

## **What are CDL Endorsements?**

Whether you already have your Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or are thinking about getting one, you may have heard of CDL endorsements. If you're looking for more information or wondering if it's a good move to try to get one or more, we've got the answers for you.

## **So what is a CDL Endorsement?**

It's an addition to your CDL that permits you to increase your earnings and ability to find employment by giving you additional training and allowing you to transport things beyond your current CDL.

## **How Many CDL Endorsements Are There?**

While it can vary from state to state, there are six commonly added and used types of CDL endorsements. The more endorsements you have on your CDL, the more you can earn. While all of these endorsements can be used with a Class A CDL (the most common type of CDL), some can also be earned on lower B or C Class licenses.

### **H Endorsement**

The H endorsement permits the holder to transport hazardous materials (HAZMAT). Additional training is required, including learning about the materials you will transport, safety training on potential dangers and security training. The H endorsement also requires passing a written knowledge test and background check, fingerprinting and completing a TSA Security Threat Assessment application. The H endorsement is valid for five years after the SAT application is approved.

## **N Endorsement**

An N endorsement authorizes you to haul a tanker carrying (non-hazardous) liquids or gas. Training includes inspecting the tank and understanding the unique challenges of hauling and transporting liquids, such as movement of the cargo and a higher center of gravity. Afterward, you must pass a written test, and then the endorsement lasts as long as your CDL is valid.

## **P Endorsement**

A P endorsement allows you to transport the most precious of cargo... people! The P is required for driving passenger vehicles with 16 or more seats (including the driver.) You'll learn pre- and post-trip vehicle inspection, vehicle load and trip start practices, prohibited practices and use of special equipment unique to transporting passengers. You'll need to pass both a written and road test. The endorsement is good as long as the CDL is.

## **S Endorsement**

The S endorsement is similar to a P endorsement but is much more specific for school buses. Training for circumstances and situations unique to transporting children include:

- Use of mirrors
- Understanding danger zones for children
- Emergency procedures
- Railroad crossings
- Managing your student passengers

After training is completed, you will also need to pass a written test, road test and background check. Then the endorsement is good as long as your CDL remains valid.

## **T Endorsement**

The T endorsement allows you to drive double or triple trailers. You'll undergo special training and learn about the specific skills and risks of hauling multiple trailers, including coupling and uncoupling the trailers, preventing roll-overs, understanding the whip-crack effect and checking air brakes. Once you've successfully passed a written exam, you have this endorsement as long as you keep the CDL in good standing.

## **X Endorsement**

This is a combo endorsement that incorporates both tanker and HAZMAT training. It's essentially the H and N endorsements (and their requirements) combined into one. Once completed, you'll be authorized to drive a tanker or other vehicles with hazardous materials. The more restrictive qualifications for an H also apply to the X endorsement.

## **What Are CDL Restrictions?**

Just as endorsements are additions to your CDL, restrictions are subtractions or limitations to your license. This reduces the kinds of vehicles you may operate or what types of loads you may carry. Restrictions are not always a reflection of your ability but may simply be based on your age (i.e. between 18-21), the vehicle type you were tested on or any disqualifying medical conditions. To maximize your opportunities, you may want to consider taking the necessary steps to get the restrictions removed. Common restrictions include:

- E restriction limits you to a commercial vehicle with an automatic transmission. (restricts you from operating a manual).
- L restriction restricts you from driving a vehicle with full air brakes.
- M and N restrictions lower the class of passenger vehicles you may drive with your P or S endorsements down to a B class (an A class CDL with an M restriction) or a C class (a B class CDL with an N restriction).

- O restriction limits the operator to commercial vehicles without a fifth-wheel connection. This is a big one to consider resolving or removing to maximize your potential.
- V restriction is added when the operator has a medical condition that has been reported to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and could be a potential hazard or impairment.
- Z restriction limits you from operating a commercial vehicle with full air brakes if you completed your road test in a vehicle with air over hydraulic brakes.

### **How to Get CDL Endorsements?**

Driver's license endorsements can make a significant impact on your flexibility with available jobs and increased earnings. In order to get them, you'll need to take additional classes and pass either written tests, road tests or both. Some endorsements may require additional considerations, such as a background check. The cost of most endorsement classes is relatively minimal and can easily be made up quickly with the boost in earnings from your ability to transport more unique loads.

**Want to know more? Contact us at [zetacd.com](https://zetacd.com)**