A commercial motor vehicle is described as:
- A vehicle with a GVWR of over 10,001 pounds
- A single unit vehicle with a GVWR of over 26,001 pounds
- A vehicle with a combination GVWR of over 26,001 pounds or greater
- A three axle (two drive or tandems) with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or greater
- A vehicle with a GVWR of over 57,000 pounds
- A vehicle originally designed to carry 16 or more passengers including the driver
- A vehicle which transports placardable amounts of hazardous materials
- A vehicle which requires a driver to have a CDL to operate it

Drivers must be qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle. The qualifications consists of an application, a background investigation of prior work history, a driving record check, a completed medical form and a physical (every two years) and an annual certificate of violations. Drug and alcohol testing applies to operators of vehicles that require a commercial drivers license (CDL).

Each commercial motor vehicle must have a vehicle maintenance file and a daily vehicle inspection report which includes a visual pre-trip and a written post-trip inspection.

No commercial motor vehicle shall be driven unless the driver is satisfied that the following parts and accessories are in good working order:
- Service brakes, including trailer brake connections
- Parking (hand) brake
- Steering mechanism
- Lighting devices and reflectors
- Tires, wheels and rims
- Horn
- Windshield wiper or wipers
- Rear-vision mirror or mirrors
- Coupling devices
- Emergency equipment

For information on accident prevention, please contact Employers Association, Inc. at 763-253-9100.
There have been some recent changes in cargo securement rules for commercial vehicles with a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of over 10,000 lbs. The changes may increase the number of tieldowns used to secure certain types of cargo. Articles of cargo that are likely to roll must be restrained by chocks, wedges, a cradle or other equivalent means to prevent rolling.

**Articles of cargo placed beside each other and secured by transverse tieldowns must be:**
- Placed in direct contact with each other
- Prevented from shifting towards each other while in transit

The aggregate working load limit of any securement system used to secure an article or group of articles against movement must be at least one half the weight of the article or group of articles.

When an article of cargo is not blocked or positioned to prevent movement in the forward direction:
- One tieldown is needed for articles 5 ft or less in length and 1,100 lbs or less in weight
- Two tieldowns are needed if the article is 5 ft or less in length and > 1,100 lbs; or the article is > 5 ft. but < 10 ft., regardless of weight

The hours of service regulations have also recently changed and their purpose is to ensure highway safety by reducing highway accidents that result from driver fatigue. The current regulations for property carriers include the 11 hour rule which states that no driver shall drive more than 11 hours following 10 consecutive hours off duty and the 14 hour rule that states no driver shall drive after having been on duty 14 hours following 10 consecutive hours off duty. The regulations for passenger carriers have a 10 hour and a fifteen hour rule which states that no driver shall drive more than 10 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty and no driver shall drive after having been on duty 15 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty. The 60/70 hour rule states that no driver shall drive after having been on duty 60 hours in any 7 consecutive day period or 70 hours in any 8 consecutive day period. For property carriers there is a restart of the driver’s clock after a break of 34 consecutive hours off.

Local drivers (property carriers) who operate within a 100 air-mile radius of their normal work reporting location are exempt from logging hours of service, but the driver must:
- Return to the same work reporting location
- Be released from duty within 12 consecutive hours
- Have at least 10 consecutive hours separate each 12 hour shift
- Not exceed 11 hours driving in each shift

Driver security awareness has been incorporated into driver training requirements since 9-11. Security awareness begins at the shipper since most theft/jamming events occur within a few miles of the shipper. Drivers should report any unusual or suspicious activity immediately. While on route, maintain regular communication and stop, park and take breaks at high traffic/reputable truck stops and rest areas only. Inspect your vehicle and cargo frequently and prepare and execute a well-thought-out trip plan. When arriving at your destination, report in, match paperwork, inspect and break the seals and inspect cargo during unloading activities.

The transport of hazardous materials poses additional risks for commercial vehicle operators. A “Hazardous Material” is any substance or material in a form which poses an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce. Hazardous materials must be properly labeled and the trucks placarded where applicable. Some hazardous materials have reportable quantities that require special notification if released into the environment from a transportation accident.

**Specific shipping documents are required for the transport of hazardous materials which must include:**
- Proper Shipping Name
- Hazardous Material Class/Division
- UN/NA Identification Number
- Packaging Group—I, II, III

Emergency response information must have an emergency phone number or material safety data sheet and a current copy of the emergency response guidebook which provides protocols to deal with hazardous material releases. These documents must be in the driver door or within the reach of the driver.

**Materials of trade are hazardous materials that are carried on a motor vehicle:**
- For the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the motor vehicle operator or passengers (such as insect repellent or self-contained breathing apparatus);
- For the purpose of supporting the operation or maintenance of a motor vehicle, including its auxiliary equipment (such as a spare battery or engine starting fluid); or
- By a private motor carrier (including vehicles operated by a rail carrier) in direct support of a principal business that is other than transportation by motor vehicle (such as lawn care, plumbing, welding, or farm operations)

These materials are exempt from other hazardous material transportation regulations but have certain limitations for certain classes of hazardous materials. However, the gross weight of all materials of trade on a motor vehicle may not exceed 200 kg (440 lb).