

# DRIVER EXAMINATION DIVISION

The Missouri State Highway Patrol Division provides an effective program of driver testing to ensure Missouri licensed drivers have a level of competency consistent with safe driving habits and practices as well as demonstrated skills and knowledge of Missouri laws related to traffic safety. The Driver Examination Division provides the written and skills test for applicants applying for a Missouri operator's license, motorcycle license, chauffeur's license, and commercial driver's license (CDL).

The Driver Examination Division provides administrative and staff support for the program in the field. Responsibilities of the division include: program direction and guidance, coordination of examination site selection, liaison with the Department of Revenue and field personnel, correspondence and personal contacts concerning the driver examination program, training, equipment, supplies procurement, and overall program budget control.

The 66th General Assembly of 1952 passed the Driver's License Examination Law and delegated its supervision to the Highway Patrol. Thirty-five uniformed officers of the Highway Patrol, Kansas City Police Department, and St. Louis Police Department administered the statewide driver tests until 1955. In 1955, the entire program was given to the Highway Patrol. On July 26, 1955, 26 civilian driver examiners reported for duty to take on the extra duties tasked to the Highway Patrol. Currently, the Driver Examination Division is tasked with the responsibilities of driver testing in Missouri. Prior to the Driver Examination Division, the driver testing resided in various divisions within the Highway Patrol, including the Traffic Division, Safety Division, Safety and Administration Division, and the Driver and Vehicle Regulation Division.

"Applicants would often add humor to the testing process," said retired Captain Robert J. "Bob" Hagan in a 2005 interview. Capt. Hagan began his career with the Patrol as a driver examiner from 1956-1958. "The draft card was an acceptable form of identification. Some people who felt they couldn't pass the test would have someone else come in and try to take the test for them. A lot of the people in the area didn't have middle names, so their draft card would have "NMN" in that blank, which stood for "no middle name." One day a man came in and handed me a draft card. I asked him for his date of birth and then asked him what his middle name was. He made the sound for the letters "NMN." He had read the card and didn't realize what "NMN" stood for." He thought it was the person's middle name." (*This interview was included in the publication "To Serve and Protect, A Collection of Memories". Capt. Hagan was the first director of the Driver Examination Division.*)

Beginning in 1968, motorcycle tests were given to determine if the applicant has a level of competency consistent with safe driving habits and

practices as well as demonstrated skills and knowledge of Missouri laws related to traffic safety. The skill test determines the applicant's ability to safely maneuver and operate his/her motorcycle.

In 1987, Dale Shikles, then-driver examiner supervisor, was transferred to General Headquarters to help the division prepare for the new CDL program. Dale was the first driver examiner assigned to General Headquarters. During this time of preparation, Dale was promoted to chief driver examiner. Prior to this, there were only three chief driver examiners. They were assigned to Troops A, C, and D, and supervised the driver examiner supervisors. In 1990, Dale was promoted to senior chief driver examiner. By this time, there had been a chief examiner assigned to all nine troops. Dale Shikles was the first (and only) senior chief examiner and held the position until his retirement in 2005. At that time, Rhonda Czarnecki was promoted to senior chief examiner and currently holds that position.

A new law affecting school bus drivers became effective on September 1, 1988. It required drivers of school buses owned by or under contract with a public school or the State Board of Education to obtain a school bus operator's permit. One of the requirements an applicant for a bus permit must satisfy is to take and pass a series of examinations. The examinations consist of a written test of applicable laws, rules, and procedures, and a driving test in the class of vehicle to be operated.

*The Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 required the development of minimum standards for all commercial drivers nationwide. These standards are found in Section 49, part 383 of the Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR 383). Meeting these standards requires all persons who operate commercial motor vehicles to pass certain knowledge and skill tests. Together, these tests ensure that the driver meets the minimum knowledge and skill requirements set forth in 49 CFR 383 for the safe operation of the commercial vehicle class and type the driver expects to operate. All states were required to be in compliance with the CDL testing standards by April 1, 1992.*

In 1990, the first Commercial Driver's License Examiner Training Session took place at the Safety Center located at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri. The five-day training addressed how to conduct road tests under the new CDL program. Driver examiners and driver examiner sergeants from around the state attended.

