

# Frequently asked questions: Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) for Bus Drivers

Changes to licensing and training requirements for bus drivers come into force March 1, 2019.

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What is the Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) Program and why is it being implemented?

Effective March 1, 2019, anyone who wants to get a Class 1 or Class 2 driver's licence must take the Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) Program. **Between March 15 and July 31, 2019 new school bus drivers can apply for an extension to comply with the MELT requirements. More information can be found below.**

The MELT Program is comprised of mandatory, standardized curriculums for Class 1, Class 2 and Class 2-S (school bus) licences with in-class, in-yard (where the vehicle is not moving) and in-vehicle (where the vehicle is moving) training.

The 2-S curriculum combines both the Class 2 curriculum and the School Bus Driver Improvement (or S-Endorsement) Program, needed for school bus drivers.

Following training, all students are required to pass an enhanced knowledge and road test (based on the MELT curriculum) in order to obtain their commercial driver's licence.

The purpose of the training is to ensure that commercial drivers have the basic skills and experience necessary to safely operate large commercial vehicles on the road.

This training should improve safety, reduce collisions and save lives.

What are the requirements for new and existing bus drivers?

- 1) **Existing Drivers:** If you got your Class 2 licence on or before October 10, 2018, and you have an S-Endorsement on your licence, no changes apply to you. You continue to be a school bus driver without any additional requirements.
- 2) **MELT Transition Period:** If you got your Class 2 licence between October 11, 2018 and February 28, 2019, you must take the enhanced knowledge and road test by March 1, 2020. The purpose of this re-testing is to ensure that recently licensed Class 2 drivers have driving skills that meet the new MELT standards.
  - o Government will pay for the first attempt at the knowledge and road tests. You will have two attempts to pass.
- 3) **S-Endorsement Transition Period:** If you are a school bus driver and do not yet have an S-Endorsement on your licence, you have until July 31, 2019 to get the necessary training and update your licence. A permit will be required to give current drivers who do not yet have their S-Endorsement an extension until July 31, 2019 to take this training. See the School Bus Policy for more information located at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/school-bus-policy>
- 4) **New Drivers:** Effective March 1, 2019, all drivers who have never held a Class 2 licence before and want to get one must take Class 2 MELT training.
- 5) **New School Bus drivers:** until July 31, 2019, new school bus drivers can apply to Alberta Transportation to get their Class 2 licence under the pre-MELT process. This is to ensure that there is no interruption to service to schools during the transition to MELT. You must also take the enhanced MELT knowledge and road test by March 1, 2020. All school bus drivers must have completed the School Bus Driver Improvement Program (S-Endorsement) by July 31, 2019.

I want to become a school bus driver for the first time, how to I apply to get the school bus driver extension?

If you apply for and are eligible for the extension, you will be permitted to take the existing, pre-MELT, Class 2 knowledge and road test by July 31, 2019. You must also take the enhanced MELT knowledge and road test by March 1, 2020.

- 1) Any new school bus driver who wants to apply for the extension must fill out an application form between March 15 and July 31, 2019. The application form will be available online on March 15 at <https://www.alberta.ca/mandatory-entry-level-training-for-class-1-and-2-drivers-licences.aspx>
- 2) Alberta Transportation will review the application and, if approved, you will receive an authority letter for you to present at a registries office in order to take the existing, pre-MELT, Class 2 knowledge and road test.
- 3) Once you have been approved for the extension, you must take and pass the pre-MELT Class 2 knowledge and road test **by July 31, 2019.**
- 4) No one is eligible for the extension effective August 1, 2019.

- 5) To make sure these drivers also meet the new MELT standards, you will also have to take the enhanced knowledge and road test (based on the MELT curriculums) before March 1, 2020 to ensure that you meet the new driver training standards.

Any driver who wants to get a Class 2 licence at any time must meet all of the following requirements:

- Have an approved Class 2 driver's medical completed by a physician,
- Be at least 18 years old,
- Not be part of the Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Program and have at least a full Class 5 Alberta driver's licence; and
- Successful completion of the Air Brake Endorsement (Q Endorsement) Program, if applicable.

If I got my licence between October 11, 2018 and February 28, 2019, what is the re-testing process?

