

Disclaimer

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CDL/CMV

Disqualification

Tribal Benchcard



Commonly Used CDL Related Terms & Definitions

BAC	Blood Alcohol Concentration	GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating
CDL	Commercial Driver's License	HazMat	Hazardous Materials
CDL Downgrade	Loss of CDL privileges due to disqualification or noncompliance	HOS	Hours of Service
CDLIS	Commercial Driver's License Information System	Inspection Levels I-VI	Standard roadside inspection categories
CLP	Commercial Learner's Permit	Interstate Commerce	Operating across state lines or affecting interstate trade
CMV	Commercial Motor Vehicle	Intrastate Commerce	Operating only within one state
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation	MC Number	Motor Carrier operating authority number
Disqualification/ Suspension/ Revocation	Loss of commercial driving privileges	Medical Examiner's Certificate	Ensures CDL holders are physically and mentally fit to operate CMVs
Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse	Federal database for CDL drug/alcohol violations	MVR	Motor Vehicle Records
DUI/DWI	Driving Under the Influence / Driving While Intoxicated	OOS	Out of Service
Endorsement	Additional authorization such as HazMat, Tanker, Passenger	Restriction	Limitation placed on CDL privileges
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	Return-to- Duty Process	Required steps after drug/alcohol violations
GCW	Gross Combination Weight	SAP	Substance Abuse Professional
GCWR	Gross Combination Weight Rating	USDOT Number	U.S. Department of Transportation identification number
GVW	Gross Vehicle Weight		

49 CFR §383.51

- (1) A person required to have a CLP or CDL who is disqualified must not drive a CMV.
- (2) An employer must not knowingly allow, require, permit, or authorize a driver who is disqualified to drive a CMV.
- (3) A holder of a CLP or CDL is subject to disqualification sanctions designated in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, if the holder drives a CMV or non-CMV and is convicted of the violations listed in those paragraphs.
- (4) Determining first and subsequent violations. For purposes of determining first and subsequent violations of the offenses specified in this subpart, each conviction for any offense listed in Tables 1 through 4 to this section resulting from a separate incident, whether committed in a CMV or non-CMV, must be counted.
- (5) The disqualification period must be in addition to any other previous periods of disqualification.
- (6) Reinstatement after lifetime disqualification. A State may reinstate any driver disqualified for life for offenses described in paragraphs (b)(1) through (8) of this section (Table 1 to § 383.51) after 10 years, if that person has voluntarily entered and successfully completed an appropriate rehabilitation program approved by the State. Any person who has been reinstated in accordance with this provision and who is subsequently convicted of a disqualifying offense described in paragraphs (b)(1) through (8) of this section (Table 1 to § 383.51) must not be reinstated.
- (7) A foreign commercial driver is subject to disqualification under this subpart.

Tribal Court Considerations

These benchcard guidelines reflect federal Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements intended to promote uniform safety standards across all jurisdictions. For courts in Indian Country, accurate application of these requirements supports public safety, strengthens intergovernmental coordination, and ensures proper reporting to State Driver Licensing Agencies and CDLIS.

At the same time, Tribal courts operate under their own sovereign authority. Judges should consult their Tribal constitution, codes, and applicable statutes when applying these principles to ensure alignment with Tribal law, jurisdictional authority, and local practices.

Table 1 to § 383.51 DISQUALIFICATIONS FOR MAJOR OFFENSES

Table 1 to §383.51 contains a list of the offenses and periods for which a person who is required to have a CLP or CDL is disqualified, depending upon the type of vehicle the driver is operating at the time of the violation, as follows:

If a driver operates any motor vehicle and is convicted of:	For a first conviction or refusal to be tested while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a first conviction or refusal to be tested while operating a non-CMV, a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a first conviction or refusal to be tested while operating a CMV transporting hazardous materials required to be placarded under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (49 CFR part 172, subpart F), a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a second conviction or refusal to be tested in a separate incident of any combination of offenses in this Table while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a second conviction or refusal to be tested in a separate incident of any combination of offenses in this Table while operating a non-CMV, a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...
(1) Being under the influence of alcohol as prescribed by State law	1 year	1 year	3 year	Life	Life
(2) Being under the influence of a controlled substance	1 year	1 year	3 year	Life	Life
(3) Having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater while operating a CMV	1 year	Not applicable	3 year	Life	Not applicable
(4) Refusing to take an alcohol test as required by a State or jurisdiction under its implied consent laws or regulations as defined in §383.72 of this part	1 year	1 year	3 year	Life	Life
(5) Leaving the scene of an accident	1 year	1 year	3 year	Life	Life
(6) Using the vehicle to commit a felony, other than a felony described in paragraph (b)(9) of this table	1 year	1 year	3 year	Life	Life
(7) Driving a CMV when, as a result of prior violations committed operating a CMV, the driver's CDL is revoked, suspended, or canceled, or the driver is disqualified from operating a CMV	1 year	Not applicable	3 year	Life	Not applicable
(8) Causing a fatality through the negligent operation of a CMV, including but not limited to the crimes of motor vehicle manslaughter, homicide by motor vehicle and negligent homicide	1 year	Not applicable	3 year	Life	Not applicable
(9) Using the vehicle in the commission of a felony involving manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing a controlled substance	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement
(10) Using a CMV in the commission of a felony involving an act or practice of severe forms of trafficking in persons, as defined and described in 22 U.S.C. 7102(11)	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Not applicable	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Not applicable	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement

