

Driver Qualification File Checklist 2026

One per driver. Rules current as of September 2026 (49 CFR Parts 382 and 391).

Driver name	Hire date	CDL? Yes / No
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BEFORE THE FIRST TRIP

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Employment application, signed by the driver
Lists employers for the last 3 years. CDL drivers also list CMV employers for the 7 years before that. | § 391.21 | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Road test certificate, or an accepted equivalent
Equivalent: a valid CDL for the type of truck, or a road test certificate from the last 3 years. Keep a copy in the file. | § 391.31 / 391.33 | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Medical certification
CDL drivers: the state driving record (CDLIS MVR) showing medical certification status. Non-CDL drivers: a copy of the medical examiner's certificate. | § 391.51(b)(6) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Note verifying the medical examiner is on the National Registry (non-CDL drivers) | § 391.51(b)(8)(i) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Medical variance or SPE certificate, if the driver has one | § 391.51(b)(7) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Clearinghouse pre-employment full query (driver consents in the Clearinghouse) | § 382.701(a) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Negative pre-employment drug test result
Required before any safety-sensitive work. Keep it with your drug and alcohol records, not in the DQ file. | § 382.301 | <input type="text"/>
date done |

WITHIN 30 DAYS OF HIRE

- | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Driving record (MVR) from every state the driver held a license in, last 3 years | § 391.23(a)(1) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Safety performance history from DOT-regulated employers, last 3 years
Replies, or proof of good-faith attempts. Keep in a separate, secure investigation file with the driver's written authorization. | § 391.23(a)(2) | <input type="text"/>
date done |

EVERY 12 MONTHS

- | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ New driving record (MVR) from each state the driver held a CMV license in | § 391.25(a) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Signed note of your annual review of that driving record | § 391.25(c)(2) | <input type="text"/>
date done |
| ☐ Annual Clearinghouse query (limited query is fine with the driver's consent) | § 382.701(b) | <input type="text"/>
date done |

WHEN THE MEDICAL CARD RUNS OUT

- ☐ **New medical exam at least every 24 months, sooner if the examiner set a shorter period**
Update the file the same way: CDLIS MVR for CDL drivers, a certificate copy and registry note for non-CDL drivers.

§ 391.45

date done

HOW LONG TO KEEP IT

- Keep the whole file while the driver works for you, and for 3 years after they leave. (§ 391.51(c))
- You may remove these once they are 3 years old: annual MVRs, annual review notes, medical certificates (or CDLIS MVRs), medical variances, and registry notes. (§ 391.51(d))
- The safety performance history file is kept separately, with access limited to people involved in the hiring decision. (§ 391.53)

NO LONGER REQUIRED

The driver's annual list of violations is gone. § 391.27 was removed, so you don't need it in the file anymore. Many older checklists still include it.

Want us to keep your driver files audit-ready?

We build and track DQ files, MVRs, medical cards and Clearinghouse queries for every driver.

Call (208) 296-6470 or visit truckwisereporting.com/services/driver-safety-compliance.html