

DRIVER EXAMINATION DIVISION

The Missouri State Highway Patrol Division provides an effective program of driver testing to ensure Missouri licensed drivers have a level of competency consistent with safe driving habits and practices as well as demonstrated skills and knowledge of Missouri laws related to traffic safety. The Driver Examination Division provides the written and skills test for applicants applying for a Missouri operator's license, chauffeur's license, and commercial driver's license (CDL). The division also works with other agencies to review and update the Commercial Driver License Manual, Missouri Driver's Guide, and Missouri Motorcycle Operator's Manual.

The Driver Examination Division provides administrative and staff support for the program in the field. Program direction and guidance; coordination of site selection; rent and lease contract processes for all driver examination office locations; liaison with the Department of Revenue and field personnel; correspondence and personal contacts concerning the driver examination program; training, equipment, and supplies procurement; and overall program budget control are some of the responsibilities of the division.

The 66th General Assembly of 1952 passed the Driver's License Examination Law and delegated its supervision to the Patrol. Thirty-five uniformed officers of the Patrol, Kansas City Police Department, and St. Louis Police Department administered the tests until 1955. In 1955, the entire program was given to the Patrol. On July 26, 1955, 26 civilian examiners reported for duty. The Traffic Division, the Safety Division, the Safety and Administration Division, and the Driver and Vehicle Regulation Division within the Patrol have all been assigned administrative supervision over the driver examination program.

"Applicants would often add humor to the testing process," said retired Captain Robert J. "Bob" Hagan in a 2005 interview. Capt. Hagan began his career with the Patrol as a driver examiner from 1956-1958. "The draft card was an acceptable form of identification. Some people who felt they couldn't pass the test would have someone else come in and try to take the test for them. A lot of the people in the area didn't have middle names, so their draft card would have "NMN" in that blank, which stood for "no middle name". One day a man came in and handed me a draft card. I asked him for his date of birth and then asked him what his middle name was. He made the sound for the letters "NMN". He had read the card and didn't realize what "NMN" stood for." He thought it was the person's middle name." *(This interview was included in the publication "To Serve and Protect, A Collection of Memories". Capt. Hagan was the first director of the Driver Examination Division.)*

Beginning in 1968, motorcycle tests were given to determine if the applicant has a level of competency consistent with safe driving habits and

practices as well as demonstrated skills and knowledge of Missouri laws related to traffic safety. The skill test determines the applicant's ability to safely maneuver and operate his/her motorcycle.

In 1987, Dale Shikles, then-driver examiner supervisor, was transferred to General Headquarters to help the division prepare for the new CDL program. Dale was the first driver examiner assigned to General Headquarters. During this time of preparation, Dale was promoted to chief driver examiner. Prior to this, there were only three chief driver examiners. They were assigned to Troops A, C, and D, and supervised the driver examiner supervisors. In 1990, Dale was promoted to senior chief driver examiner. By this time, there had been a chief examiner assigned to all nine troops. Dale Shikles was the first (and only) senior chief examiner and held the position until his retirement in 2005. At that time, Rhonda Czarnecki was promoted to senior chief examiner and currently holds that position.

A new law affecting school bus drivers became effective on September 1, 1988. It required drivers of school buses owned by or under contract with a public school or the State Board of Education to obtain a school bus operator's permit. One of the requirements an applicant for a bus permit must satisfy is to take and pass a series of examinations. The examinations consist of a written test of applicable laws, rules, and procedures, and a driving test in the class of vehicle to be operated.

"The CDL program started with a written test in January 1990. The driving skills portion of the test began in July 1990. The Patrol didn't have any sites available to administer the skills test initially, due to the amount of space needed for the commercial vehicle," said Senior Chief Driver Examiner Dale P. Shikles in a 2005 interview. "It was required that drivers be tested in a vehicle representative of the class of license for which they applied. Initially, drivers meeting certain criteria were "grandfathered", which meant they weren't required to take the driving skills test. However, every driver had to take the written test.

The CDL program is one of the best changes in the history of the driver-testing program," continued Sr. Chief DE Shikles. "It is a much more effective way to ensure drivers have minimum driving skills to operate large trucks and buses." (*This interview appears in the publication entitled, "To Serve and Protect A Collection of Memories".*)

In 1990, the first Commercial Driver's License Examiner Training Session took place at the Safety Center located at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri. The five-day training addressed how to conduct road tests under the new CDL program. Driver examiners and driver examiner sergeants from around the state attended.

