

1 SENATE BILL NO. 47  
2 INTRODUCED BY T. MANZELLA  
3 BY REQUEST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
4

5 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE LAW TO COMPLY  
6 WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS; REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO QUERY THE ENTRY-  
7 LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING PROVIDER REGISTRY AND THE COMMERCIAL DRUG AND ALCOHOL  
8 CLEARINGHOUSE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS; REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT TO TAKE CERTAIN  
9 ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF REQUIRED QUERIES; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AMENDING  
10 SECTION SECTIONS 61-5-110 AND 61-14-202, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE  
11 A DELAYED EFFECTIVE DATE EFFECTIVE DATES."  
12

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:  
14

15 NEW SECTION. SECTION 1. ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING -- REQUIREMENTS -- RESPONSIBILITIES OF  
16 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. (1) THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:

17 (A) SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM, INCLUDING THEORY  
18 AND BEHIND-THE-WHEEL TRAINING, THAT COMPLIES WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASS A AND CLASS B  
19 COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES, EXCLUDING ENDORSEMENTS;

20 (B) SHALL MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC THE ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM PROVIDED FOR  
21 IN SUBSECTION (1)(A);

22 (C) MAY UTILIZE VARIOUS FORMATS OF ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAININGS, INCLUDING IN-PERSON TRAINING  
23 AND ASYNCHRONOUS OR SYNCHRONOUS VIRTUAL TRAINING; AND

24 (D) MAY COORDINATE WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES OR ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT  
25 ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING.

26 (2) AN ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
27 MUST INCLUDE USE OF FACILITIES, VEHICLES, AND INSTRUCTORS SUFFICIENT TO ISSUE A COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S  
28 LICENSE.

1           (3) THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MAY ESTABLISH RULES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
2 ADMINISTRATION OF AN ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM.

3

4           **Section 2.** Section 61-5-110, MCA, is amended to read:

5           **"61-5-110. Records check of applicants -- examination of applicants -- cooperative driver**  
6 **testing programs -- reciprocal agreement with foreign country.** (1) ~~(a)~~ Prior to examining an applicant for a  
7 driver's license, the department shall conduct a check of the applicant's driving record by querying the national  
8 driver register, established under 49 U.S.C. 30302, and the commercial driver's license information system,  
9 established under 49 U.S.C. 31309.

10           ~~(b) (i) The department shall conduct an electronic query to the entry-level driver training provider~~  
11 ~~registry for a nonexempt commercial driver's license applicant prior to:~~

12           ~~(A) administering a commercial driver's license skills test for a class A or class B commercial~~  
13 ~~driver's license or for a passenger or school bus endorsement;~~

14           ~~(B) upgrading from a class B commercial driver's license to a class A commercial driver's license;~~  
15 ~~or~~

16           ~~(C) administering a knowledge test for a hazardous materials endorsement.~~

17           ~~(ii) The department may not act under subsection (1)(b)(i) when the entry-level driver training~~  
18 ~~provider registry does not validate that the nonexempt applicant completed the requisite entry-level driver~~  
19 ~~training.~~

20           ~~(c) Beginning November 18, 2024, prior to issuing, renewing, transferring, or upgrading a~~  
21 ~~commercial driver's license or a commercial learner's permit, the department shall conduct a check of the~~  
22 ~~applicant's eligibility by electronically querying the commercial drug and alcohol clearinghouse. The department~~  
23 ~~may not issue, renew, transfer, or upgrade a commercial driver's license or commercial learner's permit when~~  
24 ~~the result from the clearinghouse indicates the driver is prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle.~~

25           ~~(d) On receiving notification that, pursuant to 49 CFR 382.501(a), as in effect on November 15,~~  
26 ~~2022, the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license holder is prohibited from operating a~~  
27 ~~commercial motor vehicle, the department shall initiate established procedures for downgrading the commercial~~  
28 ~~learner's permit or commercial driver's license. The downgrade must be completed and recorded on the~~

1 ~~commercial driver's license system driver record within 60 days of the notification.~~

2 ~~(i) If, prior to the department completing and recording the downgrade on the commercial driver's~~  
3 ~~license system driver record, the department receives notification that, pursuant to 49 CFR 382.503(a), as in~~  
4 ~~effect on November 15, 2022, the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license holder is no longer~~  
5 ~~prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle, the department shall terminate the downgrade process~~  
6 ~~without removing the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license privilege from the driver's~~  
7 ~~license.~~

