

The Driver Training and Certification Process

This section outlines the driver training and certification process for new drivers certifying for the first time on EMS units, Brush Trucks, Engine, Trucks, Rescue Squads and Tankers.

License Requirements

Nationally, vehicles in excess of 26,001lbs GVWR or designed to carry 16 or more passengers require a commercial driver's license. In most jurisdictions, including Maryland and Virginia, firefighters are exempted from these requirements.

Part 383 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 49 governing commercial driver's licensing states:

§383.3 Applicability

(d) Exception for farmers, firefighters, emergency response vehicle drivers, and drivers removing snow and ice. *A State may, at its discretion, exempt individuals identified in paragraphs (d)(1), (d)(2), and (d)(3) of this section from the requirements of this part. The use of this waiver is limited to the driver's home State unless there is a reciprocity agreement with adjoining States.*

(2) *Firefighters and other persons who operate CMVs which are necessary to the preservation of life or property or the execution of emergency governmental functions, are equipped with audible and visual signals and are not subject to normal traffic regulation. These vehicles include fire trucks, hook and ladder trucks, foam or water transport trucks, police SWAT team vehicles, ambulances, or other vehicles that are used in response to emergencies.*

In Maryland, driver's licensing requirements and exemptions for emergency vehicle operators are addressed in Titles 11 and 16 of the Maryland Transportation Code. A member or employee of a fire department, rescue squad, emergency medical services unit, or volunteer fire company while driving an emergency vehicle is exempted from commercial driver's licensing requirements if the driver:

1. Holds a valid Class C license issued to the driver;
2. Has been authorized by the political subdivision that operates a fire department, rescue squad, emergency medical services unit, or volunteer fire department to operate the type of emergency vehicle being driven; and
3. Is driving the emergency vehicle in the performance of the official duties of the driver in or out of this State.

In conjunction with the Maryland regulations, MCFRS authorizes drivers using the guidance provided in Policy 23-07AMII Driver Certification Procedure effective March 1, 2007. Personnel need to be familiar with the specific requirements of that policy.

DRIVING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Per Policy 23-07AMII, each type of medium and heavy vehicle has a certification checklist that verifies both pre-requisites for entering trainee status and required training that must be completed to be certified to drive/operate specific breeds or types of apparatus. The certification process includes formal courses, written assignments, and station-level tasks. Prior to practical testing and emergency responses, the Trainee must have all competencies, written assignments, and routine driving hours completed

as outlined in their Trainee book. LFRD personnel are typically subject to the processes established by their respective organizations and approved by their Fire Chief or a designee. LFRD may also elect to utilize the process followed by the career staff.

Upon completion of all requirements, the Certification Checklist indicates the appropriate distribution of documentation. Prior to distribution, personnel should make copies of all documentation related to their process for their own records. Officers, mentors, and evaluators all verify by their signatures or initials that a Trainee has satisfactorily completed a task or test.

As with all written reference material, organizational and apparatus changes periodically require revisions. *It is the responsibility of the Trainee to maintain their reference material.* The Driver Training Apparatus Books & Class Materials web page is the source for current competencies, written assignments, training supplements, and practical application guide sheets.

Driver Training Course Pre-Requisites

Both courses for heavy apparatus operators have prerequisite requirements that candidates should address prior to attempting to register:

	EVO Class B	EVO Class A
Prior to close of registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be IECS certified Firefighter II • PSTA transcript must display successful completion of Pump Operator, Aerial Operator, or both Rescue Technician Courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be IECS certified Firefighter II • PSTA transcript must display successful completion of Aerial Operator Course
Prior to the first session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be at least 20 years of age • Student must possess a valid non-provisional Maryland Class "C" driver's license or out-of-state equivalent • Student must be a certified EMS Transport Unit driver for 1 year • PIMS or PCAP must display a membership or hire date with MCFRS at least 2 years prior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be at least 20 years of age • Student must possess a valid non-provisional Maryland Class "C" driver's license or out-of-state equivalent • Student must be a certified Class B apparatus driver for 1 year • PIMS or PCAP must display a membership or hire date with MCFRS at least 3 years prior

These requirements are subject to change and personnel should always check the course announcement and/or the Driver Training website to ensure they have the current information.

Training Documentation

EMS Transport Units, Engines, Aerials, Rescue Squads, Tankers, and Brush Trucks each have a Trainee book to package the materials necessary for a Trainee to complete their certification process. Trainees are responsible for managing and maintaining their documentation until their process is complete. They are encouraged to maintain copies

of any completed documents and augment these books as they research topics related to each apparatus. The books are a basis for the start of a member's driving experience with the member continuing to build their knowledge throughout their time in the fire service.

Specialty vehicles, such as support units, command posts, and trailers, typically have a certification process that requires completion of competencies in station under the supervision of the station officer or their designee.

Public Roadway Training Log

Documentation of the necessary non-emergency driving is completed using the Public Roadway Training Log. Each log must reflect at least the minimum number of routine driving hours required of the Trainee before practical testing will be completed.