During the calendar year 1990, there were 177,630 CDL written tests administered with an overall failure rate of 27 percent. CDL skills tests were administered at 16 CDL test sites around the state. The CDL skills test consists of a pre-trip vehicle inspection test, basic vehicle control skills test, and an on-the-

road driving test. The average test is over 12 miles, during which the applicant must demonstrate ability to effectively handle the vehicle, operate the vehicle in traffic, and to perform a variety of controlled maneuvers. The failure rate for CDL driving skills tests averaged 16 percent during 1990.

In 1991 the state law allowed for third party testers to administer the commercial driver license skills examination. The staff at Central Missouri State University and the Driver Examination Division (GHQ) held a one-week Third Party Training Course. This course was conducted at the Central Missouri State University Safety Center at Warrensburg. Eighteen people took the training to be certified as third party examiners.

Being A Driver Examiner May Be Hazardous To Your Health

January 21, 1994, was another, normal workday for most of us. Not so for Driver Examiner Henry Spencer, who works out of the Department of Revenue office in Joplin, Missouri. Normally, there are three examiners on duty. January 21, however, everyone was gone except for Henry. Now, Henry is a well-rounded, seasoned veteran who can handle any situation -- well, almost any situation. As you can imagine, he was quite busy. In fact, the longer the day went, the more behind he got.

Things started going downhill at 11:28 a.m. He was giving a previously revoked driver his driving portion of the test, and they were southbound on Joplin Street. This is a two-lane, one-way street. They were in the right lane. Henry told the alert driver to make a left turn at the next street. The driver responded and proceeded to get into the left lane just in time to strike another southbound vehicle in the right side. Corporal Kemp A. Shoun investigated the accident. There were no injuries, and, yes, the driver received an invitation to court.

Things went fairly well for Henry until 3:20 p.m. Guess what!?! He witnessed his second accident of the day. This time, he was giving the driving test to a young lady trying to get her first driver's license. They were westbound on Fourth Street approaching Main Street. Henry noticed the light was red and traffic was stopped. He didn't think she saw it, so he casually told her about the stopped cars that were "quickly" approaching. Being an inexperienced driver, she hit the accelerator instead of the brake and struck the rear of another car. Unfortunately, the passenger of the other car was injured and transported to the hospital. Trooper C.M. Stratton investigated this accident. When they tried to get Cpl. Shoun to work it, he thought they were "putting him on". I can't imagine that. This driver also was given an invitation to court.

I understand both drivers failed their examinations, and Henry had to take two days off to recuperate. Perhaps he should receive hazardous duty pay.

Henry, was this Friday the 21st or maybe Friday the 13th? *(Reprinted from May 1994 issue of the Patrol News.)*

In 1996, division members also rewrote the Missouri School Bus Driver Trainer Instruction Manual, and served on the School Bus Driver Trainer Curriculum Development Committee. In addition, the Driver Examination Division served on a joint committee with the Department of Revenue, Division of Highway Safety, and Central Missouri State University personnel, to develop a driver-training guide for parents who wish to teach their kids how to drive.

From 1998 until the present, the division has participated in revising the Missouri Driver's Guide to reflect changes brought about as a result of new legislation.

The Graduated Driver's License law became effective January 1, 2001, requiring that all first-time drivers between 15 and 18 years old complete a period of driving with a licensed driver (Instruction Permit) and restricted driving (Intermediate License) before getting a full driver's license.

In July 31, 2002, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) created a new endorsement that CDL holders must obtain in order to operate a school bus. The FMCSA created an "S" endorsement and developed three requirements that an applicant must satisfy before obtaining an "S" endorsement: 1. Qualify for a passenger endorsement. 2. Pass a knowledge test that covers at least three safety specific topic areas. 3. Pass a skills test in a school bus of the same vehicle group, as the applicant will drive. September 30, 2005, was the deadline for implementing the "S" endorsement; the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association extended this date to September 30, 2006.

In 2003, the driver examination division made a big change in the way the written test was administered. The written test became automated in 17 of our five days-per-week examination stations. It has now been expanded to 22 of our testing locations. With computerized testing, the applicant simply touches the screen to answer the questions. The computer has an audio function that allows the applicant to request the computer to read the questions to the applicants. The computer also has graphic illustrations to assist the applicant in understanding the questions.

