**Mandatory training for commercial full Class A licence applicants starts July 1, 2017**

Starting July 1, 2017, drivers seeking a commercial full Class A licence in Ontario must complete a mandatory entry-level training course before attempting their road test. The new requirement, announced last summer by Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca, will ensure commercial drivers have the experience and training needed to safely operate large trucks on Ontario’s roads.

The mandatory training course will apply to all new applicants for commercial full Class A licences — the class needed to drive trucks with air brakes and vehicles over 4,600 kilograms. Drivers who take a road test before July 1, 2017 and those who already hold a valid Class A licence are not required to take the course.

To complete the course, drivers must enrol with a registered Private Career College or another provider that is recognized under the Ministry of Transportation’s Driver Certification Program.

“In the past, we’ve seen some unregistered truck schools offering courses that focus solely on teaching drivers how to pass the road test, rather than teaching the skills they need to operate their vehicles safely,” said Del Duca. “This change will ensure that drivers are getting the proper training and learning about Ontario’s road safety standards.”

The curriculum for the mandatory training course will be set by the training providers, and must meet the Ministry of Transportation’s *Commercial Truck Driver Training Standard (Class A).* The course will cover entry-level knowledge and skills that a truck driver must possess in order to operate a Class A vehicle safely, including basic driving techniques, tractor-trailer off-road manoeuvres, vehicle inspection activities and more. The course is expected to take about four to six weeks to complete. Training providers will set the cost.

Upon a driver’s successful completion of the course, training providers will submit verification via a web-based system to the province. DriveTest centres will check the driver record to ensure the course has been completed before a full Class A road test can be taken. The course is valid for life.

Drivers seeking a Restricted Class A (AR) licence — to drive vehicles with a single trailer without air-brakes — will not be required to complete the course. However, the course must be completed if and when drivers wish to remove the restriction and upgrade to a full Class A licence.

The move, which has been well-received by trucking organizations throughout the province, will help address the industry’s need for well-qualified and properly-trained drivers.

According to Ontario’s Road Safety Annual Report, the total number of collision-related fatalities on Ontario’s roads was 517 in 2014. Of those, 109 involved large trucks. By increasing the training requirements for new commercial truck drivers, the province hopes to see a steady decline in those numbers.

“The safety of everyone who uses Ontario roads is our top priority,” said Minister Del Duca. “By introducing mandatory training in addition to knowledge and road tests, we’re taking steps to ensure Ontario’s roads stay among the safest in North America.”

In 2014, there were 291,555 large trucks in Ontario, and over half of those were operated by Class A drivers. In addition to boosting road safety, the Ministry of Transportation is estimating that the new training requirements will save taxpayers about $29 million per year by reducing the social costs of collisions on Ontario highways.

To learn more about Ontario’s new mandatory entry-level training, visit ontario.ca/classAtraining.