

Driver Qualification File Requirements for Canadian Operations



Whether you're part of a massive Canada-based fleet or a company of one running under your own safety fitness certificate, you'll need a driver qualification file for each driver operating a company vehicle. But what happens if you don't know what needs to be in the file because the requirements aren't consistent across Canada? You might even be worried that you'll fail a National Safety Code (NSC) facility audit because your files are incomplete.

Worry no more because we're going to explain everything you need to understand about driver files so you can rest easy knowing that you're in line with regulatory and NSC requirements.

What is the purpose of a driver qualification file?

The driver file is a required collection of documents and records proving that a driver has completed any required training and is legally authorized to drive the type of commercial motor (CMV) you have assigned them to.

However, the definition of a CMV depends on what province or territory they're operating in.

Commercial Vehicle Definition by Jurisdiction	
Alberta	Provincial status (within Alberta only): Registered weight of 11,794 kilograms or more Federal status (operate outside of Alberta): Registered weight 4,501 kilograms or more
British Columbia	Truck or truck tractor with a licensed gross vehicle weight exceeding 5,000 kilograms (including the weight of an attached trailer)
Manitoba	A regulated vehicle is a commercial truck, limited-use commercial truck, self-propelled public service vehicle, limited-use public service vehicle, school bus, or other motor vehicle that meets either or both of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Its registered gross weight is 4,500 kilograms or more; or• It is designed for carrying 11 persons or more, including the driver
New Brunswick	A commercial vehicle that has a gross mass of 4,500 kilograms or more and includes a bus designed for carrying 10 or more passengers and used for the transportation of persons

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Commercial Vehicle Definition by Jurisdiction *(continued)*

Newfoundland/ Labrador	A truck, tractor, or trailer, or any combination of them, exceeding a registered gross vehicle weight of 4,500 kilograms, a bus, a school bus, a school purpose vehicle as defined in the Bus Regulations, or a disabled passenger vehicle as defined in the Official Inspection Station Regulations
Northwest Territories	A truck, truck-tractor, or trailer, or a combination of a truck or truck-tractor and one or two trailers, where the gross weight of the motor vehicle or the combination of motor vehicles exceeds 4,500 kilograms
Nova Scotia	A truck, truck-tractor, trailer, or a combination thereof that has a registered gross vehicle weight of more than 4,500 kilograms
Ontario	Vehicles with a gross weight or registered gross weight of more than 4,500 kilograms and tow trucks regardless of weight
Prince Edward Island	Vehicles with a gross mass exceeding 4,500 kilograms
Quebec	A road vehicle or combinations of road vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross combination weight rating of 4,500 kilograms or more
Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles registered in Class A, C, or D and that have a registered gross weight of 5,000 kilograms or more; or • Vehicles that are registered in Class LV (commercial use only) and that have a registered gross weight of 11,794 kilograms or more, or, if operated outside of Saskatchewan, with a registered gross weight of 5,000 kilograms or more
Yukon Territory	Trucks, tractors, or trailers, or any combination of these vehicles, that have a registered gross vehicle weight exceeding, or that weigh more than, 4,500 kilograms



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What should you include in your driver files?

This is a good question, as this can vary slightly depending on what province your principal place of business is in and in which province(s) you hold a safety fitness certificate.

It can also depend on what the record might be called, for example in Ontario a driver's abstract is commonly referred to as a driver's CVOR abstract.

Although some documents may not be required in certain provinces, the following items are the "best practice" recommended records to keep in your driver file:

- The driver's completed application form for employment,
- A copy of the driver's abstract dated within 30 days of hire,
- Annual updated copies of the driver's abstract,
- The driver's employment history for the preceding 3 years,
- A record of the driver's convictions of safety laws relating to the operation of a motor vehicle in the current year and in each of the preceding 4 years,
- A record of any administrative penalty imposed on the driver,
- A record of all collisions involving a motor vehicle operated by the driver that are required to be reported to a peace officer,
- A record of all training taken by a driver related to the operation of a vehicle and compliance with safety laws, and
- A copy of any training certificate issued to the driver, in electronic or paper form, for the period starting on the date the training certificate is issued.



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How do I know what each jurisdiction requires in their driver files?

Driver Qualification File Requirements					
	Alberta	British Columbia	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Employment application	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Copy of driver's license	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Road test(s)	Yes Prospective employers must conduct an initial road test and maintain an ongoing driver evaluation program.	No	No	No	No
Work history (3 years)	Yes	No	No	No	No
Drivers abstract	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes Request and review driver abstracts annually, within 30 days, to ensure driver fitness.	Yes
Driver training records	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Driver convictions (traffic offenses etc)	Yes Current year and in each of the preceding 4 years and any records of administrative penalties impose on the driver under safety laws.	Yes	Yes	Yes Driver must report "without delay."	Yes
Notice to carrier - NSC (accidents, violations, convictions, etc)	Yes Must be reported but no timeline given.	Yes Notification required within 15 days.	Yes Driver must report within 14 days.	Yes Driver must report "without delay."	Yes
Annual driver fitness review (medical)	No	No	No	Yes	No
Driver disciplinary actions	No	Yes	No	No	No
Special training (TDG)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Driver accidents (current year+ previous 4 years)	Yes	Yes	Yes The accident record must include the date, details, driver's name, type and amount of damage, and vehicle identification.	Yes	Yes

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	Quebec	Newfoundland & Labrador	New Brunswick	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia
Employment application	No	No	No	Yes	No
Copy of driver's license	Yes	No	Yes Before being hired, commercial drivers must disclose in writing their licensing jurisdiction, the name on their license, and any suspensions or revocations.	Yes	Yes
Road test(s)	No	No	No	No	No
Work history (3 years)	No	No	No	No	No
Drivers abstract	Yes	Yes Abstracts required annually during the same month as the anniversary of the driver's birth, for each year the driver is employed.	Yes The carrier must obtain five years' worth of driving records, then annually after that.	Yes Annual abstracts required.	Yes Annual abstracts required.
Driver training records	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Driver convictions (traffic offenses etc)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notice to carrier - NSC (accidents, violations, convictions, etc)	Yes Driver must report "without delay."	Yes Driver has up to 30 days to report convictions, accidents, driver or vehicle inspection, or a warning or OOS notice in relation to an inspection of the driver or of the vehicle the driver is operating.	Yes	Yes Required within 10 days.	Yes Driver must report within 14 days.
Annual driver fitness review (medical)	No	No	No	No	No
Driver disciplinary actions	No	Yes	No	No	No
Special training (TDG)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Driver accidents (current year+ previous 4 years)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Driver Qualification File Requirements *(continued)*

	Northwest Territories	Nunavut	Yukon
Employment application	No	N/A	No
Copy of driver's license	No	N/A	Yes
Road test(s)	No	N/A	No
Work history (3 years)	No	N/A	No
Drivers abstract	Yes Annual abstracts required.	N/A	Yes Annual abstracts required.
Driver training records	No	N/A	Yes
Driver convictions (traffic offenses etc)	Yes	N/A	Yes
Notice to carrier - NSC (accidents, violations, convictions, etc)	Yes Driver must report within 14 days.	N/A	Yes
Annual driver fitness review (medical)	No	N/A	No
Driver disciplinary actions	No	N/A	No
Special training (TDG)	Yes	N/A	Yes
Driver accidents (current year+ previous 4 years)	Yes	N/A	Yes

KEY TO REMEMBER:

Driver files better enable a carrier to monitor and manage the safety of all drivers involved in the operation of commercial vehicles. Being prepared with the proper documents in the file will help you survive an audit.



Driver Qualification File Requirements for Canadian Operations *(continued)*

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