- 1) You have until March 1, 2020 to take your enhance knowledge and road test. You have two attempts to pass both tests.
  - You can continue to drive a Class 2 vehicle until that time.
- 2) Starting March 1, 2019, you can book your enhanced knowledge test in person at any Alberta registry agent office.
- 3) Government will pay for your first attempts at the knowledge and road tests. If you fail the first attempt at the knowledge test, or the first attempt at the road test, you have one more chance to retake the test you failed, at your expense.
- 4) If you fail the second re-test attempt at either the knowledge or road test, your licence will be re-classed to the class of licence you held previously (e.g. if you held a Class 5 licence, it will revert back to a Class 5 licence.)
- 5) You will be ineligible to drive Class 2 vehicles.

To re-obtain your Class 2 licence, you must take the MELT training and pass the knowledge and road tests.

What if I don't re-test before March 1, 2020?

If you haven't done your re-testing by March 1, 2020, your licence will be automatically re-classed to the class of licence you held previously (e.g. if it was Class 5, your licence will revert back to Class 5.)

You will be ineligible to drive Class 2 vehicles.

- To re-obtain your Class 2 licence, you must take MELT training and pass the knowledge and road tests.

What is an S-Endorsement?

The S-Endorsement, also known as the School Bus Driver Improvement Program, is a course that is specifically designed for school bus drivers, to give them additional training to safely maneuver a school bus and transport passengers. The School Bus Driver Improvement Program teaches components that are specific to school buses. For example, the course teaches protocols for unloading and loading passengers, vehicle maneuvers, emergency management, vehicle components and so forth.

## Who needs an S-Endorsement?

### **New school bus drivers**

As of March 1, 2019, unless they have applied and are approved for an extension, all new Class 2 school bus drivers must:

- complete Mandatory Entry-Level Training and successfully pass all required testing, and
- have an S-Endorsement on their driver's licence

If an extension is granted, new school bus drivers have until July 31, 2019 to complete the pre-MELT Class 2 knowledge test and road test, and complete the S-Endorsement.

### **Existing school bus drivers**

As of March 1, 2019, the legal definition of a school bus is changing. If your organization uses vehicles that meet the new definition of a school bus, anyone who drives these vehicles must have an S-Endorsement on their commercial driver's licence by July 31, 2019. A permit will be required to give current drivers who do not yet have their S-Endorsement an extension until July 31, 2019 to take this training.

See the School Bus Policy for more information.

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/school-bus-policy>

## What is the definition of a school bus?

The definition for a school bus has recently been updated in the *Operator Licensing and Vehicle Control Regulation* and will be in force as of March 1, 2019. Please see the new School Bus Policy for the definition.

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/school-bus-policy>

## Considering the updated School Bus definition, what vehicles will require the S-Endorsement to be completed?

The chart at the end of the FAQ lists when S-Endorsement will be required. For further information, please refer to the new School Bus Policy.

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/school-bus-policy>

## How do I obtain an S-Endorsement permit?

To ensure that the school bus industry has enough time to meet these requirements for existing Class 1, 2, or 4 drivers, the Registrar of Motor Vehicle Services has issued a permit giving school bus drivers operating school buses as per the new definition until July 31, 2019 to obtain their S-Endorsement. School bus operators are required to print and maintain a copy of this permit in the school bus which can be accessed from:

<https://www.alberta.ca/school-bus-driver-improvement-program.aspx>

As of August 1, 2019 all school bus drivers must have the S-Endorsement on their driver's licence, regardless of the class of licence they hold.

## What is the process to get an S-Endorsement?

- 1) Complete S-Endorsement classroom training. You must participate in a classroom training session delivered by a licensed driver training school. The classroom training is a minimum of 15 hours. Each student is provided with a copy of the School Bus Operator's manual as a reference and study guide.
- 2) Pass knowledge assessments. Knowledge assessments are completed under the direct supervision of the driving instructor after each series. You have three attempts to pass each knowledge assessment.
- 3) Complete practical training. Once you complete the classroom training and pass all knowledge assessments, you must participate in the practical training session.
- 4) Pass pre-trip inspection assessment and 45 minute on-road assessment. Only one practical re-assessment is allowed before additional training is required. The re-assessment must be conducted on a different day. Once you pass the on-road assessment, you will be issued a Notice of Driver Education Course Completion form.
- 5) Go to a registry agent. Bring the Notice of Driver Education Course Completion form to any Alberta registry agent to get the S-Endorsement added to your driver's licence. A government fee and a service charge will apply. The S-Endorsement will then appear on your driver's licence card.

There is no renewal requirement for the S-Endorsement.

