

Frequently Asked Questions

Is my limousine a bus?

If the vehicle, regardless of body style, is designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers (including the driver) it is a bus.

How is design determined?

Federal Motor Vehicle Standards define seating capacity as:

Any location capable of accommodating a person at least as large as a 5th percentile adult female, if the overall seat configuration and design and vehicle design is such that the position is likely to be used as a seating position while the vehicle is in motion.

The designated seating capacity weight allowance must not exceed the GVWR rating of the vehicle.

This measurement generally is 14" per designated seat.

Manufacturers generally determine the maximum seating capacity of a bus.

Do I have to have an intrastate USDOT number?

All intrastate only for-hire bus carriers must apply for and have displayed a Michigan intrastate USDOT number on all passenger buses. This number may be obtained by calling the Michigan Public Service Commission at (888) 464-8736 or apply on line to the FMSCA site listed under the next question.

What is the difference between Intrastate and Interstate?

Intrastate means picking up someone in this state and transporting them to somewhere else in this state.

Interstate means picking up someone in this state and transporting them to another state or country or transporting someone from another state or country and dropping them in this state.

My company wishes to go across state lines or US borders, what do I need to do this?

You must have both a federal USDOT Number, and a federal Interstate Operating Authority (MC number). This can be completed by filing on-line at: at www.fmcsa.dot.gov under the REGISTRATION & LICENSING Section. After securing the MC number, you must also designate an agent to legally represent you in every state that you wish to operate in/thru. You can find a list of BOC-3 agents at: www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration-licensing/licensing/agents.htm

When filling out applications, your operation would be described as interstate, authorized for-hire common carrier, and then follow the instructions provided on the website.

Carriers operating equipment having two axles and a gross vehicle weight or a registered gross vehicle weight exceeding 26,000 pounds or with 3 axles or more must have **IFTA** fuel tax decals displayed on the vehicle. These decals can be obtained by calling the Michigan Department of Treasury at (517) 636-4580 or visit http://michigan.gov/documents/2823f_2932_7.pdf

Do I have to have my company name on my bus?

MCL 257.723 states in part:

- (1) All commercial vehicles with a single or combination gross weight rating or total gross weight of more than 5,000 pounds in operation upon the public highways of this state shall have the name, city, and state or the registered logo or emblem of the registered owner of the vehicle, and lessee of the vehicle if the vehicle is being operated under lease, painted or permanently attached on each side of the vehicle in letters of not less than 3 inches in height, not lower than the bottom edge of the door. This information shall be in sharp color contrast to the background.
- (2) The identification requirements of subsection (1) may be met through the use of removable devices which meet the requirements of subsection (1). The removable devices shall be attached so that the identification is in a horizontal position.
- (3) A vehicle in compliance with the identification requirements of the federal motor carrier safety regulations, 49 CFR parts 390-399, is considered to be in compliance with this section.
- (5) A person who violates this section is responsible for a civil infraction.

What is a UCR? Do I need to be in the program?

The 2005 Transportation Reauthorization Act, called SAFETEA-LU, eliminated the Single State Registration System (SSRS). SSRS was a fee-based permit program that applied to all interstate for-hire companies. In place of SSRS, Congress mandated that USDOT/FMCSA establish the Unified Carrier Registration Program. UCR differs from SSRS in that it applies to **ALL** interstate commercial transportation using vehicles that meet the definition in Section 390.5 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. It applies to for-hire, private, and for-hire exempt carriers, including farmers and agricultural operations. It also applies to leasing companies, freight forwarders, and brokers.

Persons subject to UCR must register each calendar year, starting in 2007. Questions about the program should be directed to the Michigan Public Service Commission at 517-241-6030. You can also register on line at www.ucr.in.gov.

What about going into Canada?

Operations into Canada must be conducted using Canada's rules and regulations. Information can be obtained from the province(s) which you intend to operate in or thru.

Ontario now requires U.S. carriers to have a Commercial Vehicle Operator Registration (CVOR). To register, print off the application form and guide available on line at www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/guideline/appendixm.htm or call the Ministry of Transportation Client Services Unit at (416) 246-7166 Ext. 6302.

Carriers and drivers must be aware that Canada's Hours of Service are different than the U.S. regulations and must be taken into account prior to traveling in Canada.

What is an Apportioned Plate and IRP and what do they stand for?

The International Registration Plan (**IRP**) is a program for licensing commercial vehicles (trucks and **non-chartered buses**, i.e. Regular Route) in interstate operations. Under this program, an interstate carrier files an apportioned registration application in the state or province where the carrier is based (the base jurisdiction). The fleet vehicles and the miles traveled in each state are listed on the application. The base jurisdiction collects the full license registration fee. They distribute the fees to the other jurisdictions based on the percentage of miles the carrier will travel, or has traveled in each jurisdiction. The base jurisdiction also issues **a license plate showing the word "apportioned"** and a cab card showing the jurisdictions and weights for which the carrier has paid fees. **Buses used exclusively to transport chartered groups do not have to have this registration.**

My company is based in another state and we plan on touring locations in Michigan. Are there any permits, filings or licenses required?

Michigan is proud to provide open borders to **Interstate** Motor Carriers of Passengers with no filings required. Carriers must have a valid federal interstate operating authority while performing interstate movement in Michigan. To provide intrastate transportation, all carriers must have a MDOT Certificate of Authority.

I plan on getting a bus..... When should I purchase my plates?

After MDOT completes the required safety inspection of the vehicle, and your Michigan Certificate of Authority is issued, you may be issued a Reduced Fee Plate Certificate by the MDOT inspector. You must then provide it to the Michigan Secretary of State at the time you purchase the plate. The reduced fee plate costs \$25.00.

The bus I'm buying is a yellow/black school bus; do I have to repaint it?

Unless the bus is used primarily for the transportation of pupils to or from school and authorized by the Michigan State Police, state law says that except for a bus leased seasonally to transport agricultural workers to and from a field for agricultural operations, a bus **shall not** be painted, in whole or in part National School Bus Yellow and Black. (MCL 257.1833).

After getting my authority what is required thereafter?

Every motor carrier who holds a certificate of authority shall pay to MDOT an annual renewal fee equal to \$25.00 times the number of motor buses used by the carrier. The period for registration renewals is from January 1 through the last day of February of every year. **The Certificate of Authority of any carrier operating without compliance of the conditions set forth after March 1, will be revoked pursuant to the Act. Once revoked a \$300 filing fee for reinstatement will be charged.**

Each motor bus operated by the motor carrier shall pass an annual safety inspection which meets the department's specifications for safe operating character and condition.

Each motor carrier thru their insurance provider shall maintain and provide continuous insurance coverage as required by MCL 474.109 (Motor Bus Transportation Act).