During the calendar year 1990, there were 177,630 CDL written tests administered with an overall failure rate of 27 percent. CDL skills tests were administered at 16 CDL test sites around the state. The CDL skills test consists of a pre-trip vehicle inspection test, basic vehicle control skills test, and an on-the-road driving test. The average test is over 12 miles, during which the applicant must demonstrate ability to effectively handle the vehicle, operate the vehicle in traffic, and to perform a variety of controlled maneuvers.

In 1991 the state law allowed for third party testers to administer the commercial driver license skills examination. The staff at Central Missouri State

University and the Driver Examination Division (GHQ) held a one-week Third Party Training Course. This course was conducted at the Central Missouri State University Safety Center at Warrensburg. Eighteen people took the training to be certified as third party examiners.

In 1996, division members rewrote the Missouri School Bus Driver Trainer Instruction Manual, and served on the School Bus Driver Trainer Curriculum Development Committee. In addition, the Driver Examination Division served on a joint committee with the Department of Revenue, Division of Highway Safety, and Central Missouri State University personnel to develop a driver-training guide for parents who wish to teach their kids how to drive.

From 1998 until the present, the division has participated in revising the Missouri Driver's Guide to reflect changes brought about as a result of new legislation.

The Graduated Driver's License law became effective January 1, 2001, requiring that all first-time drivers between 15 and 18 years old complete a period of driving with a licensed driver (Instruction Permit) and restricted driving (Intermediate License) before getting a full driver's license.

In July 31, 2002, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) created a new endorsement that CDL holders must obtain in order to operate a school bus. The FMCSA created an "S" endorsement and developed three requirements that an applicant must satisfy before obtaining an "S" endorsement: 1. Qualify for a passenger endorsement. 2. Pass a knowledge test that covers at least three safety specific topic areas. 3. Pass a skills test in a school bus of the same vehicle group as the applicant will drive. September 30, 2005, was the deadline for implementing the "S" endorsement; the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association extended this date to September 30, 2006.

In 2003, the Driver Examination Division made a big change in the way the written test was administered. The written test became automated in 17 of the five days-per-week examination stations. It has now been expanded to 22 testing locations. With computerized testing, the applicant simply touches the screen to answer the questions. The computer has an audio function that allows the applicant to request the computer to read the questions to the applicants. The computer also has graphic illustrations to assist the applicant in understanding the questions.

The Driver Examination Committee was formed to complete several projects, which have had a significant impact on the driver examination operation. They include revising the monthly summary report, the Driver Examination Procedural Manual, and Class E, F, M, school bus, and foreign written examinations. They also revised five forms into one new form to record written and skill test results. All these projects have resulted in significant timesaving for driver examination personnel in the performance of their duties. The DE Committee currently meets at least annually to discuss current issues and make recommendations to the division.

The written test (paper) for a Class F license is available in 11 foreign languages. They are: Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Bosnian. Seven foreign languages are offered on the computer. They are: Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Bosnian, Korean, and Chinese. The CDL written examinations are provided in English only.

In 2005, Section 302.721 RSMO. gave the Department of Revenue and the Missouri State Highway Patrol authority to retest 10 percent of the third party tester applicants. State regulation 12 CSR 10-24.335 was created to establish procedures for the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Missouri Department of Revenue to conduct retesting of commercial driver license applicants in order to determine compliance with the Third Party Commercial Driver License Examination Program. The state currently has six retest auditors located in four troops. On September 19, 2005, the auditors began retesting 10 percent of third party tester applicants.

In 2007, new CDL testing sites were opened in Rolla and Carthage. Also in 2007, a training curriculum was developed and presented to all driver examination personnel to assist in evaluating cited drivers. The program is titled, "Health, Functional Status, and Older Driver Safety." This training is presented to all newly hired examiners.

Section 302.720 RSMo. was revised in 2007, requiring all CDL written tests be administered in the English language. No translators are allowed for applicants taking CDL tests.

In October 2008, Missouri implemented the new "AAMVA CDL testing standards." Missouri was the 13th state to adopt the standards. Also in October 2008, a new CDL testing site was opened in South St. Louis.

