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State Regulations for Buses

Pennsylvania

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<https://www.penndot.pa.gov>

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FACT SHEET

Commercial Vehicles Registration Requirements

OVERVIEW

A commercial vehicle is any type of motor vehicle used for transporting goods or passengers for compensation. Commercial vehicle operations are categorized as either intrastate or interstate operations. Interstate operations require the applicant to operate in Pennsylvania and at least one other jurisdiction. Upon meeting the registration requirements, the applicant will obtain an apportioned registration plate. Intrastate operations require the applicant to conduct point to point operations within Pennsylvania. Non-apportioned commercial vehicles may operate in another jurisdiction with the purchase of a temporary permit from the jurisdiction where travel is desired.

Pennsylvania is a title state which requires a vehicle to be titled prior to registration being issued, however, an out-of-state title owner may lease his vehicle to a Pennsylvania apportioned registrant. The vehicle owner must provide a photocopy of the front and back of the out-of-state title. A lease agreement between the vehicle owner and the lessor is also required in order to create a Pennsylvania non-negotiable title record before registration may be issued.

Intrastate Operations - Intrastate operations occur when commercial vehicles transport goods or passengers from one point to another point within Pennsylvania. Vehicles primarily conducting intrastate operations are issued registration plates labeled as; "Bus," "Limousine," "Taxi," or "Truck" at the bottom. A temporary permit is required for a registered commercial truck over 26,000 pounds or a non-chartered bus travelling outside of Pennsylvania. Limousines and taxis operating outside of their regulated areas must obtain the proper authority prior to operating in that area. Additional information on intrastate vehicles and operations may be found by reviewing [PUB 479, "Fleet Registration Instruction Manual,"](#) found on the Driver and Vehicle Services website at www.pa.gov/dmv.

Companies with 15 or more vehicles may establish a fleet account. A fleet account enables the company to have the same registration expiry date for all vehicles in the fleet. One registration renewal invitation is issued containing all the vehicles in the fleet with the same expiration date.

Interstate Operations - Interstate operations occur when commercial vehicles transport goods or passengers from one point to another point in multiple jurisdictions. Commercial vehicles that operate in two or more jurisdictions and meet the following requirements are considered apportioned vehicles:

- i. Have two axles and a gross vehicle weight or registered gross weight in excess of 26,000 pounds (11,793.401 kilograms);
- ii. Have three or more axles, regardless of weight; or,
- iii. Are used in combination, when the gross vehicle weight of such combination exceeds 26,000 pounds (11,793.401 kilograms)

These vehicles are issued a registration plate labeled "Apportioned" at the bottom of the registration plate. The cab (registration) card lists the jurisdictions intended for travel and the maximum weight requested by the applicant. Registration fees are determined based on a calculation of total distance traveled in each jurisdiction (including Pennsylvania), jurisdictional fees by vehicle weight and number of vehicles in the fleet. An apportioned fleet may be established provided the applicant supplies three proofs of residency. The three proofs of residency are used to provide proof the applicant resides in Pennsylvania.

An individual must provide a front and back copy of their Pennsylvania Driver's License and supply two of the following:

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- a. Photocopy of utility bills (electric, gas, water or cable)
- b. Photocopy of stamped "Paid" HVUT 2290 Tax Receipt or IRS E-File Receipt
- c. Photocopy of real estate or personal property tax
- d. Photocopy of vehicle information for existing Pennsylvania registered vehicle
- e. Photocopy of valid county issued weapons permit

A business must supply proof of corporate documents filed with the Pennsylvania Department of State and three of the following:

- a. Photocopy of utility bills (electric, gas, water or cable)
- b. Photocopy of stamped "Paid" HVUT 2290 Tax Receipt or IRS E-File Receipt
- c. Photocopy of real estate or personal property tax
- d. Photocopy of vehicle information for existing Pennsylvania registered vehicle

International Registration Plan (IRP) – A reciprocity agreement between the United States, District of Columbia and Canadian provinces of apportioned vehicles primarily weighing in excess of 26,001 lbs. A Pennsylvania registrant pays a portion of registration fees to each jurisdiction requested on their apportioned vehicle application. The registrant is issued a cab card for each vehicle in the fleet. The cab card identifies the IRP jurisdictions in which the registrant may operate. Another key element of the plan is auditing. A registrant may be selected for audit by PennDOT. The audit is performed to validate compliance of proportional fees paid to each affected jurisdiction. Actual distance reported is evaluated and validated by comparing the trip log books or records maintained for each vehicle within the fleet.

Registrants with apportioned registration plates are required to maintain trip reports indicating the total distance traveled by vehicle. All movement must be recorded, including Pennsylvania. Auditing requirements vary between Federal and State agencies. PennDOT requires an apportioned registrant to maintain all vehicle trip records for a period of three (3) registration periods which may total up to five (5) years. Distance must be recorded daily and summarized monthly and quarterly by vehicle. A registration period is July 1st through June 30th annually.

Pennsylvania IRP and International Fuel Tax Agreement audits are conducted separately, therefore, it is important to maintain all records and receipts based on the record keeping requirements for each auditing agency. Visit the IRP website at www.irponline.org or reference [PUB 181, "Apportioned Registration Manual,"](#) on PennDOT's website at www.pa.gov/dmv for additional information.

Full Reciprocity Plan (FRP) – Under IRP, the FRP will eliminate the need to add jurisdictions to apportioned registration accounts. It will also eliminate the over "100 percent" fee calculation used when adding jurisdictions. Apportioned IRP registrants will not need to plan for trip permits as each IRP jurisdiction will be on the registration card. Every IRP jurisdiction will be implementing FRP in the same manner.

