



TruckingHR Canada
**Learning and
Development
Centre**

Occupational Level Training –
Commercial Transport Truck Operators
Program Review Guide



 **TruckingHR
Canada**

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As a national, non-profit organization, Trucking HR Canada (THRC) advances modern HR solutions for the trucking and logistics workforce. One of our strategic priorities is to make a company's job easier by delivering a comprehensive collection of up-to-date guides, reports, templates and more to support effective human resources management and recruitment and retention efforts.

Visit **truckinghr.com** to find out more.

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BACKGROUND

THRC publishes a National Occupational Standard for Commercial Transport Truck Operators (NOS-O) which defines the knowledge, skills, and abilities ("competencies") required for this occupation.

This document is a supplemental resource to the NOS-O. For the full suite of supplemental resources, visit **truckinghr.com**.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose of this Guide	1
Who can use this Guide	1
What will you find in this guide	1
Occupational Level Training Overview	2
Reviewing your OLT Program	3
Program Topic Areas	4
OLT Checkpoints	6
Instructors, Trainers, Mentors, Coaches, and Evaluators	7



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be used by companies with Occupational Level Training (OLT) for Commercial Transport Truck Operators, also known as driver finishing or onboarding. This guide helps identify the elements of your program that can be reviewed to best ensure that operators completing your OLT program meet the National Occupational Standard for Commercial Transport Truck Operators (NOS-O).

If you want to create a program, refer to the Program Development Guide which covers a proposed program structure, how to determine participants, what should be considered when evaluating your program, and more!

WHO CAN USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be used by company staff that are responsible for **human resources, training, safety, compliance, recruiting, and operations.**

WHAT WILL YOU FIND IN THIS GUIDE?

Read through each of the document's sections to determine what components of your OLT program can be reviewed. Visit the links to over a dozen resources you can use to help review and update your current program.

If you have questions or are interested in more information, contact THRC at info@truckinghr.com



OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL TRAINING OVERVIEW

Occupational level training (OLT) is often referred to as “driver finishing” – it is part of the training that allows commercial transport truck operators to acquire the competencies outlined in the National Occupational Standard for Commercial Transport Truck Operators (NOS-O).

Trucking HR Canada (THRC) published a National Occupational Standard for Commercial Transport Truck Operators (NOS-O). The NOS defines the knowledge, skill, and ability (“competencies”) required for this occupation. To download your copy, visit truckinghr.com.

TRAINING STAGES

Success in the commercial transport truck operator occupation requires individuals to acquire a unique set of competencies, usually in two major stages.

During Stage 1, commercial transport truck operators work to obtain all the competencies outlined in the National Occupational Standards (NOS-O) in two phases:

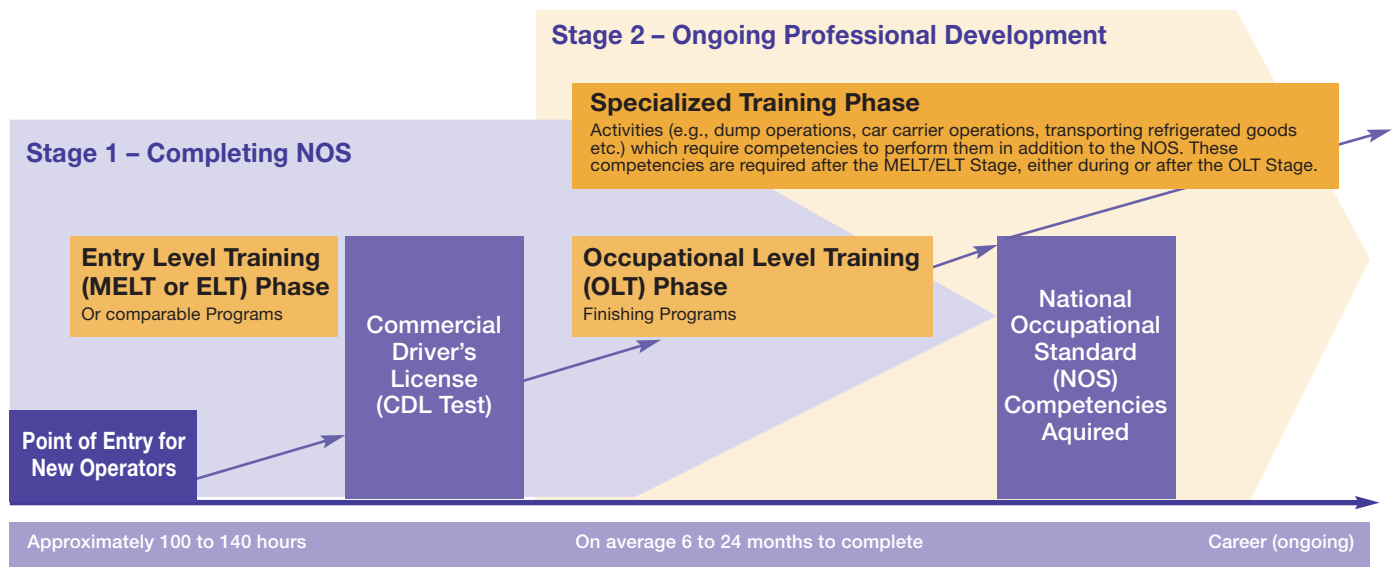
- **Entry-Level Training (MELT/ ELT) Phase:** In this phase an individual begins acquiring enough of the NOS-O competencies to obtain a commercial driver licence (CDL) and to begin working as a commercial transport truck operator.
- **Occupational Level Training (OLT) Phase:** In this phase, an individual applies NOS-O competencies in real-life situations while working as a commercial transport truck operator to fully acquire those competencies. This phase of competency development is often referred to as “driver finishing” and takes place after the ELT phase.

