

technical guidance in the area of truck driver training. Research at that time had shown that many driver-training schools offered little or no structured curricula or uniform training programs for any type of CMV.

To help correct this problem, the agency developed, and in 1985 issued, the "Model Curriculum for Training Tractor-Trailer Drivers" (1985, GPO Stock No. 050-001-00293-1), which incorporated the agency's "Proposed Minimum Standards for Training Tractor Trailer Drivers" (1984). The Model Curriculum, as it is known in the industry, is a broad set of recommendations that incorporates standardized minimum core curriculum guidelines and training materials, as well as guidelines pertaining to vehicles, facilities, instructor hiring practices, graduation requirements, and student placement. Curriculum content includes the following areas: basic operation, safe operating practices, advanced operating practices, vehicle maintenance, and non-vehicle activities.

The Professional Truck Driver Institute (PTDI) was created in 1986 by the motor carrier industry to certify training programs offered by the truck-driver training schools. (Originally named the Professional Truck Driver Institute of America (PTDIA), the group changed its name to reflect the addition of Canada to the organization.) The Model Curriculum is the base from which the PTDI's certification criteria were derived. The PTDI, in mid-1988, began certifying truck-driver training programs across the country. As of February 2003, approximately 64 schools in 27 States and Canada have received the PTDI certification. Although many schools have a number of truck driving courses, most have only one course certified by PTDI.

The Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 (CMVSA) (49 U.S.C. 31301 *et seq.*), although not directly targeted at driver-training, is intended to improve highway safety. Its goal is to ensure that drivers of large trucks and buses possess the knowledge and skills necessary to safely operate those vehicles on public highways. The CMVSA established the commercial driver's license (CDL) program and directed the FMCSA to establish minimum Federal standards which States must meet when licensing CMV drivers. The CMVSA applies to virtually anyone who operates a CMV in interstate or intrastate commerce,

including employees of Federal, State, and local governments. As defined by the implementing regulation (49 CFR 383.5), a CMV is a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property if the vehicle—

- (a) Has a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 11,794 or more kilograms (26,001 or more pounds) inclusive of a towed unit with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds); or
- (b) Has a GVWR of 11,794 or more kilograms (26,001 or more pounds); or
- (c) Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
- (d) Is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials as defined in this section.

In accordance with the CMVSA, all drivers of CMVs must possess a valid CDL in order to be properly qualified to operate the vehicle(s) they drive. In addition to passing the CDL knowledge and skills tests required for the basic vehicle group, all persons who operate or expect to operate the following vehicles, which have special handling characteristics, must obtain endorsements under 49 CFR 383.93:

- (a) Double/triple trailers;
- (b) Passenger vehicles;
- (c) Tank vehicles; or
- (d) Vehicles required to be placarded for hazardous materials.

For all endorsements, the driver is required to pass a knowledge test. The driver must also pass a skills test to obtain a passenger endorsement.

The CDL standards do not require the comprehensive driver-training proposed in the Model Curriculum since the CDL is a "licensing standard" as opposed to a "training standard." Accordingly, there are no prerequisite Federal or State training requirements to obtain a CDL.

In 1990, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommended that drivers of specialized vehicles, including drivers of twin trailer vehicles, be knowledgeable about the special handling characteristics and other variables that influence the controllability and maneuverability of multiple-trailer configurations, and how these variables compare to, and contrast with, those that affect the operation of a semi-trailer combination.

Subsequently, the agency awarded a contract in February 1991 to the PTDI to develop voluntary criteria for training drivers in the safe operation of twin 8.534-meter (28-foot) trailer combination vehicles. The result of this contract was the development of a "Twin Trailer Driver Curriculum"

which outlines how drivers should be trained in the safe operation of these vehicles. This document is available for review in the public docket.

The "Twin Trailer Driver Curriculum" outline was developed with the assistance of subject matter experts from motor carrier fleets, industry associations, training institutions and governmental organizations. The resulting curriculum is a training program that consists of 115 clock-hours of direct driver participation, including a minimum of 56 hours of behind-the-wheel training.

The agency awarded two additional contracts to the PTDI to develop curriculum outlines to address triple-trailer combination vehicles and Rocky Mountain/Turnpike Doubles combination vehicles. Ultimately, the curriculum outlines for twin trailers, Rocky Mountain/Turnpike Doubles and triple-trailer combinations were merged into a single document, entitled "Multiple Trailer Combination Vehicle (MTCV) Driver Training Guide: Suggested Units of Instruction and Curriculum Outline." The PTDI was selected to develop a composite modular training curriculum outline embracing both the LCV driver and instructor.

Upon completion of the curricula, the agency coordinated with the U.S. Department of Education (Education) to ensure that the proposed training requirements are in concert with its accreditation requirements. The agency representatives agreed that the proposed training requirements would be eligible for accreditation by any group that met the criteria and procedures described in the publication "Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies and Associations, Criteria and Procedures for Listing by the U.S. Secretary of Education and Current List." This document is available for review in the public docket.

The agency also completed two projects that contributed to an enhanced understanding of driver training. Although they were not specifically designed to address one type of driver training versus another or to address specific items that would be included in a minimum training standard, they do provide perspective on the importance of driver training and the need for minimum training requirements. The following summarizes these projects:

The first project took place during December 1994 when the agency conducted focus groups to obtain information about highway safety issues relating to commercial motor carriers (trucks and buses). The sessions were conducted with representatives of three

December 9, 1999, the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999 established a new administration—the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)—within the Department to improve the motor carrier safety program, effective January 1, 2000.