

Driver Qualification File Checklist

[49 CFR 391](#) explains the minimum requirements for commercial motor vehicle drivers. Motor carriers are required to maintain a [Qualification File](#) for each of their drivers. The following checklist will help you ensure that each driver qualification file is complete. This file must be completed within 30 days of hire.

✓	Form/Inquiry/Note to Include	Must Retain Document For
Initial DQ File Documents	<p>Driver’s Application for Employment — 49 CFR 391.21(b1-12)</p> <p>A person shall not drive a commercial motor vehicle unless he/she has completed and furnished the motor carrier that employs him/her with an application for employment that meets the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section.</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>(DACH) Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse — 49 CFR Part 40 & 382</p> <p>Employers are required to query the Clearinghouse for current and prospective employees' drug and alcohol violations before permitting those employees to operate a CMV on public roads. The initial query must be a pre-employment full query that requires the driver to be registered and provide consent through the clearinghouse portal. This report must be accepted by the driver, and it must report “NOT PROHIBITED”.</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Safety Performance History Records Request — 49 CFR 391.23(g)(1)</p> <p>Carriers must investigate the driver's safety performance history and employment record during the preceding three years. This investigation must be completed within 30 days of the date employment begins. Carrier must retain a record of the request and all response documentation.</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Road Test Certificate or Equivalent — 49 CFR 391.31(a) 49 CFR 391.33(a)(1)</p> <p>Except as provided in subpart G, a person shall not drive a commercial motor vehicle unless he/she has first successfully completed a road test and has been issued a certificate of driver's road test in accordance with this section. In place of, and as equivalent to, the road test required by § 391.31, a person who seeks to drive a commercial motor vehicle may present, and a motor carrier may accept— A valid Commercial Driver's License as defined in § 383.5 of this subchapter,</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Medical Examination Report and Medical Examiner’s Certificate — 49 CFR 391.43</p> <p>All commercial drivers are required to pass a physical exam conducted by a licensed medical examiner at least once every 24 months. The carrier must retain a copy of this certificate. For CDL drivers; the carrier must retain a copy of the CDLIS motor vehicle record, which contains the examination information.</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Employer note verifying that medical examiner is listed on National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners — CDL drivers: 49 CFR 391.51(b)(9)(ii)</p> <p>A note must be included in the driver’s qualification file to verify that the medical examiner is listed and current on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners.</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination

	<p>Hours of Service Statement — CFR 395.8(j)(2)</p> <p>Motor carriers, when using a driver for the first time or intermittently, shall obtain from the driver a signed statement giving the total time on duty during the immediately preceding 7 days and the time at which the driver was last relieved from duty prior to beginning work for the motor carriers. The driver must certify their 7 prior days on the day they start performing a safety sensitive function</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Inquiry To State Agencies for 3-Year Driving Record — 49 CFR 391.23(a)(1) and (b)</p> <p>Carriers must contact State agencies for the driver’s MVR for the past three years. Request must be made within 30 days of hire. MVR must be kept in the driver’s qualification file, and updated annually. See “Review of Driving Record” entry below.</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Pre-employment Drug Testing — 49 CFR 382.301(a)</p> <p>Prior to the first time a driver performs safety-sensitive functions for an employer, the driver shall undergo testing for controlled substances as a condition prior to being used, unless the employer uses the exception in paragraph (b) of this section. No employer shall allow a driver, who the employer intends to hire or use, to perform safety-sensitive functions unless the employer has received a controlled substances test result from the MRO or C/TPA indicating a verified negative test result for that driver.</p>	See Controlled Substances and Alcohol chapter for recordkeeping requirements.
	<p>Pre-Employment Drug and Alcohol Documents — 49 CFR 40.25(j); 49 CFR 382.301</p> <p>Employers must ask potential employees if they have tested positive or refused to test, on any pre-employment drug or alcohol test within the past three years. If the potential employee admits to having a positive test or refused to test, that individual must not perform safety-sensitive functions until the successful completion of the return-to-duty process. Documentation demonstrating completion of return-to-duty process must be retained in the driver qualification file.</p>	See Controlled Substances and Alcohol chapter for recordkeeping requirements.
	The following additional documents are only required for certain types of drivers, or in specific situations.	
Initial DQ File Documents	<p>Entry-Level Driver Training Certificate — 49 CFR 380.509(b)</p> <p>All CDL drivers with less than one year experience must provide this certificate.</p>	3 years from date of execution
	<p>Longer Combination Vehicle (LCV) Driver Training Certificate — 49 CFR 380.401</p> <p>A driver must not operate an LCV unless the driver can produce an LCV Driver Training Certificate or an LCV Driver Training Certificate of Grandfathering. OR;</p> <p>Longer Combination Vehicle (LCV) Certificate of Grandfathering — 49 CFR 380.111</p>	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	<p>Skill Performance Evaluation Certificate — 49 CFR 391.49</p> <p>Only if required</p>	3 years from date of execution

