Driver Qualification File Readiness Checklist

Use one copy per driver to find missing records and assign follow-up. Check a box only after reviewing the record; write N/A and the applicable exception when an item does not apply.

Carrier _____ Driver or internal ID _____

Record owner _____ Review date _____ Next review _____

Scope: A practical Part 391 review aid for small fleets, not a complete hiring or compliance program. Requirements vary by driver, operation and applicable exceptions, including Part 391 Subpart G. This worksheet is not legal advice or a guarantee of compliance.

Review the qualification records

☐ **Employment application**

Confirm the completed application is in the file. [1]

☐ **Initial driving records**

Confirm required initial MVR inquiries and records are documented. FMCSA guidance calls for records from licensing states covering the preceding three years and placement in the file within 30 days after employment begins. [1, 4]

☐ **Road test or accepted equivalent**

Confirm the road-test certificate, permitted equivalent, or applicable alternative documentation is present. Do not assume every license qualifies as an equivalent. [1]

☐ **Annual MVR inquiry and review**

At least every 12 months, obtain the required MVRs and review driving qualifications, subject to Subpart G exceptions. Keep the MVR and a note naming the reviewer and review date. Obtaining a report alone is not the review. [2]

MVR obtained _____ Reviewed _____ Reviewer _____

☐ **Applicable medical qualification records**

Check the record required for this driver: CDLIS MVR with medical certification status, or medical certificate where applicable; include required variance or exemption documentation. Check any applicable National Registry verification-note requirement. [1]

Medical follow-up: Verify current FMCSA rules and any driver-specific exemption before relying on paper medical documentation. This worksheet does not extend or restate an NRII waiver.

Protect records and close gaps

☐ **Investigation history and access controls**

Review required prior-employer responses or documented good-faith contact efforts in the investigation-history file. Keep this information secure with controlled access; it has its own requirements under 391.53. Do not use an unrestricted personnel folder as a substitute. [3]

☐ **Retention reviewed before removal**

The general DQ retention rule is employment plus three years. Certain records listed in 391.51(d), including annual MVRs and review notes, may be removed three years after execution. Prior-employer histories received for a hired driver are retained through employment plus three years. Check other applicable holds before deleting records. [1, 3]

☐ **Other compliance duties tracked separately**

This worksheet does not cover every Clearinghouse, drug and alcohol, training, licensing or state requirement. Assign a separate review where applicable; do not assume these records all belong in the DQ file.

Follow up on missing items

Missing item or exception _____

Next action _____

Assigned to _____ Due date _____ Closed date _____

Missing item or exception _____

Next action _____

Assigned to _____ Due date _____ Closed date _____

Keep completed worksheets and driver records securely. Do not send license numbers, medical details or full driver files through a general website contact form.

Sources and next step

Sources reviewed October 30, 2026. Use the current regulation if a guidance page differs. This is a blank organizational worksheet, not a substitute for the required underlying records.

[1] 49 CFR 391.51 Qualification files and retention
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-391/subpart-F/section-391.51

[2] 49 CFR 391.25 Annual inquiry and review
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-391/subpart-C/section-391.25

[3] 49 CFR 391.53 Investigation history and controlled access
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-391/subpart-F/section-391.53

[4] FMCSA Motor Carrier Safety Planner Driver qualification files
https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetyplanner/MyFiles/SubSections.aspx?ch=23&sec=66&sub=152

Need help organizing recurring DQ file tasks? Explore CDL Manager DQ file management.
https://cdlmanager.com/dq-file-management/