8 ~~(ii) If, after the department completes and records the downgrade on the commercial driver's~~  
9 ~~license system driver record, the department receives federal motor carrier safety administration notification~~  
10 ~~that, pursuant to 49 CFR 382.503(a), as in effect on November 15, 2022, a driver is no longer prohibited from~~  
11 ~~operating a commercial motor vehicle, the department shall make the driver eligible for reinstatement of the~~  
12 ~~commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license privilege to the driver's license.~~

13 ~~(iii) If, after the department completes and records the downgrade on the commercial driver's~~  
14 ~~license system driver record, the department receives federal motor carrier safety administration notification~~  
15 ~~that the driver was erroneously identified as prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle, the~~  
16 ~~department shall:~~

17 ~~(A) reinstate the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license privilege to the driver's~~  
18 ~~license as expeditiously as possible; and~~

19 ~~(B) expunge from the commercial driver's license system driver record and motor vehicle record~~  
20 ~~any reference related to the driver's erroneous prohibited status.~~

21 (2) (a) The department shall examine each applicant for a driver's license or motorcycle  
22 endorsement, except as otherwise provided in this section. The examination must include a test of the  
23 applicant's eyesight, a knowledge test examining the applicant's ability to read and understand highway signs  
24 and the applicant's knowledge of the traffic laws of this state, and, except as provided in 61-5-118, a road test  
25 or a skills test demonstrating the applicant's ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the safe  
26 operation of a motor vehicle or motorcycle. The road test or skills test must be performed by the applicant in a  
27 motor vehicle that the applicant certifies is representative of the class and type of motor vehicle for which the  
28 applicant is seeking a license or endorsement.

- 1 (b) The knowledge test, road test, or skills test may be waived by the department:  
2 (i) upon certification of the applicant's successful completion of the test by a certified cooperative  
3 driver testing program as provided in subsection ~~(3)~~ (4) or by a certified third-party commercial driver testing  
4 program as provided in 61-5-118; or  
5 (ii) in accordance with a driver's license reciprocity agreement between the department and a  
6 foreign country.  
7 (c) The skills test may be waived by the department upon the applicant's completion of the  
8 requirements of 61-5-123.

9 (3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, PURSUANT TO ADMINISTRATIVE RULE AUTHORITY GRANTED IN 61-14-202(4),  
10 (5), AND (6), CONDUCT RECORDS CHECKS PRIOR TO PROCESSING A NONEXEMPT COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE  
11 APPLICATION AND PRIOR TO RENEWING, TRANSFERRING, OR UPGRADING A COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE OR  
12 COMMERCIAL LEARNER'S PERMIT, AND SHALL ACT IN CONFORMITY WITH THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION PROVIDED IN 61-  
13 14-202(5) AND (6) UPON RECEIVING RESULTS FROM RECORDS CHECKS. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL IMPLEMENT THE  
14 ADMINISTRATIVE RULES ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2024.

15 ~~(3)~~(4) The department is authorized to certify as a cooperative driver testing program any state-  
16 approved high school traffic education course offered by or in cooperation with a school district that employs an  
17 approved instructor who has current endorsement from the superintendent of public instruction as a teacher of  
18 traffic education or any motorcycle safety training course approved by the board of regents and that employs an  
19 approved instructor of motorcycle safety training and who agrees to:

20 (a) administer standardized knowledge and road tests or skills tests required by the department to  
21 students participating in the district's high school traffic education courses or motorcycle safety training courses  
22 approved by the board of regents;

23 (b) certify the test results to the department; and

24 (c) comply with regulations of the department, the superintendent of public instruction, and the  
25 board of regents.

26 ~~(4)~~(5) (a) Except as otherwise provided by law, an applicant who has a valid driver's license issued by  
27 another jurisdiction may surrender that license for a Montana license of the same class, type, and endorsement  
28 upon payment of the required fees and successful completion of a vision examination. In addition, an applicant

1 surrendering a commercial driver's license issued by another jurisdiction shall successfully complete any  
2 examination required by federal regulations before being issued a commercial driver's license by the  
3 department.

