



REQUIREMENTS TO DRIVE A SCHOOL BUS IN ALABAMA
HOW TO GET AN ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION



Anyone twenty-one years old or older wishing to drive a school bus in the state of Alabama must obtain a **Commercial Driver License (CDL)** issued by the Alabama Department of Public Safety (DPS) and an **Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate** issued by the Alabama Department of Education.

HOW TO GET A CDL

In order to receive a CDL to drive a school bus, a prospective school bus driver must secure a Third Party Tester Form. This form can be secured from any CDL office in Alabama. The form is given to drivers who do not currently hold a CDL, need to upgrade their CDL, or need to add passenger (P) or school bus (S) endorsements. In order to be issued this form, prospective school bus drivers must pass four written CDL tests at the CDL office. These tests include General Knowledge, Air Brakes, Transporting Passengers, and School Buses.

Study materials for these four tests can be found in the Alabama Commercial Driver License Manual. This manual can be secured from any local driver license office or any CDL office. In preparation for the four tests noted above, the prospective driver should study sections 1-5 and section 10 in the CDL manual. There is a fee for taking the written tests. There is no fee for performance testing. Upon passing these written tests, the prospective driver will be issued the Third Party Tester Form. **The prospective driver must bring this form to the SDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class.**

HOW TO GET AN ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATE

In order to receive an Alabama School Bus Driver certificate, a prospective school bus driver must meet the following requirements:

1. Receive a minimum of 4 hours training from local school system transportation officials **before** enrollment in the SDE School Bus Driver Certification Class. For prospective Covington County Schools drivers contact Jerry Merrill at 334-222-3624 to set up training. Only drivers who receive this training and produce a properly signed training certification form will be scheduled for performance testing.
2. Attend a 12-hour SDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class taught over a period of three days. Normally, a portion of a fourth day is required for performance testing.
3. Score at least 80% on a written test given at the conclusion of the three-day class.
4. Pass a three-part performance test including:
 - (A) Pretrip inspection of a school bus with at least 80% mastery.
 - (B) Basic Control Skills Tests. These are backing and forward stop-line test.
 - (C) On-the-road Driving Skills Test with at least 80% mastery.

In order to enroll in an SDE class and be performance tested, all prospective drivers must be assigned to the SDE new driver class by a local school system transportation supervisor. **All CDL performance testing for school bus drivers is done by the SDE.**

HOW TO KEEP AN ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATE

In order to maintain their school bus driver certification, school bus drivers are required to participate in a 4-hour recertification class. These classes are scheduled in all school systems and are taught between January 1 and October 31 annually. **All bus driver certificates expire annually on December 31.** Drivers who have attended a recertification class are issued an Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate for the next calendar year. Drivers who fail to attend a recertification class must repeat the new driver training. An Alabama School bus driver may have his/her Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate suspended and/or revoked when there is a danger to the public safety or welfare of school children or when the certificate holder has been guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, confirmed improper drug use, criminal convictions, failure to use the driver seat belt, unsafe driving history, being uninsurable, or other just cause as determined by the state superintendent of education.

WHO TO CONTACT

Anyone wishing to drive a school bus in Alabama should contact the local system transportation coordinator. For Covington County Schools one should contact Donnie L. Franklin, Transportation Supervisor, at 334-222-7571 or 334-222-3624.