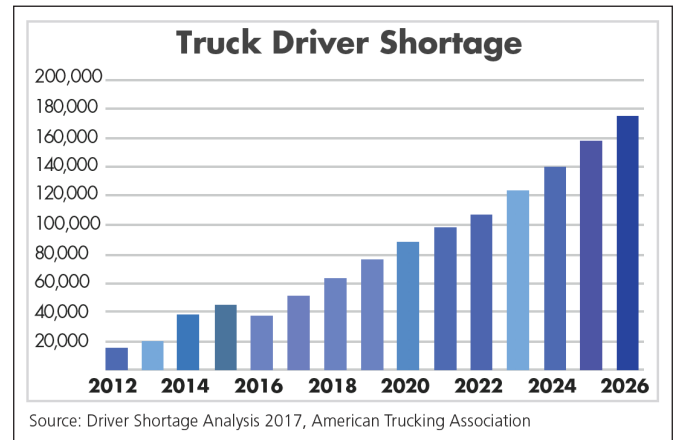


# Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) Regulations

Hiring qualified new drivers is one of the most important and challenging elements of a good fleet program. Nationally, the driver shortage is predicted (per American Trucking Association) to be 150,000 in 2021, 160,000 in 2022, and 170,000 by 2024. The need for qualified CDL drivers will continue to increase as we progress to 2030. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has been reviewing this shortage and the pressures it's put on motor carriers. They developed new entry level driver training regulations (ELDT).



*Figure 1 Projected driver shortage from analysis by American Trucking Association*

## What is the entry level driver regulation?

The purpose of the ELDT is to provide a standardized training curriculum (classroom and on-the-road training). In addition, it provides the FMCSA's Training Provider Registry. The registry can be used as a clearing house for fleet managers to access a new driver's training history, and to determine if their instructor was registered. The original implementation date was February 7, 2020; however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this has been extended to February 7, 2022.

## Summary of new standard:

Go to <https://tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov/> to find approved trainers and training centers.

### 1) Classroom or Theory Instruction

The new curriculum will be required to cover the five objectives:

- Basic operation
- Safe operation procedures
- Advanced operating procedures
- Vehicle systems and reporting malfunctions
- Non-driving activities

There's no minimum number of hours required on theory (classroom) instruction; however, the instructor must document competency in each objective.

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## 2) Road Instruction

Range and public road instruction must be conducted in the type and class of commercial motor vehicle the trainee will be driving.

Skills that should be included in this training:

- Vehicle inspection
- Backing skills
- Coupling and uncoupling
- Right and left turns
- Lane changes
- Curves at highway speed
- Entry and exit on interstate and or controlled access highways

The new rule now requires the instructor to determine and document that each driver-trainee has demonstrated proficiency in all elements behind the wheel. In addition, they must document the total clock hours each driver-trainee spends to complete the behind-the-wheel curriculum.

This applies to individuals who are:

1. Applying for their commercial driver's license (CDL) for the first time
2. Applying for an upgrade of their CDL (e.g., a Class B CDL holder seeking a Class A CDL)
3. Applying for a hazardous material (H), passenger (P), or school bus (S) endorsement for the first time

This has taken the burden of compliance and monitoring from the carriers and placed it on the training companies. If driver training is performed in house, however, compliance is still the carrier's responsibility.

Though documentation of training compliance has shifted to trainers and training centers, there are still concerns for fleet managers and business owners. They should ensure the new standards are reflected in or implemented into:

1. Your hiring practices. They should be used and documented in the application, screening, and interview process.
2. Driver files. Files should contain documentation of compliance of the new standards.
3. In-house training. If provided, these standards should be adopted, implemented, and documented into your fleet program.