Charter Bus Apportioned Registration – Effective January 1, 2016, all charter buses operating interstate will be required to obtain apportioned registration or purchase trip permits. The IRP adopted the Full Reciprocity Plan (FRP) January 1, 2015, which grants apportioned registrants full access for commercial interstate operations. The exempt status from the IRP for charter buses was removed since FRP provides charter buses the flexibility required by charter bus operations. If the registrant elects to obtain temporary trip permits, the permits must be obtained prior to travel into another jurisdiction.

ELECTRONIC APPORTIONED CREDENTIAL

The International Registration Plan (IRP) has been amended to allow motor carriers to store apportioned registration cards in an electronic format, no longer requiring apportioned registered motor carriers to maintain paper credentials. The Pennsylvania apportioned registrant does not have to do anything different as a result of this amendment but may elect to upload their signed credential electronically. This amendment is effective January 1, 2019 and requires law enforcement from all US and Canadian IRP member jurisdictions to accept electronic images of apportioned registration cards (also known as cab cards). When stopped by law enforcement, apportioned registrants may show their credential as an electronic image on an electronic device or as a paper copy. Regardless of the format, the document must be valid, accurate, accessible and readable by law enforcement. If the motor carrier operator is unable to present proper credentials, the operator may receive a citation.

PennDOT is not changing their apportioned registration credential. Today, PennDOT can email the registration credential to motor carriers upon request. However, Section 1311(a) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code requires the registration document to be signed by the Pennsylvania apportioned registrant. This means that although PennDOT may email the apportioned registration credential electronically, the motor carrier operator must print and sign the credential. If they choose, they may upload the signed apportioned registration credential to their electronic device as a result of the Plan amendment or maintain it as a paper credential.

REGULATORY AUTHORITIES' REQUIREMENTS AFFECTING COMMERCIAL VEHICLES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) – A fuel tax agreement between US jurisdictions managed by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Any carrier operating a qualified motor vehicle exclusively in Pennsylvania, and not exempted by law or regulation, must register for Motor Carrier Road Tax (MCRT). Any carrier operating in Pennsylvania and at least one other jurisdiction must register with a base state pursuant to the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA). IFTA is an agreement among taxing jurisdictions that simplifies the reporting of fuel used by interstate motor carriers by consolidating all states' operations into one reporting form. Upon application, the carrier's base jurisdiction will issue credentials that allow the IFTA licensee to travel in all IFTA member jurisdictions. Record keeping requirements are similar but not the same as IRP requirements. Visit the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue website at www.pa.gov/agencies/revenue.html for additional information.

Motor Carrier (MC) – The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulates interstate operating authority of companies that operate as for-hire carriers (for a fee or other compensation) that transport passengers or federally regulated commodities or arrange for their transport. Visit the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website at www.fmcsa.dot.gov for additional information.

Public Utility Commission (PUC) – The Public Utility Commission regulates motor carriers that transport property, passengers or household goods as well as brokers of passenger transportation between points in Pennsylvania for compensation. Visit the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission website at www.puc.state.pa.us for additional information.

Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA) – The Philadelphia Parking Authority regulates medallion taxicabs that provide service between points within Philadelphia, from points within Philadelphia to destinations outside of Philadelphia, and from points outside of Philadelphia to points within Philadelphia and limousines providing service between points within Philadelphia, and service from an airport, railroad station or hotel located in Philadelphia. Visit the Philadelphia Parking Authority's website at www.philapark.org for additional information.

Port Authority of Allegheny County – The Port Authority of Allegheny County grants operating permits to carriers that offer para-transit service within Allegheny County. These permits are good for one year but are renewable. Visit the Port Authority of Allegheny County website at www.portauthority.org for additional information.

United States Department of Transportation Number (USDOT Number) – The United States Department of Transportation issues USDOT numbers to monitor a motor carrier's safety operations. The USDOT Number serves as a unique identifier when collecting and monitoring a company's safety information acquired during audits, compliance reviews, crash investigations, and inspections. A registrant or motor carrier operating a commercial motor vehicle that transports passengers or hauls cargo across state lines must be registered with the USDOT and must have and display an "Interstate USDOT Number" on their vehicles.

A registrant or motor carrier operating within Pennsylvania must have an "Intrastate USDOT Number" unless they have secured state-issued operating authority. Visit the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission website at www.puc.state.pa.us for additional information.

Hazardous Waste Transporter License – A motor carrier must obtain a Hazardous Waste Transporter License from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) if hazardous waste is being picked up or delivered in Pennsylvania. A motor carrier is not required to obtain a Hazardous Waste Transporter License if only passing through Pennsylvania. Visit the Hazardous Waste Management website at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep.html> for additional information.

Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) – The Unified Carrier Registration program requires that motor carriers and leasing companies that operate in interstate or international commerce in the United States must register under the UCR program. UCR replaced the Single State Registration System (SSRS) program.

The UCR program is similar to SSRS in that UCR is a base state system under which a carrier pays UCR fees through its base state on behalf of all participating states. Visit the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission website at www.puc.pa.gov for additional information.

PennDOT Central Permit Office – The PennDOT Central Permit Office issues hauling permits that are used to help facilitate the movement of mobile homes, oversize or overweight vehicles, and combinations of vehicles, as well as the movement of traffic, generally to protect the structural integrity of the highway and bridge system without the necessity of constant supervision by law enforcement. For additional information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation website at [Apply for a PennDOT Hauling Permit | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#).

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission – The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission may require special hauling permits or restrictions on certain placarded vehicles for transportation on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Please be aware that some permitting requirements may be specific to operations on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. For additional information, visit the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission website at www.paturnpike.com for additional information.