDL skills test in the future or simply require that the driver be tested only on the engine compartment.

**6. What does the waiver remove from testing?**

The waiver removes the requirement for checking certain items under the hood during the Vehicle Inspection portion of the CDL Skills Test.

**7. What restrictions will be added to my license?**

Drivers will receive an S (School Bus only) and K (Intrastate operation only) restriction on their CDL. This CDL will only allow you to operate a school within the state of Pennsylvania and prohibits you from driving any other type of commercial vehicle.

**8. Does the waiver require the CDL license to have the K restriction?**

Yes. Drivers issued a CDL pursuant to this waiver must be restricted to the intrastate operation of school buses only. The K restriction is the way to identify this limitation on the CDL.

**9. If I have an existing P endorsement, am I allowed to test for the S endorsement under this waiver?**

No. If a driver currently holds a CDL with a P endorsement, a State should not test the individual under the terms of this waiver. The state would test the CDL holder in accordance with current testing procedures for the S endorsement.

**10. How does this waiver impact me if I also want to drive charter motorcoaches?**

Restricted CDLs issued under this waiver do not permit the holder to operate a charter motorcoach or any commercial motor vehicle other than a school bus in intrastate commerce. Drivers seeking to operate a motorcoach in intrastate or interstate commerce, in addition to a school bus, will be required to obtain a CDL with the S and P endorsements with no restrictions in accordance with current requirements.

**11. Am I allowed to drive out of state?**

No. This waiver is intended for individuals who do not currently hold a CDL and are seeking only to operate school buses in intrastate commerce.

**12. How must I self-certify on the DL-11CD?**

Drivers who wish to obtain a CDL by using the Under-the-Hood School Bus only license must self-certify as NA (Non-Excepted Intrastate Transportation) or EA (Excepted Interstate Transportation) and are only permitted to operate a CDL within the state of Pennsylvania. Drivers who wish to self-certify as either NI (Non-Excepted Interstate Transportation) or EI (Excepted Interstate Transportation) would not be eligible.