



Class A CDL Training Curriculum

This is a summary of the minimum Federal curriculum requirements for entry-level driver applicants seeking a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL). Training providers must also comply with any applicable State requirements. The curriculum for Class A applicants pertains to combination vehicles (Group A) as defined in § [383.91\(a\)\(1\)](#).

To learn more about each unit in the curriculum, see the Code of Federal Regulations ([49 CFR 380, Appendix A](#)).



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Theory Instruction Standard Curriculum

There are no required minimum instruction hours for theory training, but the instructor must cover all the topics in the curriculum.

Training providers must use assessments (in written or electronic format) to determine if trainees are proficient in all units of the theory curriculum. Students must earn a minimum overall score of 80 percent on the theory assessment(s).

A1.1 Basic Operation

- 1.1.1 Orientation
- 1.1.2 Control Systems/Dashboard
- 1.1.3 Pre- and Post-Trip Inspections
- 1.1.4 Basic Control
- 1.1.5 Shifting/Operating Transmissions
- 1.1.6 Backing and Docking
- 1.1.7 Coupling and Uncoupling

A1.2 Safe Operating Procedures

- 1.2.1 Visual Search
- 1.2.2 Communication
- 1.2.3 Distracted Driving
- 1.2.4 Speed Management
- 1.2.5 Space Management

- 1.2.6 Night Operation
- 1.2.7 Extreme Driving Conditions

A1.3 Advanced Operating Practices

- 1.3.1 Hazard Perception
- 1.3.2 Skid Control/Recovery, Jackknifing, and Other Emergencies
- 1.3.3 Railroad-Highway Grade Crossings

A1.4 Vehicle Systems and Reporting Malfunctions

- 1.4.1 Identification and Diagnosis of Malfunctions

- 1.4.2 Roadside Inspections

- 1.4.3 Maintenance

A1.5 Non-Driving Activities

- 1.5.1 Handling and Documenting Cargo
- 1.5.2 Environmental Compliance Issues
- 1.5.3 Hours of Service Requirements
- 1.5.4 Fatigue and Wellness Awareness
- 1.5.5 Post-Crash Procedures
- 1.5.6 External Communications
- 1.5.7 Whistleblower/Coercion
- 1.5.8 Trip Planning
- 1.5.9 Drugs/Alcohol
- 1.5.10 Medical Requirements

Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) Range

There are no required minimum instruction hours for BTW range training, but the instructor must cover all topics set forth in the BTW curriculum. The instructor must document the total number of clock hours (one clock hour for each 60 minutes of instruction) each trainee takes to complete the BTW range curriculum.

The instructor must document that each trainee is proficient in all elements of the BTW range curriculum for the trainee to successfully complete this module.

BTW range training must teach driving exercises related to basic vehicle control skills and mastery of basic maneuvers, as covered in 49 CFR §§ [383.111](#) and [383.113](#). The training providers must teach this unit on a driving range as defined in § [380.605](#). The training provider must teach “Get Out and Look” (GOAL) to the trainee as it applies to units A2.2-2.6.

A2.1 Vehicle Inspection Pre-Trip/ Enroute/Post-Trip

A2.2 Straight Line Backing

A2.3 Alley Dock Backing (45/90 Degree)

A2.4 Off-Set Backing

A2.5 Parallel Parking Blind Side

A2.6 Parallel Parking Sight Side

A2.7 Coupling and Uncoupling

Notes BTW training must be conducted in a CMV for which a Class A CDL is required.

Consistent with the definitions of BTW range training and BTW public road training in § [380.605](#), a simulation device may not be used to conduct training or to demonstrate proficiency.



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Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) Public Road

There are no required minimum instruction hours required for BTW public road training, but the instructor must cover all topics set forth in the BTW curriculum, and must document the total number of clock hours (one clock hour for each 60 minutes of instruction) each trainee takes to complete the BTW public road curriculum.

The instructor must document that each trainee is proficient in all elements of the BTW public road curriculum for the trainee to successfully complete this module.

The instructor must engage in active two-way communication with the trainees during all active BTW public road training sessions. Skills described in units A3.8 through 3.12 of this section must be discussed during public road training, but not necessarily performed. Trainees are not required to demonstrate proficiency in the skills described in units A3.8 through 3.12; however, trainees are required to demonstrate their ability to recognize potential dangers, be familiar with how to operate a CMV safely at night and in extreme conditions, and know the causes of skidding and jackknifing and the techniques for avoiding and recovering from them.

A3.1	Vehicle Controls Including: Left Turns, Right Turns, Lane Changes, Curves at Highway Speeds, and Entry and Exit on the Interstate or Controlled Access Highway
A3.2	Shifting/Transmission
A3.3	Communications/Signaling
A3.4	Visual Search
A3.5	Speed and Space Management
A3.6	Safe Driver Behavior
A3.7	Hours of Service (HOS) Requirements
A3.8	Hazard Perception
A3.9	Railroad (RR)-Highway Grade Crossing
A3.10	Night Operation
A3.11	Extreme Driving Conditions
A3.12	Skid Control/Recovery, Jackknifing, and Other Emergencies

Notes *BTW training must be conducted in a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) for which a Class A CDL is required.*

Consistent with the definitions of BTW range training and BTW public road training in § 380.605, a simulation device may not be used to conduct training or to demonstrate proficiency.