

Trip Preparation

Vehicle Orientation

In order to operate the vehicle safely and compliantly, you must be familiar with it. This involves knowing the required vehicle credentials and systems.

Required Vehicle Credentials

The vehicle must have the company name and DOT number on both sides, in letters large enough that they can be seen from 50 feet away. The name and DOT number must also be readable, so if it has become dirty you will need to clean it off.

The vehicle must also have registration. This is normally issued by the state the vehicle or company is based in. The proof of registration is a “cab card” and a license plate.

There are two different options when it comes to vehicle registration (and the accompanying license plate) for vehicles that have a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more. The difference is whether or not the vehicle crosses state lines.

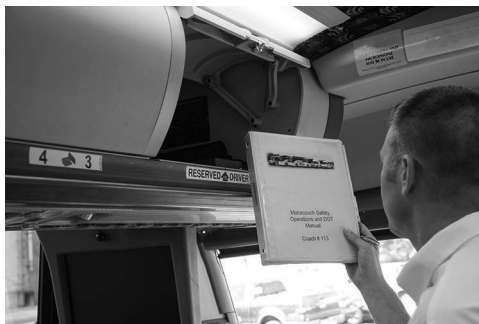
If the vehicle will be operating in one state, then “regular” registration and a regular plate issued by that state are all that is required. If for some reason the vehicle must operate into another state, the vehicle would have to get a “trip permit” or a “temporary registration” to operate in that state.

If the vehicle will regularly be crossing state lines, then an “apportioned” registration and plate issued under the International Registration Plan (IRP) would become necessary. IRP registration and the accompanying plate are issued by the company’s “base state,” and are valid in all states and provinces.

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“Fuel permitting” is how states make sure that vehicles over 26,000 pounds that cross state lines are paying taxes for the roads they use. Much like the registration, if the vehicle only operates in one state they must only comply with the home-states rules (normally, a vehicle that never leaves a state does not need to be fuel permitted). However, if the vehicle crosses state lines, it will need to have a temporary fuel permit for all states it will be operating in (other than the home state) or be enrolled in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) plan.

IFTA works much the same way as IRP. The vehicle is enrolled in the home state, and then authorized to operate in all states and provinces.



In the case of IRP and IFTA credentialed vehicles, detailed records of all trips must be kept. The records must include all trips the vehicle made, as well as all miles and routes traveled in each state the vehicle operated in. The records can be paper-based or electronic. If they are