These two phases are generally detached from one another, but in some jurisdictions the training is combined and administered through a single program. Where the phases are separate, traditional truck driving schools almost exclusively deliver the first phase, while workplaces offer the second.

Stage 2 extends through the entire length of a commercial transport truck operator's career. During this stage, operators develop professionally above and beyond the competencies outlined in the NOS-O and often acquire supplementary knowledge relating to various commodities, operation settings, routes, etc.

See Graph #1 – Commercial Transport Truck Operator – Training Stages

GRAPH #1 – Commercial Transport Truck Operator – Training Stages



REVIEWING YOUR OLT PROGRAM

There are similarities in OLT programs, but to meet the unique needs of each company, OLT programs often vary in scope, duration, and structure. Your company can deliver OLT in a unique way to meet operating demands, goods carried, routes, company objectives, and availability of resources.

Many successful OLT programs are designed so commercial transport truck operators acquire the competencies outlined in the NOS-O upon graduation. This allows you to help your operators become “road ready.”

Consider the following components of your OLT program as you assess if your program is helping commercial transport truck operators meet the NOS-O.

PROGRAM TOPIC AREAS

OLT programs can generally follow the same topics and learning environment structure used during ELT:

- Topics (taught in the classroom, in-yard, and on-road)

- Working in the Industry
- Vehicle Components and Systems
- Basic Driving Techniques
- Professional Driving Habits
- Tractor-Trailer Off -Road Tasks and Maneuvers
- Documents, Paperwork, and Regulatory Requirements
- Vehicle Inspection Activities
- Hours of Service Compliance
- Cargo Securement and Loss Prevention
- Handling Emergencies

- Tasks (taught in-yard and on-road)

- Vehicle inspection
- Coupling/uncoupling
- Backing, docking, parking
- On-road driving

In addition to these topic areas, you may also choose to add other topics to your OLT program to meet specific company needs such as transportation of dangerous goods, workplace hazardous material information systems, hazard and incident response, border crossing, food handling, and company policies and procedures.



National Occupational Standard – Commercial Transport Truck Operator Supplements

As commercial transport truck operators develop professionally above and beyond the competencies outlined in the NOS-O, they often acquire additional knowledge and skills related to various commodities, operation settings, routes, etc. THRC has developed documents with the additional competencies required of operators for:

- Driving Steep Inclines

- Flatbed Operations

THRC has produced two tools that list the knowledge that should be understood by a commercial transport truck operator and the practical skills that a commercial transport truck operator should be able to demonstrate following the completion of an OLT program.

These resources are primarily designed for curriculum development, but can also be used for gap analysis of existing materials against the NOS-O:

- **Occupational Level Training – Knowledge Content Inventory:** This document lists knowledge-based learning outcomes you should ensure are addressed in your OLT training curriculum. Many will have been covered during the ELT training phase and should only require learning validation. Some however may need to be reinforced, while others require on-the-job experience to be fully acquired.
- **Occupational Level Training – Practical Content Inventory:** This document lists the practical learning outcomes you should ensure are addressed in your OLT training curriculum. Many will have been covered during the ELT training phase and as part of the CDL test, however skill levels are likely to vary. Performing tasks and practical evaluation is the best way to validate learning and acquire practical competencies. Many practical learning outcomes require on-the-job experience and repetition to be fully acquired.