4 (b) The department may require an applicant who surrenders a valid driver's license issued by  
5 another jurisdiction to submit to a knowledge and road or skills test if:

6 (i) the applicant has a physical or mental disability, limitation, or condition that impairs, or may  
7 impair, the applicant's ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the safe operation of a motor  
8 vehicle on the highway; and

9 (ii) the surrendered license does not include readily discernible adaptive equipment or operational  
10 restrictions appropriate to the applicant's functional abilities; or

11 (iii) the applicant wants to remove or modify a restriction imposed on the surrendered license.

12 (c) When a license from another jurisdiction is surrendered, the department shall notify the issuing  
13 agency from the other jurisdiction that the applicant has surrendered the license. If the applicant wants to retain  
14 the license from another jurisdiction for identification or other nondriving purposes, the department shall place a  
15 distinctive mark on the license, indicating that the license may be used for nondriving purposes only, and return  
16 the marked license to the applicant.

17 ~~(5)(6)~~ The department may enter into a reciprocity agreement with a foreign country to provide for the  
18 mutual recognition and exchange of a valid driver's license issued by this state or the foreign country if the  
19 department determines that the licensing standards of the foreign country are comparable to those of this state.  
20 The agreement may not include the reciprocal exchange of a commercial driver's license."

21

22 **SECTION 3. SECTION 61-14-202, MCA, IS AMENDED TO READ:**

23 **"61-14-202. Rulemaking authority -- commercial driver licensing.** (1) The department shall adopt  
24 rules governing the classification of commercial driver's licenses and related endorsements and the  
25 examination of commercial driver's license applicants and renewal applicants that the department considers  
26 necessary for the safety and welfare of the traveling public. The rules must:

27 (a) subject to the department's functional and vision requirements, conform to the licensing  
28 standards and requirements of 49 CFR, part 383, the medical qualification of 49 CFR, part 391, and the

1 security threat assessment provisions of 49 CFR, part 1572, UNLESS A WAIVER FROM A LICENSING STANDARD OR  
2 REQUIREMENT HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION;

3 (b) allow for the issuance of an interstate commercial driver's license;

4 (c) allow for the issuance of an intrastate-only commercial driver's license, including the  
5 establishment of medical qualification and visual acuity standards;

6 (D) UPON RECEIVING A WAIVER FROM THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, ALLOW FOR THE  
7 ISSUANCE OF A SCHOOL BUS DRIVER ENDORSEMENT THAT WAIVES THE KNOWLEDGE TEST OR SKILLS TEST BASED ON  
8 COMPARABLE EXPERIENCE OF THE ENDORSEMENT CANDIDATE, AS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT;

9 ~~(d)~~(E) establish the requirement for the issuance of a seasonal commercial driver's license, including  
10 the waiver of the knowledge and skills test for a qualified person employed in a farm-related service industry;

11 ~~(e)~~(F) establish the operational and seasonal restrictions for a seasonal commercial driver's license;

12 ~~(f)~~(G) establish the requirements for the medical statement that must be submitted for a person to be  
13 qualified for a commercial driver's license; and

14 ~~(g)~~(H) allow for and establish the requirements for the issuance of a commercial learner's permit.

15 (2) The department shall adopt rules governing the minimum standards for certification of a third-  
16 party commercial driver testing program and any test waiver under 61-5-118 and governing the certification,  
17 operation, and monitoring of third-party skills testing programs. The rules must:

18 (a) substantially comply with the licensing standards and requirements of 49 CFR, part 383, and  
19 the state compliance standards of 49 CFR, part 384, including:

20 (i) issuance of a commercial driver's license skills testing certificate to a certified program upon  
21 execution of a third-party skills testing agreement;

22 (ii) requiring that all third-party skills test examiners meet minimum qualifications, including  
23 passing background checks paid for by the third-party testing program and successfully completing a formal  
24 skills test examiner training course;

25 (iii) providing examiner test limitations, minimum testing standards, and refresher training  
26 requirements; and

27 (iv) requiring recordkeeping and a detailed audit program that includes overt and covert test  
28 monitoring and onsite audits by state and federal personnel;

1 (b) specifically address the requirements for certifying third-party commercial driver testing  
2 programs, including place of business, appropriate bond and liability insurance, and facilities requirements; and

3 (c) specify minimum technology requirements for recordkeeping, scheduling applicants for the  
4 skills test, conducting the skills test, and electronically transferring skills test results to the department.

5 (3) The department shall adopt rules governing the waiver of knowledge and skills tests related to  
6 commercial vehicle operators with military experience as provided in 61-5-123.

