

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**COMMERCIAL DRIVING NOW AN OPTION
FOR OHIOANS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

New licensing test removes barriers, opens path to employment

COLUMBUS – For the first time, Ohioans who are deaf or hearing impaired will now have the opportunity to obtain their Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), thanks to collaboration between state agencies.

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) have partnered to develop procedures which allow individuals who qualify for a hearing exemption waiver to train and test for a CDL.

The process to obtain a hearing exemption waiver was instituted by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Ohio is leading the way as one of the first states to implement testing. BMV, OCJS and OOD took the proactive step of developing Ohio test procedures, which have been distributed to the hearing impaired community and the driver training schools.

“We are proud that this partnership has helped set standards and guidelines for CDL testing for the hearing impaired community in Ohio,” said BMV Registrar Don Petit. “This is just another example of our commitment to improving the customer’s overall experience.”

Since implementing the new CDL testing process, Ohio has seen immediate interest from individuals with hearing impairments wanting to learn more about pursuing a CDL. At last report, more than 13 individuals were in various phases of obtaining their waiver, training or testing, with at least two individuals successfully obtaining a CDL and securing employment as a commercial driver.

OOD approached BMV to collaborate on this project as an outgrowth of the Governor’s Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT). Created by the General Assembly in 2014, the WIT was charged with gathering and analyzing data in order to make recommendations regarding barriers to employment and income parity for Ohioans who are deaf or blind. The goal was to better understand the current employment environment for deaf and blind communities, and as a result, develop effective strategies aimed at helping these citizens reach their highest employment potential.

“This collaboration is another example of Ohio breaking down barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities,” said Kevin L. Miller, executive director of OOD. “It means jobs for Ohioans and an expanding workforce for Ohio employers.”

The CDL trucking driving industry is an in-demand occupation supporting Ohio’s economy. From April 14, 2016, through May 13, 2016, more than 28,000 job openings with a CDL requirement were posted. The trucking industry will greatly benefit from a larger pool of qualified candidates. To find out more about an in-demand career in the transportation industry, visit OhioMeansJobs.com or your county’s [OhioMeansJobs Center](#).

In addition, BMV and OOD are developing a video with American Sign Language (ASL) that explains the requirements and testing process. The video will be available through both the BMV and OOD websites this fall so that individuals, driving schools and employers, can learn about the testing and licensure process.

For more information, log onto www.bmv.ohio.gov

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