

BC Professional (Truck) Driver Training Program

EMPLOYER FAQs

What is the Professional (Truck) Driver Training Program?

The Professional (Truck) Driver Training Program is a comprehensive training course developed by trucking industry experts with the participation of the Transportation Career Development Association (transCDA) and provisionally approved by BC's Industry Training Authority (ITA).

The Professional Driver Training Program integrates extensive classroom, on-road and on-the-job training for professional truck drivers. Three required components provide training, supervision and ongoing assessment of driver trainees throughout the program, including:

- eight weeks of classroom and practical driver training at an ITA-approved school
- four weeks of Supervised Work Experience with a trucking company
- 1000 additional hours of Work-Based Learning with a potential employer

The trainee, who must have a Class 1 learner's licence at the start of the program, will obtain a full-fledged Class 1 licence during the first eight weeks of training. In this phase, the trainee gains proficiency in the following key competencies:

- driving a vehicle
- driving for fuel efficiency
- planning trips
- handling cargo
- customer service
- vehicle maintenance
- administrative duties
- compliance with laws and regulations
- communication and interpersonal skills
- personal skills (e.g., time management)

The trainee will then complete an unpaid Supervised Work Experience placement followed by additional Work-Based Learning in the employment of a trucking company that has applied to participate in the program.

Once they've completed all three components, Professional Driver Training Program graduates take an ITA road test to obtain an ITA Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) as a Professional (Truck) Driver.

How is this program different from other training programs?

Although curriculums can vary, most training programs in BC only help individuals obtain a Class 1 licence and provide significantly fewer hours of in-cab training and practice. Trucking industry experts designed the Professional Driver Training Program to increase road exposure for trainees and to teach the full set of skills required for entry-level professional drivers. From safety requirements to customer service, the program covers the

range of skills new hires will need to represent their employers competently on and off the road.

In addition, entry requirements are stricter than for other programs. Trainees must complete a number of prerequisites to qualify for training and undergo further screening by employers involved in the Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning placements. These preliminary requirements are designed to identify individuals who are most likely to succeed as professional drivers.

If your company would like to participate in the program's work placement terms, you'll have the opportunity to interview trainees before or during the training process to ensure that your chosen trainee is suitable for employment with your company.

Who are the trainees?

Trainees may come from all walks of life. They may be young men or women setting out on their first career or individuals interested in pursuing opportunities in trucking after following a different path.

No matter what their background, all trainees must show their commitment and suitability for a driving career by meeting the following prerequisites before registering for the Professional Driver Training Program:

- obtain a Class 1 learner's licence
- complete an ICBC-approved (16-hour) on-highway air brake course
- meet government medical fitness requirements
- have no more than six points on a driver's abstract for the past five years
- complete a Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES)

TOWES measures essential or employability skills in three areas – reading text, document use and numeracy. The test measures how well individuals deal with the particular mathematical concepts and documents needed for their workplace and confirms the “fit” between these skills and the skills held.

When you interview prospective trainees, you'll be able to confirm that they also meet your company's specific hiring policies before committing to the trainee.

Where does the training take place?

The eight weeks of classroom and practical training take place at an accredited learning institution. To help guarantee the quality of training, the school must meet minimum standards for yard space, classroom facilities, classes of vehicles and equipment.

The Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning placements take place at the workplaces of employers.

Supervised Work Experience takes four weeks. The trainee is not paid during this term and a designated coach at your company must directly supervise the trainee for the entire

period. Supervised Work Experience includes all duties expected of a driver. Coaches submit a report to transCDA on the trainee's ability, knowledge and attitude using forms and standards provided by the program.

After successfully completing the Supervised Work Experience, trainees are available for paid employment in the final Work-Based Learning component of the program. During Work-Based Learning, the trainee carries out regular duties for your company, but formal monitoring and evaluation continues until he or she is eligible to take the ITA examination for professional drivers. Work-Based Learning is 1000 hours long. Assuming a 40-hour, five-day work week, this final course component will take 25 weeks to complete.

Your company can sponsor both the Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning placements for each trainee, but this is not required.

What are the employer's responsibilities?

Employers who participate in the Professional Driver Training Program provide trainees with on-the-job learning experience and confirm that they meet all the requirements of the program. For the Supervised Work Experience, you must provide a company coach for each trainee. During the Work-Based Learning placement, a trained company assessor must monitor the trainee's proficiency in prescribed program competencies and maintain and submit a progress report to transCDA. For the pilot, the coach and assessor can be the same person. (See [How to Identify and Choose a Coach/Assessor](#) for additional information.)

To be considered as a work placement sponsor, your company must also have and maintain a Satisfactory or Satisfactory-Unaudited National Safety Code rating and, if operating in the United States, a Satisfactory rating from the US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Your company will enter into a contractual agreement with the trainee and transCDA for both the Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning portions of the trainee's education. The agreement establishes that you will require trainees to perform duties normally carried out by a trained professional driver and that your company will supervise their work experience.

While the trainee is under sponsorship by transCDA, he or she is covered by transCDA for Workers' Compensation purposes.

Why should my company become involved?

Companies that participate in the training program have a unique opportunity to work with a chosen trainee in an intensive, supervised learning environment. You will be able to observe the trainee's ability to apply learning on the job, to assess how he or she responds to real-world challenges, and to judge whether the trainee is a good fit as a permanent employee.

Once the trainee graduates from the program, your company is not obliged to offer permanent employment – you are, however, in a position to do so before graduates enter the job market for other employers.

Significantly, you will also qualify for tax credits of up to \$4,000 per trainee per year. Tax credits are not offered to employers for helping to train new drivers under any other driver training program.

How much will participating in the training program cost?

For the Supervised Work Experience, employers assume the following costs:

- provision of a trained company coach for each trainee
 - allocation of the coach's time to carry out supervision of the trainee during work hours and to compile and submit a report on the trainee's progress
 - reimbursement for any out-of-pocket, work-related expenses covered by the trainee
- Employers do not otherwise pay trainees during the Supervised Work Experience.

For the Work-Based Learning placement, employers assume the following costs:

- entry-level driver wages and benefits for the trainee for the duration of the placement (1000 hours)

For this program component, the trainee will be fully employed as a driver without the close supervision of a coach.

- provision of a trained company assessor for each trainee

The same person in each company can act as both coach and assessor during the pilot project for the Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning.

- allocation of an employer assessor's time to meet regularly with the trainee during this term, to give periodic skill tests, and to provide refresher training as necessary

The assessor will also be expected to provide written assessments as required by the ITA program standard.

The \$4000 (maximum) employer tax credit will offset the cost of the trainee's wages during the Work-Based Learning placement.

Additional details about coach and assessor training are available from the BC Trucking Association (see the contact information below).

Where can I get more information?

Contact Sharon Hansen, coordinator for the pilot project, at the BC Trucking Association by phone at 604-888-5319, ext. 218, or by e-mail at shansen@bctrucking.com or go to <http://www.bctrucking.com/about/consultation.php>.