

## BC Professional (Truck) Driver Training Program

*Get your career on the road with training endorsed & supported by industry employers*

### TRAINEE FAQs

#### *What's so great about the trucking industry?*

Where should we start? Here are just a few things to consider:

- Qualified drivers are in high demand.
- Trucking is a growing industry with lots of opportunities.
- Average weekly earnings are higher than in other industries.
- Trucking employers are based all over BC, giving you more choices for where you'd like to live and work.
- Trucking is flexible. If your dream is to drive long distances across Canada and the US, you can do that. Or you can stay closer to home and work a regular schedule. You can drive a big rig on the highway or a delivery truck in town. It's up to you.
- If you love trucks and driving, there's no better place to be.

#### *Why should I take the Professional Driver Training Program?*

This is a new, comprehensive training program that offers many features that existing programs in BC don't have. With this training, you will:

- develop skills that entry-level drivers need for employment. Trucking company employers helped design the program, so your training meets industry needs.
- stand out from other new commercial drivers who haven't completed the same training. Most programs provide only enough training to help you earn a Class 1 commercial licence, not for a driving career.
- receive certification from BC's Industry Training Authority (ITA), a Crown Agency that oversees trades training programs in the province. This is the only driver training program that offers ITA certification.
- be eligible for income tax credits and qualify for provincial student loans. Only ITA-approved programs have these options.
- receive payment during part of the program. See the financial assistance information at the end of these FAQs for more details.
- work for a trucking company during your training. The company provides coaching and on-the-job experience. And, if you both like the fit, you could become a company employee without ever having to look elsewhere for a job.

### *What will I learn in this program?*

This program covers all the basics and more and includes lots of hand-on practice and coaching, not just theory. You will:

- learn through a mixture of classroom, practical and one-on-one behind-the-wheel training from professional instructors.
- learn advanced skills, such as safe driving practices, rules and regulations, driving for fuel efficiency and how to balance your work and life.
- be matched with a trucking company for four-week Supervised Work Experience term followed by a longer Work-Based Learning term.
- receive payment during the Work-Based Learning term.
- get an industry-recognized Certificate of Qualification in addition to a Class 1 driver's licence.
- be employable in one of the fastest growing industries in the province.

### *How long is training?*

The program has three parts:

- 8 weeks of classroom and practical training by a qualified training school
- 4 weeks of unpaid Supervised Work Experience with a trained coach at a trucking company
- 1000 hours of paid Work-Based Learning with a trucking company (based on a 40-hour, five-day work week, this term could be 25 weeks long)

### *What happens in each term?*

The **8-week classroom and practical training term** includes 180 hours behind the wheel and 60 hours in the classroom. You'll learn how to drive bobtail (tractor only) and tractor/trailer combinations, including basic vehicle manoeuvres, conduct vehicle inspections and perform routine vehicle maintenance. Your training will prepare you to take the ICBC road test and examination to get your Class 1 licence during this term.

After 8 weeks, you'll be ready for **Supervised Work Experience** with a trucking company. Supervised Work Experience means that you'll work together with a trained coach and apply the skills you learned in the first part of your training.

The third and last training term is 1000 hours of **Work-Based Learning**. Your trucking company will treat you as an entry-level employee during this term, which includes paying your wages, and will assign you the regular duties of a professional driver. An assessor at the company will continue to provide close supervision and regular testing, to make sure that you're improving your skills. If you have questions or need advice, you'll still be able to talk to your coach.

### *Who provides the training?*

Qualified training schools conduct the training. These schools must meet strict standards for instructors, classroom facilities, equipment and yard space. The Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning terms are at screened, pre-qualified trucking companies using trained coach/assessors.

### *How do I qualify for the program?*

- **Get a Class 1 learner's licence<sup>1</sup>:** You must be 19 years or older to get a Class 1 learner's licence. You must also already have a Class 5 or 6 licence.
- **Take an ICBC-approved 16-hour on-highway air brake course:** The 16-hour air brake course is offered by licensed driver training schools and colleges throughout the province.
- **Meet government medical fitness requirements:** As a professional truck driver, you need to be in good physical condition. Ask your doctor for a signed note or form that says that you meet the Class 1 medical fitness requirements.
- **Have fewer than six points on your driver's abstract for the last five years:** Safe driving is an important part of being a professional truck driver. Too many points on your driver's abstract may mean that this isn't the career for you. You can get a driver's abstract from ICBC at this link:  
[http://www.icbc.com/licensing/lic\\_utility\\_driving\\_recordPU.asp](http://www.icbc.com/licensing/lic_utility_driving_recordPU.asp)
- **Pass the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) assessment:** TOWES measures essential or employability skills in three areas - reading text, document use and numeracy. It helps to show the "fit" between the skills that a professional driver needs and the skills that you already have. For more information, as well as a sample of the TOWES questions, visit [www.towes.com](http://www.towes.com).

### *What else do I need to know?*

Qualifying for the program is the first step. Employers that you're matched with during Supervised Work Experience and Work-Based Learning may have their own requirements. These might include:

- **Clean criminal record:** An unpardoned criminal record, no matter how old, may mean you can't travel into the US either for work or for pleasure.
- **Minimum age:** If you're under 21 years old when you graduate from the program, you won't be able to drive in the US.
- **Drug and alcohol testing:** Any professional driver who drives in the US must be drug and alcohol tested. This includes a pre-employment drug test and ongoing random

<sup>1</sup> Go to the ICBC website for a brochure on how to obtain a Class 1 learner's licence:  
[http://www.icbc.com/licensing/pdfs-commveh/Driving\\_Commercial\\_Vehicles\\_Getting\\_Your\\_Drivers\\_Licence\\_MV2677.pdf](http://www.icbc.com/licensing/pdfs-commveh/Driving_Commercial_Vehicles_Getting_Your_Drivers_Licence_MV2677.pdf)

drug and alcohol testing. Many companies that don't send drivers into the US also have drug and alcohol testing programs.

- **FAST card:** Some trucking companies that operate in the US require their drivers to have a Commercial Driver Free and Secure Trade (FAST) card. If you don't qualify for a FAST card, you may have trouble being hired by companies that do business in the US. For more information on FAST cards, visit the Canada Border Services Agency website at <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/fast-expres/menu-eng.html>.

### *How much does the program cost?*

**The tuition for the 2010 pilot project is free.** But you'll be responsible for living expenses during the eight-week classroom and practical training and the four-week Supervised Work Experience. During the Work-Based Learning term, your employer will pay you entry-level wages.

Tuition for regular delivery of the Professional Driver Training Program following the pilot project has not yet been established.

### *Is financial assistance available?*

Yes. The Professional Driver Training Program is recognized by ITA, so you can apply for student loans and other financial assistance. Visit the following links for more information on financial aid for BC students:

- <http://www.itabc.ca/> (look under Resources, then Financial Assistance)
- <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/welcome.htm>

Employers involved the program may also provide funding.

### *How do I apply?*

See the [Trainee Application Check List](#) for instructions.

**transCDA** is the Transportation Career Development Association of BC, which oversees training standards for the road, rail, marine and aerospace sectors of BC's transportation industry, to better ensure mobility for trained workers. transCDA coordinates the delivery of the BC Professional (Truck) Driver Training Program.

The **BC Trucking Association** (BCTA) is the recognised voice of the provincial motor carrier industry, representing over 800 truck and bus fleets and over 250 suppliers to the industry. BCTA members operate more than 13,000 vehicles and employ 26,000 people in communities throughout BC. BCTA was instrumental in establishing the training program and helping to develop its curriculum.