7 (4) The department shall adopt rules governing the administration of a commercial driver's license  
8 skills test for a nonexempt applicant for a class A or class B commercial driver's license, for upgrading a  
9 commercial driver's license from class B to class A, and for obtaining a passenger or school bus endorsement  
10 and the administration of a knowledge test for a hazardous materials endorsement. The rules must provide:

11 (A) for the department conducting an electronic query to the entry-level driver training provider  
12 registry. The rules must provide:

13 (B) that the department may not conduct a skills test or hazardous materials endorsement  
14 knowledge test when the entry-level driver training provider registry does not validate that the nonexempt  
15 applicant completed the requisite entry-level driver training; AND

16 (C) THAT AN EXAMINER OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVER ENDORSEMENT CANDIDATES HAS HAD A COMMERCIAL  
17 DRIVER'S LICENSE ISSUED IN MONTANA IN THE LAST 10 YEARS AND HAS HAD AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE DRIVING  
18 A SCHOOL BUS IN MONTANA.

19 (5) The department shall adopt rules that provide that prior to issuing, renewing, transferring, or  
20 upgrading a commercial driver's license or commercial learner's permit, the department shall conduct a check  
21 of the applicant's eligibility by electronically querying the commercial drug and alcohol clearinghouse. The rules  
22 must provide that the department may not issue, renew, transfer, or upgrade a commercial driver's license or  
23 commercial learner's permit when the result from the clearinghouse indicates the driver is prohibited from  
24 operating a commercial motor vehicle.

25 (6) The department shall adopt rules that provide that upon receiving federal motor carrier safety  
26 administration notification that the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license holder is  
27 prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle, the department shall initiate established procedures for  
28 downgrading the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license. The rules must provide that

1 downgrade must be completed and recorded on the commercial driver's license system driver record within 60  
2 days of the notification. The rules must further provide that if, after the department completes and records the  
3 downgrade on the commercial driver's license system driver record, the department receives federal motor  
4 carrier safety administration notification that:

5 (a) a driver is no longer prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle, the department  
6 shall make the driver eligible for reinstatement of the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license  
7 privilege to the driver's license; and

8 (b) the driver was erroneously identified as prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle,  
9 the department shall:

10 (i) reinstate the commercial learner's permit or commercial driver's license privilege to the driver's  
11 license as expeditiously as possible; and

12 (ii) expunge from the commercial driver's license system driver record and motor vehicle record  
13 any reference related the driver's erroneous prohibited status."

14

15 ~~NEW SECTION. Section 2. — Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.~~

16

17 ~~NEW SECTION. SECTION 4. CODIFICATION INSTRUCTION. [SECTION 1] IS INTENDED TO BE CODIFIED AS AN~~  
18 ~~INTEGRAL PART OF TITLE 61, CHAPTER 5, PART 1, AND THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 61, CHAPTER 5, PART 1, APPLY TO~~  
19 ~~[SECTION 1].~~

20

21 ~~NEW SECTION. Section 5. **EFFECTIVE DATE DATES -- CONTINGENCY.** [THIS ACT] (1) EXCEPT AS~~  
22 ~~PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (2), [THIS ACT] IS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024 ON PASSAGE AND APPROVAL.~~

23 ~~(2) [SECTION 3(1)(D)] IS EFFECTIVE ON THE DATE THAT THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE~~  
24 ~~CERTIFIES TO THE CODE COMMISSIONER THAT THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS GRANTED A WAIVER~~  
25 ~~TO THE STATE UNDER [SECTION 3(1)(D)].~~

26

27 ~~NEW SECTION. SECTION 6. **APPLICABILITY.** A HOLDER OF A COMMERCIAL LEARNER'S PERMIT THAT WAS~~  
28 ~~ISSUED PRIOR TO THE ADOPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2024, PURSUANT TO [SECTION~~



1 2(3)] IS EXEMPT FROM THE ENTRY-LEVEL DRIVER TRAINING RECORDS CHECK REQUIREMENTS UNDER [SECTIONS 2(3)  
2 AND 3(4) THROUGH (6)] AS LONG AS THE PERMIT HOLDER OBTAINS A COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE PRIOR TO THE  
3 EXPIRATION, RENEWAL, OR EXTENSION OF THE COMMERCIAL LEARNER'S PERMIT.

4 - END -