In October 2009, the Driver Examination Division implemented a field training program for new examiners. This program was designed to assure all new hires were trained consistently throughout the state

In 2009, the Driver Examination Division began an audit/in-service training program to ensure all CDL qualified examiners are proficient in the new 2005 CDL testing standards. Examiners will be audited once every two years.

In September 1, 2011, the Patrol implemented statewide changes to both the written and skills test for motorcycle drivers. The test now being administered is the latest version of the motorcycle skills testing developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. This updated testing includes a new obstacle swerve test to measure a driver's ability to use proper avoidance maneuvers.

"Our mission of traffic safety includes all vehicles," said Colonel Ron Replogle. "It is our goal to reduce motorcycle crashes and fatalities through an updated, more comprehensive testing standard. I am sure the motoring public will benefit from this new testing program."

In November 2011, the Driver Examination Division deployed the first mobile computer testing station for one of the 26 traveling crews statewide. The mobile testing station consisted of two laptop computers, five electronic touch screen computers, a printer, and a router. The mobile station allowed the traveling crew to transport the computers to each of the testing locations serviced by the traveling crew. The implementation of the new technology replaced written test with computerized testing in these locations. The Macon traveling crew paved the way for 13 additional traveling crews to be equipped with the same technology. The equipment was purchased with a federal grant from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, FMCSA.

In 2011, the division was assigned an additional uniformed civilian officer due to the advanced testing technology, grant funding and auditing of third party CDL examiners. Examiner Cheryl Bardwell was promoted into this position which was assigned the title of "chief driver examiner."

In 2012, the division applied for and received two federal grants to allow the deployment of computer testing in the remaining traveling crews. This funding allowed computer testing in all 114 counties in the state of Missouri by the end of 2013. Grant funding was obtained from FMCSA to computerize CDL skills testing by purchasing electronic touch screen tablets for the examiners in the field to use. The CDL tablets are currently under development.

The Driver Examination Division held its first 16-hour "in-service" training for all driver examiners and supervisors. The in-service training will be continued on a biennial bases.

The Driver Examination Division has 231 Patrol employees assigned to the Driver Examination program. Statewide, there are 223 driver examiners and five full-time driver examiner clerks. There are 157 driver examination offices throughout the state with locations in each of the state's 114 counties and in the city of St. Louis. Thirteen of these are Commercial Driver's License skills test sites. Nineteen full-time, five day-per-week offices are located in the urban areas of Kansas City, St. Louis, Springfield, St. Joseph, Joplin, Columbia, and Jefferson City. A new five day a week testing station opened in St. Peters in March 2013 to service the public in that area.

In 2014, the responsibility of overseeing the rent and lease contract processes for all driver examination office locations moved from the Driver Examination Division to the Budget and Procurement Division.

#### DRIVER EXAMINATION DIVISION DIRECTORS:

Lt. J.A. Berglund	1952 to 1953	Div. of Safety & Administration
Captain J.A. Berglund	1953 to 1966	
Captain F.W. Shadwell	1967 to 1968	Div. of Safety
Captain F.W. Shadwell	1969 to 1972	Traffic Division
Captain C.S. Endicott	1973 to 1978	Traffic Division
Captain J.M. Luker	1979 to 1980	Driver & Vehicle Regulation Div. (Included CVE, MVI, DE)
Lt. Robert J. "Bob" Hagan	1981 to 1988	Driver Examination Division

Captain J.F. Gaines	1989	"	"
Lt. W.L. Baucom	1990		
Lt. B.R. Nelson	1991 to 1993		
Captain B.R. Nelson	1994 to 2007		
Captain G.L. Moore	2007 to 2010		
Captain K.A. Geiger	2010 to 2011		
Captain L.D. Elder	2011 to 2013		
Captain D.P. Perkins	2013 to present		

**SENIOR CHIEF DRIVER EXAMINERS:**

Dale Shikles - 1990 to 2005

Rhonda Czarnecki - 2005 to present

**CHIEF DRIVER EXAMINER:**

Cheryl Bardwell - 2011 to present