

§ 20-37.13. Commercial drivers license qualification standards.

(a) No person shall be issued a commercial drivers license unless the person meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Is a resident of this State.
- (2) Is 21 years of age.
- (3) Has passed a knowledge test and a skills test for driving a commercial motor vehicle that comply with minimum federal standards established by federal regulation enumerated in 49 C.F.R., Part 383, Subparts F, G, and H.
- (4) Has satisfied all other requirements of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act in addition to other requirements of this Chapter or federal regulation.
- (5) Has held a commercial learner's permit for a minimum of 14 days.

For the purpose of skills testing and determining commercial drivers license classification, only the manufacturer's GVWR shall be used.

The tests shall be prescribed and conducted by the Division. Provided, a person who is at least 18 years of age may be issued a commercial drivers license if the person is exempt from, or not subject to, the age requirements of the federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations contained in 49 C.F.R., Part 391, as adopted by the Division.

(b) The Division may permit a person, including an agency of this or another state, an employer, a private driver training facility, or an agency of local government, to administer the skills test specified by this section, provided:

- (1) The test is the same as that administered by the Division; and
- (2) The third party has entered into an agreement with the Division which complies with the requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 383.75. The Division may charge a fee to applicants for third-party testing authority in order to investigate the applicants' qualifications and to monitor their program as required by federal law.

(b1) The Division shall allow a third party to administer a skills test for driving a commercial motor vehicle pursuant to subsection (b) of this section any day of the week.

(c) Prior to October 1, 1992, the Division may waive the skills test for applicants licensed at the time they apply for a commercial drivers license if:

- (1) For an application submitted by April 1, 1992, the applicant has not, and certifies that he or she has not, at any time during the two years immediately preceding the date of application done any of the following and for an application submitted after April 1, 1992, the applicant has not, and certifies that he or she has not, at any time during the two years preceding April 1, 1992:
 - a. Had more than one drivers license, except during the 10-day period beginning on the date he or she is issued a drivers license, or unless, prior to December 31, 1989, he or she was required to have more than one license by a State law enacted prior to June 1, 1986;
 - b. Had any drivers license or driving privilege suspended, revoked, or cancelled;
 - c. Had any convictions involving any kind of motor vehicle for the offenses listed in G.S. 20-17 or had any convictions for the offenses listed in G.S. 20-17.4;
 - d. Been convicted of a violation of State or local laws relating to motor vehicle traffic control, other than a parking violation, which violation arose in connection with any reportable traffic accident; or
 - e. Refused to take a chemical test when charged with an implied consent offense, as defined in G.S. 20-16.2; and

- (2) The applicant certifies, and provides satisfactory evidence, that he or she is regularly employed in a job requiring the operation of a commercial motor vehicle, and he or she either:
 - a. Has previously taken and successfully completed a skills test that was administered by a state with a classified licensing and testing system and the test was behind the wheel in a vehicle representative of the class and, if applicable, the type of commercial motor vehicle for which the applicant seeks to be licensed; or
 - b. Has operated for the relevant two-year period under subpart (1)a. of this subsection, a vehicle representative of the class and, if applicable, the type of commercial motor vehicle for which the applicant seeks to be licensed.

(c1) The Division may waive the skills test for any qualified military applicant at the time the applicant applies for a commercial drivers license if the applicant is currently licensed at the time of application and meets all of the following:

- (1) The applicant has passed all required written knowledge exams.
- (2) The applicant has not, and certifies that the applicant has not, at any time during the two years immediately preceding the date of application done any of the following:
 - a. Had any drivers license or driving privilege suspended, revoked, or cancelled.
 - b. Had any convictions involving any kind of motor vehicle for the offenses listed in G.S. 20-17 or had any convictions for the offenses listed in G.S. 20-17.4.
 - c. Been convicted of a violation of military, State, or local laws relating to motor vehicle traffic control, other than a parking violation, which violation arose in connection with any reportable traffic accident.
 - d. Refused to take a chemical test when charged with an implied consent offense, as defined in G.S. 20-16.2.
 - e. Had more than one drivers license, except for a drivers license issued by the military.
- (3) The applicant certifies, and provides satisfactory evidence on the date of application, that the applicant is a retired, discharged, or current member of an active or reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States and is regularly employed or was regularly employed within the one-year period immediately preceding the date of application in a military position requiring the operation of a commercial motor vehicle, and the applicant meets either of the following requirements:
 - a. Repealed by Session Laws 2013-201, s. 1, effective June 26, 2013.
 - b. Has operated for the two-year period immediately preceding the date of application a vehicle representative of the class and, if applicable, the type of commercial motor vehicle for which the applicant seeks to be licensed, and has taken and successfully completed a skills test administered by the military.
 - c. For an applicant who is a retired or discharged member of an active or reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States, the applicant (i) has operated for the two-year period immediately preceding the date of retirement or discharge a vehicle representative of the class and, if applicable, the type of commercial motor vehicle for which the applicant seeks to be licensed, and has taken and

