

Dept. Of Transportation: Waiver extension aims to open new route for school bus driver licenses

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Amid a hiring challenge that puts qualified drivers in school buses, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has extended a testing waiver so more drivers are comfortable applying for a school bus license. The portion of the test that identifies 'under the hood' engine components is now waived until November 27, 2024. All other components of the written and road tests will remain.

Wisconsin is one of six states taking advantage of this long-term extension enacted by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). This waiver lets states modify the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) test so more commercial drivers can add a [school bus license](#) (S endorsement) to their credentials. Drivers seeking this credential will not have to identify engine parts during the pre-trip vehicle inspection portion of the skills test.

"Knowing the components of a bus engine does not necessarily impact a driver's safe driving skills so we'll follow FMCSA's guidance," DMV Administrator Kristina Boardman said. "By removing this potential barrier, we hope that more drivers will apply to add the school bus license to their credentials and, hopefully, help their community and school district."

Between January and September 2022, 69 individuals used this exemption to obtain their school bus license in Wisconsin. FMCSA initially issued this as a three-month waiver in January 2022.

"In a very tight labor market, WisDOT is supporting every effort to help to get

qualified drivers behind the wheel and get kids to school,” Boardman added.

Drivers receiving a CDL under this waiver are permitted to operate intrastate school buses only, they are not authorized to operate trucks, motor coaches, or any other type of commercial motor vehicle requiring a CDL.

Wisconsin DMV maintains a [list of driver training schools](#) that offer the option to get a CDL and school bus license.