

COVERED FARM VEHICLE (CFV) EXEMPTION

Qualifying for the CFV exemption allows farmers to enjoy breaks from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). There are limits to the exemptions. If at any time not all qualifications are met, none of the exemptions are available.

HOW TO QUALIFY

1. Farmer, family member, or employee of a farmer
2. Hauling only for the farm
3. Not hauling for hire
4. Range (see chart)
5. Registered with a “farm” license plate
6. Not required to be placarded

RANGE

(Within which the exemption may be applied)

LOCATION	CFV	
	≤ 26,001 pounds	> 26,001 pounds
INSIDE ILLINOIS	No limit	No limit
OUTSIDE ILLINOIS	No limit	150 Miles
The 150 miles is from the carrier’s base of operation, i.e., the farm.		

WHAT IS EXEMPT

CFV Exemptions cover six major areas:

1. Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) [49 CFR 383] Non-CDL Class A with a J51 restriction or Class B Non-CDL required depending on the size of the vehicle.
2. Controlled Substances, Alcohol Use, and Testing [49 CFR 382]. (Exemption includes the drug and alcohol consortium and the reasonable suspicion training.)
3. Physical Qualifications and Examinations [49 CFR 391, Subpart E] Includes the medical card requirement.
4. Hours of Service [49 CFR 395].
5. Inspection, Repair, and Maintenance [49 CFR 396]. Only for interstate vehicles with a USDOT number.
6. Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) is not required for Non-CDL license (See pg. 18 ELDT)

CDL AND THE FARM SEMI

Farm semi drivers must possess a Class A CDL or a Non-CDL farm semi license with a **J51** restriction. All tests and costs for this Non-CDL farm semi license are the same as those required for the CDL. **Obtaining the J51 does not require ELDT.** If you have a class B CDL you can add a Non-CDL Class A with a J52 Restriction to your license, with additional testing.

APPLICABILITY

The CFV exemption applies to the truck-tractor/semi-trailer (semi) equally as it does to other vehicle types. No additional requirements need to be met to qualify. Unlike the Farm Vehicle Driver (FVD) exemption, the CFV exemption for farm semi operators can be applied to non-family farm employees, not just family members.

TRAILERS

When operating a truck and trailer combination, Illinois law generally requires that both the truck and the trailer display a “farm” license plate in order to qualify as a CFV. This does not apply to semi-trailers; those are allowed to use standard “ST” semi-trailer plate. (See the following paragraphs for other trailer variations.)

PICKUPS AND DUALIES

Illinois’ smallest “farm” plate is the “VF” at 16,000 pounds. That is far larger than typically necessary for a pickup truck or dually. Instead, these smaller trucks may be registered with any license plate for a second division vehicle that is 12,000 pounds or less to be eligible to qualify for the CFV designation. The \$10 designation – plus a “farm” plate on the trailer – will satisfy the “farm” registration requirement for that combination vehicle. When not operating as a CFV, these trucks may be used as any other standard-plated truck, including non-farm business and personal use.

IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY

When operating a truck pulling an implement of husbandry, only the truck needs to have the “farm” license plate (or in the case of some pickup trucks, the registered CFV designation) in order to satisfy the “farm” registration requirement for the CFV exemption.

ENDORSEMENTS

Drivers who qualify for a non-CDL license are not required to have the special endorsements associated only with the CDL; however, those drivers who are required to have a CDL must undergo special knowledge and/or skills testing if they will be driving a vehicle:

1. With double or triple trailers, OR
2. With a tank of 1,000 gallons or more liquid capacity or multiple tanks each with a capacity of more than 119 gallons that, in aggregate, total to more than 1,000 gallons (Measure tank capacity, not content. Applies to any liquid, even water), OR
3. That is placarded because of the type and quantity of hazardous materials carried (Requires fingerprinting and background check. Apply at least 90 days in advance of driver’s license expiration). OR
4. With capacity for 16 or more passengers, including the driver.



DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

Requirement [49 DFR 382 103]

Generally, if a driver is required to have a CDL, he/she is also required to submit to drug and alcohol testing. The testing involves pre-employment, random, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, and return-to-duty testing requirements. Several other factors are worthy of note:

1. Having a CDL when not required does not trigger this testing requirement.
2. The employer is responsible for providing the testing program, not the driver.
3. An employer who employs himself/herself as a driver (as many farmers do) must comply with both the requirements that apply to employers and the requirements that apply to drivers (employees).
4. Individual drivers must be pooled with a larger group (consortium) to ensure random selection.

FARM EXEMPTION AND THE CFV [49 CFR 382.103(D) & (D)(4)]

There are two avenues of exemption. Drug and alcohol testing is generally not required of drivers who have been exempted from the requirement to have a CDL – even if that farmer has a CDL. (It is the requirement that the driver have a CDL that triggers drug testing, not merely the coincidence that the driver has that license). And drivers of a CFV are expressly exempted from drug and alcohol testing and the drug, alcohol clearinghouse requirements, and reasonable suspicion training.

OVERVIEW OF DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING REQUIREMENTS

https://on.ilfb.org/Drug_AlcoholTesting

FARM VEHICLE DRIVER (FVD) EXEMPTION

The FVD exemption currently still applies in Illinois and has not changed since 1996. To take advantage of all agriculture exemptions a farm plated vehicle offers, it is suggested that you utilize the CFV exemption. That can be accomplished by getting the Non-CDL Class A licenses with a J51 restriction. If you currently possess a Non-CDL Class A license with a J50 restriction, that is the FVD license. You are not required to, but it is recommended you go to a local Secretary of State office and get the J50 changed to a J51 restriction.