

BULLETIN

NO.: 22-096
DATE: June 16, 2022
TO: All Personnel
FROM: Willy Melendez, Battalion Chief, Training & Education Division
SUBJECT: Implementation of Firefighter Endorsement

With the implementation of new state and federal requirements for commercial driver's licenses, the San Diego Fire-Rescue will be transitioning to the Firefighter "F" Endorsement. This licensing change will be implemented in all future Driver Operator courses.

On February 7, 2022, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) implemented the Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) requirements for commercial driver license (CDL) applicants. ELDT must be conducted by a registered training provider listed on the federal Training Provider Registry (TPR).

Successful completion of ELDT is required on or after February 7, 2022, for applicants who are:

- Obtaining an original CDL (Class A or B);
- Upgrading an existing Class B CDL to a Class A CDL; or
- Obtaining a School Bus (S), Passenger (P), or Hazardous Materials (H) endorsement

In addition to the federal requirements, California residents applying for an original CDL (Class A or B) must complete a minimum of 15 hours of behind-the-wheel training, Theory Instruction Curriculum approx. 10-12 hrs., and submit a California Commercial Driver Behind The Wheel Training Certification (DL 1236) to DMV as proof of completion prior to the issuance of their CDL.

Implementation:

- Once driver operator students successfully complete the requirements for the San Diego Fire Department Driver Operator program, they will be given a "Firefighter Employment and Training Verification" letter signed by the Training Chief.
- Employees will then visit the DMV with the following:
 - Application for Driver License (DL 44)
 - Employment & Training Verification Letter
 - Health Questionnaire (DL 546) (Driver must submit this form every two years, but does NOT need a physician's signature)
 - Birthdate/Legal Presence (see real ID checklist <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-licenses-identification-cards/real-id/how-do-i-get-a-real-id/>)
 - Proof of Residency: Take at least two different printed documents that contain your California mailing address and show your first and last name with the same mailing address.

- Employees will take all applicable tests covering the California Driver Handbook and Commercial Driver Handbook.
- Upon successful completion of all tests, employees will be issued:
 - Class C interim driver license
 - Firefighter endorsement card (DL88)
- Have the Training Chief sign firefighter endorsement card (DL88).
- Submit a signed copy of DL88 and a copy of the permanent driver license once received in the mail to the Driver Training Officer and Shalonda Vinegar at Svinegar@sandiego.gov

Benefits of the FF Endorsement:

- Employees with Firefighter endorsement will fill out the Health Questionnaire (DL 546) at their regularly scheduled wellness appointment.
- Employees with Commercial Driver Licenses will continue with current wellness process and have the Medical Examiner Report (MCSA 5875) and Medical Examiners Certification (MCSA 5876) completed and given to the employee at their normal wellness examination.
- Employees do not need to obtain separate endorsements to operate firefighting equipment requiring specialty endorsements such as Haz Mat endorsement for Light and Air, and Fuel Tenders when driving on duty.
- Employees with the “F” endorsement will be able to drive any firefighting equipment that meets the definition of a Class A or Class B Vehicle. SDFD will still require having a completed task book for each apparatus the employee is operating. ***A Commercial Driver License is required to operate all USAR vehicles***
- Tiller Operators will be required to have the “F” firefighter endorsement.
- Firefighters with a current Class A or B commercial driver license (CDL) are **NOT** required to add the “F” endorsement to continue operating firefighting equipment, as long as their CDL includes all applicable endorsements for the vehicle they are operating (i.e., no change for our current employees with CDL).
- Employees do have the option to add the Firefighter endorsement to their Commercial Class “A” or “B” license, and or downgrade to a Non-Commercial Class C license with Firefighter endorsement. Detailed information on this process will be given on Vector Solutions.

It is highly recommended that you contact the Driver Training Officer, Captain James Laing at jlaing@sandiego.gov , 619-692-4981 prior to making any DMV appointment that involves a change in driver license status.