successfully completed a skills test administered by the military, (ii) has retired or received either an honorable or general discharge, and (iii) has retired or been discharged from the Armed Forces within the one-year period immediately preceding the date of application.

(c2) The one-year period referenced in subdivision (3) of subsection (c1) of this section applies unless a different period is provided by federal law. An applicant may provide his or her Form DD 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," and his or her drivers license issued by the military, to satisfy the certification required by subdivision (3) of subsection (c1) of this section. An applicant who is retired or discharged must provide a drivers license issued by the military that was valid at the time of his or her retirement or discharge when using the process in this subsection to satisfy the certification required by subdivision (3) of subsection (c1) of this section.

(c3) The Division may waive the knowledge and skills test for a qualified military applicant who has been issued a military license that authorizes the holder to operate a motor vehicle representative of the class and endorsements for which the applicant seeks to be licensed. The applicant must certify and provide satisfactory evidence on the date of application that the applicant meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) The applicant is a current or former member of an active or reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States and was issued a military license that authorized the applicant to operate a vehicle that is representative of the class and type of commercial motor vehicle for which the applicant seeks to be licensed and whose military occupational specialty or rating are eligible for waiver, as allowed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.
- (2) The applicant is or was, within the year prior to the date of application, regularly employed in a military position requiring operation of a motor vehicle representative of the class of commercial motor vehicle for which the applicant seeks to be licensed.
- (3) The applicant meets the qualifications listed in subdivision (2) of subsection (c1) of this section.

(d) A commercial drivers license or learner's permit shall not be issued to a person while the person is subject to a disqualification from driving a commercial motor vehicle, or while the person's drivers license is suspended, revoked, or cancelled in any state; nor shall a commercial drivers license be issued unless the person who has applied for the license first surrenders all other drivers licenses issued by the Division or by another state. If a person surrenders a drivers license issued by another state, the Division must return the license to the issuing state for cancellation.

(e) A commercial learner's permit may be issued to an individual who holds a regular Class C drivers license and has passed the knowledge test for the class and type of commercial motor vehicle the individual will be driving. The permit is valid for a period not to exceed 180 days. The fee for a commercial driver learner's permit is the same as the fee set by G.S. 20-7 for a regular learner's permit.

(f) Notwithstanding subsection (e) of this section, a commercial driver learner's permit with a P or S endorsement shall not be issued to any person who is required to register under Article 27A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.

(g) The issuance of a commercial driver learner's permit is a precondition to the initial issuance of a commercial drivers license. The issuance of a commercial driver learner's permit is also a precondition to the upgrade of a commercial drivers license if the upgrade requires a skills test.

(h) The Division shall promptly notify any driver who fails to meet the medical certification requirements in accordance with 49 C.F.R. § 383.71. The Division shall give the

driver 60 days to comply with the commercial drivers license medical certification requirements. If the driver fails to comply within the period allowed, the Division shall automatically downgrade a commercial drivers license to a class C regular drivers license. (1989, c. 771, s. 2; 1991, c. 726, s. 16; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 916, s. 1; 2005-349, s. 8; 2009-274, s. 4; 2009-491, s. 5; 2009-494, s. 1; 2011-183, s. 22; 2013-195, s. 1; 2013-201, s. 1; 2014-115, s. 28.5(a), (b); 2015-115, s. 1; 2016-90, s. 6(b); 2018-74, s. 9(a); 2024-30, s. 15(c).)