- Before a driver can be placed into a safety sensitive function, the employer must have confirmation of a negative drug test with the results released to the employer from the MRO on a Federal Chain of Custody and Control form and a full pre-employment query conducted through the clearinghouse with the result showing “NOT PROHIBITED”.
- All driver qualification files, and drug and alcohol testing information must be stored in a secure area not accessible by other employees or in a locked cabinet.
- Driver Qualification File needs to be complete within 30 days of hire.



Annual Ongoing Driver Qualification File Checklist

[49 CFR 391](#) explains the minimum requirements for commercial motor vehicle drivers. Motor carriers are required to maintain a [qualification file](#) for each of their drivers. The following checklist will help you ensure that each driver qualification file is updated on an annual basis.

✓	Form/Inquiry/Note to Include	Must Retain Document For
	Inquiry To State Agencies for Driving Record – Annual — 49 CFR 391.25 (a) and (c) Motor carriers must contact State agencies annually for an updated copy of each driver’s MVR.	3 years from date of execution
	Review of Driving Record – Annual — 49 CFR 391.25 (c) (2) At least once every 12 months, the carrier must collect a current motor vehicle record (MVR) from the State issuing a driver’s license and review the MVR to determine whether the driver still meets the minimum requirements for safe driving, and to confirm they are not disqualified pursuant to 49 CFR 391.15. A note including the name of the person who performed this review and the date must be retained in the file with the MVR.	3 years from date of execution
Ongoing Updates	Clearinghouse Limited Query – Annual — 49 CFR Part 40 & 382 At least once every 12 months, employers must conduct a Limited annual query for all current CDL drivers employed. Employers must have a signed Limited Query Release form from all drivers to conduct limited queries through the Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse.	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	Medical Examination Report and Medical Examiner’s Certificate — 49 CFR 391.43 All Commercial drivers are required to pass a physical exam conducted by a licensed medical examiner at least once every 24 months or as noted by the medical examiner. The carrier must retain a copy of this certificate. For CDL drivers; the carrier must retain a copy of the CDLIS motor vehicle record, which contains the examination information. A new MVR must be obtained within 15 days of receiving the new medical card to verify it has been self-certified and attached to the Drivers License.	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	Employer note verifying that medical examiner is listed on National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners — Non-CDL drivers: 49 CFR 391.51(b)(9)(i) ; CDL drivers: 49 CFR 391.51(b)(9)(ii) A note must be included in the driver’s qualification file to verify that the medical examiner is listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners .	Life of employment + 3 years after termination
	Inquiry To State Agencies for Driving Record – Medical — 49 CFR 391.25 (a) and (c) Motor carriers must contact State agencies for an updated copy of each driver’s MVR, within 15 days of receiving the new medical card to verify the driver has self-certified with the DMV and has selected the correct tier of operation.	Life of employment + 3 years after termination