## What if I have an S-Endorsement or equivalent from another jurisdiction?

S-Endorsements (or equivalent) from other jurisdictions are not valid in Alberta. As of March 1, 2019 you must successfully complete the School Bus Driver Improvement Program from a licensed Alberta driver training school or entity and have the Alberta S-Endorsement on your driver's licence before you can operate a school bus.

## What is the Class 2-S MELT curriculum?

The Class 2-S MELT curriculum combines the Class 2 MELT curriculum with the School Bus Driver Improvement Program (S-Endorsement). This curriculum was developed based on feedback from the school bus industry.

## To date, school boards and school bus companies have been able to deliver S-Endorsement training, will this still occur?

Yes, these entities can continue to teach the School Bus Driver Improvement Program (S-Endorsement Program). However, all existing entities that teach/deliver the new Class 2S MELT driver training and/or the S-Endorsement Program must be licensed with the Government of Alberta to teach these courses.

So school boards and bus companies have to become a licensed driver training school to deliver MELT and S-Endorsement?

Yes, all entities and driving instructors who want to deliver driver training, including the MELT Program curriculums and the School Bus Driver Improvement Program (S-Endorsement) in Alberta, must be licensed by Alberta Transportation.

As an existing agency that delivers the S-Endorsement, am I eligible to deliver a Class 2-S curriculum (Class 2 MELT with S-Endorsement training)? If so, how do I go about doing that?

Any licenced entity can deliver the MELT Program curriculums. All entities and driving instructors who want to deliver driver training in Alberta, must be licensed by Alberta Transportation. For details on how to become a licenced entity, please contact Alberta Transportation.

I am a Senior Driving Instructor; how many driver training schools or entities can I be affiliated with?

A Senior Driving Instructor can be affiliated with up to 3 driver training schools or entities.

I need more information on MELT or the school bus licensing requirements. Where can I find this?

For more information about MELT and school bus licensing requirements please visit:  
<https://www.alberta.ca/school-bus-driver-improvement-program.aspx>

or

<https://www.alberta.ca/mandatory-entry-level-training-for-class-1-and-2-drivers-licences.aspx>

I have further questions or want to verify the status of my application. Who can I contact?

For general inquiries, please contact [trans.driver.prog@gov.ab.ca](mailto:trans.driver.prog@gov.ab.ca)

To verify the status of your application, or for assistance with the licensing process, please contact Claycee Oderkirk at 403-297-6679.

## School Bus Definition – Clarification for S-Endorsement Requirements

Vehicle Type	What Class of Driver's Licence is Required?	Do I Need the S-Endorsement?	Example
A bus that meets the requirements of a Type A1, A2, B, C or D school bus described in CSA D250 16, or a version of CSA D250 applicable at the time of manufacture, and that is used primarily to transport students to and from school (as per the <i>Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation</i> )	Class 1 or 2	Yes	
A multifunctional school activity bus, as defined in CSA-D250-16	Class 1 or 2 (more than 24 passengers)  Class 4 (not more than 24 passengers excluding the driver)	Yes	  
A multifunctional activity bus, originally manufactured to CSA-D270 standards that meets the CSA-D250-16 requirements	Class 1 or 2 (more than 24 passengers)  Class 4 (not more than 24 passengers excluding the driver)	Yes	  
A commercial vehicle that is registered as a kindergarten bus	Class 1 or 2 (more than 24 passengers)  Class 4 (not more than 24 passengers excluding the driver)	Yes	

15 passenger vans that do not meet the CSA D250-16 requirements	Class 5	No	
Handi-buses, limo buses, funeral home buses, or coach buses	Class 1, 2 or 4	No	
Taxis or airport shuttle buses.  Unless the vehicle being used is or was CSA D-250 compliant or was a similar kind of vehicle manufactured outside of Canada	Class 1, 2 or 4	No  Yes	
A vehicle that was CSA D-250 compliant, or is a similar kind of vehicle manufactured outside of Canada to CSA-D250-like specifications, only as a private passenger vehicle (for example: an old school bus turned into a family RV)	Class 1 or 2	No	

\*Please note that these pictures are not exhaustive. They are meant to provide examples for our stakeholders. Please refer to Section 20.5 (c) of the Operator Licensing and Vehicle Control Regulation for the definition of a school bus and please refer to Alberta Transportation's School Bus Policy. The amendments to the Operator Licensing and Vehicle Control Regulation, including the new definition of a school bus, come into force March 1, 2019.