Table 2 to § 383.51 DISQUALIFICATIONS FOR SERIOUS TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

Table 2 to §383.51 contains a list of the offenses and the periods for which a person who is required to have a CLP or CDL is disqualified, depending upon the type of vehicle the driver is operating at the time of the violation, as follows:

If a driver operates any motor vehicle and is convicted of:	For a second conviction of any combination of offenses in this Table in a separate incident within a 3-year period while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a second conviction of any combination of offenses in this Table in a separate incident within a 3-year period while operating a non-CMV, a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV, if the conviction results in the revocation, cancellation, or suspension of the CLP or CDL holder's license or non-CMV driving privileges, for...	For a third or subsequent conviction of any combination of offenses in this Table in a separate incident within a 3-year period while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a third or subsequent conviction of any combination of offenses in this Table in a separate incident within a 3-year period while operating a non-CMV, a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV, if the conviction results in the revocation, cancellation, or suspension of the CLP or CDL holder's license or non-CMV driving privileges, for...
(1) Speeding excessively, involving any speed of 24.1 kmph (15 mph) or more above the posted speed limit	60 days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(2) Driving recklessly, as defined by State or local law or regulation, including but, not limited to, offenses of driving a motor vehicle in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property	60 days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(3) Making improper or erratic traffic lane changes	60 days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(4) Following the vehicle ahead too closely	60 days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(5) Violating State or local law relating to motor vehicle traffic control (other than a parking violation) arising in connection with a fatal accident	60 days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(6) Driving a CMV without obtaining a CDL	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(7) Driving a CMV without a CDL in the driver's possession	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(8) Driving a CMV without the proper class of CDL and/or endorsements for the specific vehicle group being operated or for the passengers or type of cargo being transported	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(9) Violating a State or local law or ordinance on motor vehicle traffic control prohibiting texting while driving.	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(10) Violating a State or local law or ordinance on motor vehicle traffic control restricting or prohibiting the use of a hand-held mobile telephone while driving a CMV.	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable

¹Any individual who provides proof to the enforcement authority that issued the citation, by the date the individual must appear in court or pay any fine for such a violation, that the individual held a valid CDL on the date the citation was issued, shall not be guilty of this offense.

² Driving, for the purpose of this disqualification, means operating a commercial motor vehicle on a highway, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays. Driving does not include operating a commercial motor vehicle when the driver has moved the vehicle to the side of, or off, a highway and has halted in a location where the vehicle can safely remain stationary.

Table 3 to § 383.51 DISQUALIFICATION FOR RAILROAD-HIGHWAY GRADE CROSSING OFFENSES

If the driver is convicted of operating a CMV in violation of a Federal, State or local law because:	For a first conviction a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a second conviction of any combination of offenses in this Table in a separate incident within a 3-year period, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a third or subsequent conviction of any combination of offenses in this Table in a separate incident within a 3-year period, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...
(1) The driver is not required to always stop, but fails to slow down and check that tracks are clear of an approaching train	No less than 60 days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(2) The driver is not required to always stop, but fails to stop before reaching the crossing, if the tracks are not clear	No less than 60 days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(3) The driver is always required to stop, but fails to stop before driving onto the crossing	No less than 60 days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(4) The driver fails to have sufficient space to drive completely through the crossing without stopping	No less than 60 days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(5) The driver fails to obey a traffic control device or the directions of an enforcement official at the crossing	No less than 60 days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(6) The driver fails to negotiate a crossing because of insufficient undercarriage clearance	No less than 60 days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year

Table 4 to § 383.51 DISQUALIFICATION FOR VIOLATING OUT-OF-SERVICE ORDERS

Disqualification for violating out-of-service orders. Table 4 to §383.51 contains a list of the offenses and periods for which a person who is required to have a CLP or CDL is disqualified when the driver is operating a CMV at the time of the violation, as follows:

If the driver operates a CMV and is convicted of...	For a first conviction while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a second conviction in a separate incident within a 10-year period while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...	For a third or subsequent conviction in a separate incident within a 10-year period while operating a CMV, a person required to have a CLP or CDL and a CLP or CDL holder must be disqualified from operating a CMV for...
(1) (1) Violating a driver or vehicle out-of-service order while transporting nonhazardous materials	No less than 180 days or more than 1 year	No less than 2 years or more than 5 years	No less than 3 years or more than 5 years
(2) (2) Violating a driver or vehicle out-of-service order while transporting hazardous materials required to be placarded under part 172, subpart F of this title, or while operating a vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver	No less than 180 days or more than 2 year	No less than 3 years or more than 5 years	No less than 3 years or more than 5 years



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