

Maryland Motor Vehicle Laws Have Changed, Were you Aware?

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As of September 30, 2005 several laws which affect Commercial Drivers License (CDL) holders came into play. A quick review of these laws is important for all involved. As the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) tries to keep up with everyone who has held a CDL, everyone must report all licenses held during the last ten years. This includes both CDL and non CDL in any state. MVA will use this information to update your Maryland driving record. While that alone is not really a problem, some of the other changes may be.

While the idea of getting a ticket for any reason is not high on anyone's list there are even more reasons to watch our "p's" and "q's" now. The following offenses can disqualify you from holding or keeping a CDL if you have two or more convictions in a three year period, in a commercial *or non commercial vehicle* in Maryland:

- Speeding, 15 mph or more above the posted speed limit
- Driving recklessly
- Making improper or erratic traffic lane changes
- Following the vehicle ahead too closely (tailgating)
- Violating the law in connection with a fatal accident

The new Maryland law also disqualifies you for:

- Driving while suspended or disqualified
- Driving a commercial vehicle without a CDL in your possession
- Driving a commercial vehicle without obtaining a CDL
- Driving a vehicle with the wrong CDL endorsements

Last but not the least, a CDL driver can be disqualified for the following offenses regardless of whether you are in a private or commercial vehicle **no matter what state** you hold your CDL from:

- Driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI)
- Driving under the influence of a controlled dangerous substance
- Refusing to take the alcohol test
- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Using the vehicle to commit a felony

Remember that everyone who holds a "hazmat" endorsement will be required to be fingerprinted and have a background check. This takes additional time, so make allowances for this. Also, be aware of when a CDL is required. To determine if a CDL is required look at the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or Gross Vehicle Combination Weight Rating (GVCWR) found on the manufacturer's fishplate. **This can affect you if you are in a vehicle that is over 26,000 pounds and are carrying fertilizer or pesticides in any quantity.**