

**MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999**  
**MCSIA**  
**SCHOOL BUS ENDORSEMENT**

The following Q/A format provides information on the federal mandate that all persons operating a bus meeting the definition of a school bus have a school bus endorsement (S) on the CDL.

**Question 1:** Do the federal rules that implement MCSIA establish both knowledge and skills testing?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question 2:** Where are the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) rules found?

**Answer:** Title 49 CFR, Part 383.

**Question 3:** What is the federal definition of "school bus" in Part 383.

**Answer:** "School bus means a CMV (commercial motor vehicle) used to transport pre-primary, primary, or secondary school students from home to school, from school to home, or to and from school-sponsored events. School bus does not include a bus used as a common carrier." (49 CFR, Part 383.5)

**Question 4:** If a transit authority provides transportation of students for a school district, are the transit buses considered school buses for purposes of the "S" endorsement?

**Answer:** No. The definition in Q/A #3 excludes buses used as a common carrier.

Also, the definition of "school bus" in 321.1(69)(c), Code of Iowa, states: "School bus means every vehicle operated for the transportation of children to or from school, except vehicles which are: Operated by a municipally or privately owned urban transit company or a regional transit system as defined in section 324A.1 for the transportation of children as part of or in addition to their regularly scheduled service."

**Question 5:** Must a driver also qualify for a Passenger Endorsement (P)?

**Answer:** Yes. [49 CFR, Part 383.123(a)(1)]

**Question 6:** What is the cost of the "S" endorsement?

**Answer:** Ten-dollar endorsement fee.

**Question 7:** How many questions are on the knowledge examination and how many may be missed before the test is failed?

**Answer:** Twenty questions on the test. No more than four may be missed.

**Question 8:** What is included in the knowledge examination?

**Answer:** Loading and unloading children including the safe operation of stop signal devices, external mirror systems, flashing lights and other warning and passenger safety devices required for school buses by state or federal law or regulation; emergency exits and procedures for safely evacuating passengers in an emergency; state and federal laws and regulations related to safely traversing highway rail grade crossings. [49 CFR 383, Part (a)(2)]

**Question 9:** Can drivers "grandfather" out of the knowledge examination?

**Answer:** No, all drivers must take and pass the knowledge test.

**Question 10:** Is study material available.

**Answer:** Yes. It is printed in Section 13 in the current CDL Manual available at all DOT-operated DL stations and at county treasurer offices that offer driver licensing services. The study material is also posted on the DOT's website: <http://www.iamvd.com/ods/index.htm>

**Question 11:** When will testing begin.

**Answer:** Testing is currently available.

**Question 12:** Will the DOT charge a testing fee in addition to the endorsement fee?

**Answer:** No.

**Question 13:** Will group testing be available?

**Answer:** The DOT will work with the Department of Education and the Iowa Pupil Transportation Association to coordinate group testing for both the knowledge and skills where there is a need.

**Question 14:** Can drivers “grandfather” out of the skills testing?

**Answer:** Yes, providing that during the two-year period immediately prior to applying for the school bus endorsement, the driver:

- a. Held a valid CDL with a passenger vehicle endorsement to operate a school bus representative of the group he or she will be driving.
- b. Has not had his or her driver’s license or CDL suspended, revoked or canceled or been disqualified from operating a CMV.
- c. Has not been convicted of any of the disqualifying offenses in 49 CFR, Part 383.51(b).
- d. Has not had more than one conviction of any of the serious traffic violations defined in CFR 49 Part 383.5 while operating any type of motor vehicle.
- e. Has not had any conviction for a violation of state or local law relating to motor vehicle traffic control (other than a parking violation) arising in connection with any traffic accident.
- f. Has not been convicted of any motor vehicle traffic violations that resulted in an accident
- g. Has been regularly employed as a school bus driver and has operated a school bus representative of the group the applicant seeks to drive and provides evidence of such employment. [49 CFR, Part 383.123(b)(1)(2)]

Additional waiver information and the application form is available at local driver license stations.

**Question 15:** When must drivers have the “S” endorsement?

**Answer:** September 30, 2006. No “grandfathering” of skills tests will be allowed after September 30, 2006.

**Question 16:** Who is the Iowa DOT contact for the school bus endorsement testing?

**Answer:** David Stutz  
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