The Driver Examination Committee was formed to complete several projects, which have had a significant impact on the driver examination operation. They include revising the monthly summary report, the Driver Examination Procedural Manual, Class E, F, M, school bus, and foreign written examinations. They also revised five forms into one new form to record written and skill test results. All these projects have resulted in significant timesaving for driver examination personnel in the performance of their duties. The DE Committee currently meets at least annually to discuss current issues and make recommendations to the division.

The written test (paper) for a Class F license is available in 11 foreign languages. They are: Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Bosnian. Seven foreign languages are offered on the computer. They are: Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Japanese,

Bosnian, Korean, and Chinese. The CDL written examinations are provided in English only.

During 2005, the Driver Examination Division administered a total of 525,260 written examinations. This includes 126,295 written examinations for commercial driver's licenses. There were 163,755 road tests (in traffic) given to applicants for all license classes. Of this number, 12,836 were commercial driver's license road tests (in traffic). The failure rate for skills tests averaged 26 percent and 55 percent for written tests.

In 2005, RSMo. 302.721, gave the Department of Revenue and the Missouri State Highway Patrol authority to retest 10 percent of the Third Party Tester applicants. State regulation 12 CSR 10-24.335 was created to establish procedures for the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Missouri Department of Revenue to conduct retesting of commercial driver license applicants in order to determine compliance with the Third Party Commercial Driver License Examination Program. The state currently has six retest auditors located in five troops. On September 19, 2005, the auditors began retesting 10 percent of Third Party Tester applicants.

In 2007, new CDL testing sites were opened in Rolla and Carthage. Also in 2007, a training curriculum was developed and presented to all driver examination personnel to assist in evaluating cited drivers. The program is titled, "Health, Functional Status and Older Driver Safety." This will be an ongoing training presented to all newly hired examiners.

Statute 302.720 was revised in 2007, requiring all CDL written tests be administered in the English language. No translators are allowed for applicants taking CDL tests.

In October 2008, Missouri implemented the new "AAMVA CDL testing standards." Missouri was the 13th state to adopt the standards. Also in October 2008, a new CDL testing site was opened in South St. Louis.

In October 2009, the Driver Examination Division implemented a field training program for new examiners. This program was designed to assure all new hires were trained consistently throughout the state. DE Examiner III Jennifer Whiting, Troop A, was instrumental to the implementation of the new program. Examiner Whiting developed the foundation on which the new field training program was built.

During 2009, there were 229 Patrol employees assigned to the Driver Examination program. Statewide, there are 219 driver examiners and 4 full-time clerks.

In 2009, the Driver Examination Division began an audit/in-service training program to ensure that all CDL qualified examiners are proficient in the new 2005 CDL testing standards. Examiners will be audited once every two years.

During 2010, there were 230 Patrol employees assigned to the driver examination program. Statewide, there are 222 driver examiners and five full-time clerks. There are 155 driver examination locations throughout Missouri with

offices in all of the state's 114 counties and the city of St. Louis. Thirteen of these locations are commercial driver's license (CDL) skills test sites. Eighteen full-time, five-days-a-week offices are located in the urban areas of Kansas City, St. Louis, Springfield, St. Joseph, Joplin, Columbia, and Jefferson City. In 2010, approval was given to open an additional full-time driver examination office. It will be located in Wentzville, Missouri.

The Driver Examination Division is currently working with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation to develop a new motorcycle skills test.

Driver Examination Division Directors

Lt. J.A. Berglund	1952 to 1953	Div. of Safety & Administration
Capt. J.A. Berglund	1953 to 1966	
Capt. F.W. Shadwell	1967 to 1968	Div. of Safety
Capt. F.W. Shadwell	1969 to 1972	Traffic Division
Capt. C.S. Endicott	1973 to 1978	Traffic Division
Capt. J.M. Luker	1979 to 1980	Driver & Vehicle Regulation Div. (Included CVE, MVI, DE)
Lt. Robert J. "Bob" Hagan	1981 to 1988	Driver Examination Div.
Capt. J.F. Gaines	1989	
Lt. W.L. Baucom	1990	
Lt. B.R. Nelson	1991 to 1993	
Capt. B.R. Nelson	1994 to 2007	Driver Examination Division
Capt. G.L. Moore	2007 to 2010	
Capt. K.A. Geiger	2010 to 2011	
Capt. L.D. Elder	2011 to present	

Senior Chief Driver Examiners

- Dale Shikles - 1990 to 2005
- Rhonda Czarnecki - 2005 to the present