



PA 24-14—sHB 5404

*Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee
Transportation Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE
AND THE DRIVER'S LICENSE ENDORSEMENT TO OPERATE FIRE
APPARATUS**

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner to waive certain Q-endorsement eligibility requirements for veterans and current members of the armed forces or National Guard (“military members”) who qualify. A Q-endorsement is a license endorsement that authorizes holders to operate a fire apparatus (i.e., drive a fire truck). Under prior law, all applicants for this endorsement must have (1) been trained to drive a fire truck according to Commission on Fire Prevention and Control standards and (2) demonstrated the necessary skills (i.e., passed a driving test) on a representative vehicle, among other requirements.

To qualify for a waiver under the act, members must meet minimum federal waiver requirements for commercial driver’s license (CDL) testing. This federal regulation allows states to waive the CDL knowledge test and driving skills test and sets qualifications for the waivers (see below). Under the act, the DMV commissioner must waive both the Q-endorsement training and driving test requirements for members who meet the federal requirements for either the CDL knowledge test or driving skills test waiver.

The act limits the amount of time that each veteran has to qualify for a Q-endorsement waiver. A veteran may only apply for the waiver within two years after his or her military discharge and must have met the federal waiver requirements within the two years before being discharged. (As described below, the federal waiver regulations require that applicants meet certain conditions within the prior year.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

**FEDERAL CDL WAIVER REQUIREMENTS APPLIED TO Q-
ENDORSEMENTS**

Federal law sets rules for CDLs for interstate operation and states are generally required to conform their licensing laws to these requirements. Among other things, these rules include requiring CDL applicants to pass a knowledge test and driving skills test. However, they allow states to waive these test requirements under certain circumstances.

Federal law generally allows states to waive the CDL knowledge test requirement for military members who show that, within the year prior to applying, they:

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

1. were regularly employed in one of seven specified military capacities (e.g., an Air Force pavement and construction equipment operator, Army PATRIOT launching station operator, or Marine Corps motor vehicle operator);
2. operated a commercial motor vehicle representative of the type they expect to operate upon separation from the military;
3. have not held more than one civilian license at the same time; and
4. have not been convicted of certain specified motor vehicle offenses or had any license suspended or revoked (49 C.F.R. § 383.77(a)(2)).

Similarly, states may generally waive the CDL driving skills test requirement for military members who show, among other things, that they:

1. were regularly employed within the last year in a military position that required driving a commercial motor vehicle;
2. drove, for the two years prior to separating from the military, a vehicle representative of the commercial type they expect to operate upon separation from the military;
3. have not held more than one civilian license at the same time; and
4. have not been convicted of certain specified motor vehicle offenses or had any license suspended or revoked (49 C.F.R. § 383.77(b)(2)).

Under the act, if a military member meets either of the above sets of requirements (i.e., for either the knowledge test or driving skills test waiver), the DMV commissioner must waive both the Q-endorsement knowledge test and training requirements. The act requires the commissioner to establish a process for members to apply for the waiver.

BACKGROUND

By law, a veteran is anyone honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions, or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition, from active service in the armed forces (i.e., the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, Air Force, and any of their reserve components, including the Connecticut National Guard when under federal service) (CGS § 27-103, as amended by PA 23-71).