THRC has also developed a suite of Training Guides with information, tools, and templates that are based on the NOS-O. Consider reviewing what you already use in house with the following:

- Training Guide: Vehicle Inspection

- Training Guide: Tractor-trailer Coupling and Uncoupling

- Training Guide: Tractor-trailer Backing

- Training Guide: On-road Driving

OLT CHECKPOINTS

To confirm that commercial transport truck operators are progressing and learning the required material, three checkpoints are recommended: when entering the program, an interim checkpoint, and at graduation.

The time between checkpoints will vary widely, as will the activities taking place between them, depending on the needs of your operators.

1. Entry Checkpoint

If you aren't already doing so, consider assessing operators when they first enroll so you know their starting points.

A commercial transport truck operator can be tested in the following ways:

- Knowledge Tests

- Practical Tests

- Vehicle Inspection
- Coupling/uncoupling
- Backing, docking, parking
- On-road driving

Entry assessments can help you structure your program to ensure commercial transport truck operators are receiving training in the NOS-O areas where they need support.

2. Interim Checkpoint

A natural opportunity for an interim checkpoint is when direct instruction ends and solo driving begins. It's an ideal opportunity to review knowledge and road tests and may include a review of previous evaluations from the initial training period.

You may also choose a different opportunity to check learning progress.



3. Graduation Checkpoint

This checkpoint should demonstrate that an operator is fully competent as defined in the NOS-O. Competency at graduation is validated again by knowledge and practical tests (as defined above).

Tools to Support Checkpoints

THRC has developed tools to help you evaluate your operators at each checkpoint:

- **Knowledge Evaluation Test Bank:** Provides a suite of questions used to assess operators. Use them to create knowledge tests of various lengths, duration, and difficulty.
- **Driving Assessment Guide:** Provides methods for conducting skill assessments of operators for the tasks of vehicle inspection, coupling/uncoupling, backing, and for on-road driving.

INSTRUCTORS, TRAINERS, MENTORS, COACHES, AND EVALUATORS

You likely use many different types of individuals to deliver OLT. The following information and THRC resources can help you to determine if you have the individuals you need in the right roles for your program and if they are a good fit.

Recommended roles supporting OLT delivery:

Instructor (also referred to as Trainer)

OLT program delivery often consists of traditional one-on-one activities (e.g., operator and instructor in the same vehicle), where there is a defined learner/trainer relationship. The instructor role tends to evolve as OLT delivery progresses: the instructor may become more of a mentor or coach later in OLT delivery.

Mentor (also referred to as a Coach)

The role of mentor is less intensive than that of an instructor and usually involves less one-on-one time.



Types of Mentoring

You will likely use mentors in one or more of the following ways:

- **Formal Mentoring**

Formal mentoring involves specific objectives, timelines, activities, and metrics. The duration of formal mentoring can be short or long and should involve a manager who confirms plans are being followed, and goals are being achieved. Meetings between mentors and mentees generally follow a schedule.

- **Informal Mentoring**

Informal mentoring may also involve objectives, timelines, activities, and metrics, but is based on a “just-in-time” approach, where the learner takes responsibility for self-directed learning. Meetings between mentors and mentees occur as needed following a process for contacting each other. Informal mentoring may not tie as well to formal OLT program objectives and may not provide metrics.

- **Flash Mentoring**

Formal and informal mentoring suggest longer periods of contact with a mentee. Flash mentoring allows a mentee who is looking for specific information or help with a topic or task to reach out to short-term mentors for one or two sessions. This approach requires a workplace to identify mentors with specialized or advanced knowledge on various workplace related tasks, who also have the ability and desire to assist others. This approach requires a culture that encourages mentees to feel confident about seeking assistance.

Assessor (also referred to as an Evaluator)

You also likely have a person conducting road tests and assessing operators’ knowledge and skills as part of your OLT program. In OLT programs, often this role is taken on by the instructor and mentor.

Review the following to help you and your team select and confirm the competencies of individuals needed for the roles of instructor, mentor, and assessor:

- **National Occupational Standard for Commercial Transport Truck Instructor:**

Defines the knowledge, skills, and abilities (competencies) that are needed to be a Commercial Transport Truck instructor, mentor, and assessor.



Preparing, Training and Monitoring

Unlike an instructor at a driving school or company delivering ELT, OLT instructors, mentors, and assessors are generally not subject to certification or qualification requirements outside of your company.

To support the individuals you have in place, consider providing them with training and evaluate their effectiveness at regular intervals to help ensure that you have the right staffing with the right skills.

To support training and assessing instructors, mentors, and assessors, consider using the following resources:

- **Instructor Curriculum Framework:**

Provides a framework for developing training curriculum for commercial transport truck instructors.

- **Assessment Guide for Commercial Transport Truck Instructor:**

Provides methods for assessing driving instructors, mentors, and assessors.





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