Driving Behavior Evaluations

Associated with the Public Roadway Training Log is the Road Driving Behavior Evaluation Form. These are required to document the application of desirable behaviors and offer the Trainee feedback to improve their performance in both non-emergency and emergency driving situations. When completing non-emergency driving requirements, one evaluation is generally required for at least every 2 hours of driving. Evaluation may occur more frequently as mentors see fit or as necessary to provide corrective feedback to the Trainee. During the emergency driving phase of training, this form is used to document each individual response that counts toward final certification.

Training Competencies

Each type of apparatus has a set of core knowledge and skills competencies that Trainees must complete. The majority of the competencies are designed to be in-station activities led by mentors at the station. These activities must be validated by the instructor or mentor by dating and initialing each competency. All competencies must be completed before practical testing is administered and will be validated by the Driver Training Program evaluator.

Written Assignment

Written assignments contained within each Trainee book are intended to reinforce key topics and encourage Trainees to research materials related to the apparatus. They also offer a sense of the scope of any written exam associated with the apparatus. These assignments must be graded by an in-station mentor and will be reviewed by the Driver Training Program evaluator prior to practical testing.

Area Knowledge

Trainees are required to pass an area knowledge exam developed and delivered at the station. Successful completion of this exam requires a score of 70% or higher. The exam is specific to the response area of the Trainee's assigned apparatus. For Trainees on temporary assignment to complete their process, the Area Knowledge exam is to cover the response district of the apparatus at the temporary assignment.

Personnel completing the MCFR EMS Transport Unit process must also complete a general area knowledge exam that is included in the Trainee book.

Each type of apparatus requires an area knowledge exam. The area knowledge exam must be 25 questions that can be a combination of streets, buildings, hospitals or geographic locations and may include locations outside of a station's first due area. Each type of unit that is assigned to a station must have its own distinct and separate area knowledge exam. For example, a station that has an EMS unit, Engine, Aerial, or Rescue Squad would have area knowledge for each type of unit. The exceptions to this requirement are Tankers and Brush Trucks. Station commanders in consultation with the other shift officer's and LFRD Driver Training Coordinator must develop the area of knowledge exams and ensure that all driver trainees complete the required area knowledge exam. The area knowledge exam requirement must be completed and graded at the station by a mentor and will be reviewed by the Driver Training Program evaluator prior to administering a practical exam.

Training Supplements

The Training Supplement section of each Trainee book provides information specific to the type of apparatus and applicable MCFRS procedures. The Driver Training Knowledgebase web page offers further information that Trainees may find useful.

Practical Application Guide Sheets

Practical Application Guide Sheets (PAGS) outline recommended procedures, critical tasks, and offer a step-by-step sequence to common tasks associated with driving or operating apparatus. They offer a baseline for uniformity and consistency among operators. PAGS do not cover all competencies or possible tasks operators may be required to perform during their career. PAGS are utilized by Driver Training Program evaluators for assessing Trainees during practical exams.

FORMAL EXAMINATIONS

Written Examination

The following written exams are conducted at the Public Safety Training Academy:

- EMS Transport Unit
- EMS Transport Unit – Territory & County Familiarity Exam
- Engine
- Aerial – includes Aerial Ladder, Aerial Tower, and Tractor-Drawn Aerial
- Rescue Squad

Brush Truck written exams are conducted at the station on the same day as the practical exam. The Driver Training Program evaluator will provide the exam.

There is no written exam for Tanker Trainees.

Written examinations are typically administered on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 0900 hours. Actual test dates are posted online at the Driver Training Exams web page. Trainees must contact Driver Training Program administrators via email to reserve a seat at the exam. Exams are taken while off-duty without compensation with exceptions only in extenuating circumstances as approved by the Operations Division.

Trainees must bring their own writing utensils and the use of electronic devices (including calculators) is not permitted during the exam. Trainees must achieve a score of 70% or higher to pass. Persons failing the written exam must wait at least 30 days before re-testing. Trainees generally have one year from the date of their written exam to complete their process or they may be required to take the written exam again. Exceptions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Written exams may be multiple choice or short answer or a combination. Some exams require basic mathematics such as those required during Pump Operations courses.

Written exam content is assembled from numerous sources, including but not limited to, the Trainee book contents, MCFRS policy or directives, applicable State or Federal regulation, and PSTA or MFRI course materials. While not mandatory, Trainees are highly encouraged to complete the written assignments and competencies in their books prior to attempting a written exam.

Practical Examinations

Practical examinations are administered while Trainees are on duty. With the exception of Tankers and Brush Trucks, the exams are conducted at the Public Safety Training Academy.

Due to the logistics involved, practical exam requests must be routed to the Driver Training Program through the station officer. Requests are not accepted directly from the Trainee.

On the day of testing, the evaluator will validate the Trainee's completion of all necessary pre-requisite materials, i.e. competencies, written assignments, non-emergency driving. Any failure to complete the in-station materials prior to the date of the exam will result in cancellation of the test.

Trainees must achieve a score of 70% or higher and not trigger any critical fail points to pass. Persons failing the practical exam must wait at least 30 days before re-testing. In the event of a re-test, the scope and location of the re-test will be at the discretion of the Driver Training Program Manager.

Practical examinations are based upon the current PAGS for that type of apparatus with Driver Training Program evaluators retaining discretionary authority over the full scope of the testing. Exams are conducted using the most updated PAGS, therefore Trainees must ensure their materials are current by periodically visiting the Driver Training Apparatus Books & Class Material web page.