

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### **Is my vehicle a limousine or bus?**

If the vehicle is being operated “for-hire,” regardless of body style, is designed or used to transport 15 passengers or less (including the driver), it is a limousine and the carrier must have a Limousine Certificate of Authority. If the vehicle is designed to transport more than 15 passengers (including the driver) it is a bus and the carrier must have a Motor Bus Certificate of Authority.

### **How do I determine seating capacity?**

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 gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) rating of the vehicle.

MDOT uses the federal guide of 14 inches per designated seating position with 7 inches of leg space beyond the edge of the seat.

### **Based on seat measurement, my vehicle will hold 15 passengers, plus the driver, but I only allow 14 passengers to be on board. Can I license my vehicle as a limousine?**

No, it is legally defined as a bus by Michigan and federal regulations if the seating capacity is designed to be greater than 15 passengers (including the driver) on board during vehicle operation.

### **Is my vehicle a taxi?**

Your vehicle is considered a taxi if the maximum seating capacity is up to nine passengers, including the driver, and you are using a metered device to measure distance traveled and waiting time to compute the fare. A taxi operating without a meter or with the meter shut off would be in violation of the Limousine Act, PA 271 of 1990, if passengers are present in the vehicle.

### **If I need to get an authority, how long does it take?**

Processing of a completed application usually takes two to three weeks. However, processing will take longer during the renewal period (Jan. 1 - March 1). A carrier may not commence intrastate operations until the Certificate of Authority and decals are issued.

### **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.

### **Can I come to the MDOT main office to get my authority and decals?**

Appointments are made at MDOT's discretion. Non-approved arrivals will not be seen. Prior to any appointment being scheduled, all of the required items must be processed before the authority and/or decals will be issued.

To schedule an appointment contact:

For carrier company names beginning with A-K, call Robbie Smith at 517-241-0679.

For carrier company names beginning with L-Z, call Michelle Weber-Currie at 517-241-0680.

### **I do non-emergency medical transportation. Do I need a Certificate of Authority?**

Yes, a non-emergency-equipped vehicle (such as a van taking patients to doctor appointments, etc.) is a limousine and the carrier must have a Limousine Certificate of Authority. Ambulances are not required to be registered by MDOT if transporting persons for emergency care.

### **Are there other limousine-specific state laws I need to be aware of?**

Portions of the Michigan Vehicle Code (Act 300) apply specifically to limousine carriers of passengers. Section 257.208(b) requires that limousine companies must subscribe to the Commercial Look-Up Service provided by the Secretary of State. The service will track the driving record of each driver the company submits to the service. A printout of each driver's record will be generated and sent to the company once a year. The driver will then be tracked by the service, and if the driver is convicted of a driving offense during the year, a notice will be sent within 48 hours to the company. To apply for this service, it is required that you send an e-mail to: [commercialservices@michigan.gov](mailto:commercialservices@michigan.gov). Include your name and the legal company name.

All limousine drivers must maintain a current copy of their driving record, and make non-personal information of their record available for review by any passenger. A copy of this law can be found at: [www.michiganlegislature.org/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-257-208b.pdf](http://www.michiganlegislature.org/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-257-208b.pdf).

Limousine companies are not allowed to provide alcoholic beverages to customers unless the company has a valid license issued by the Liquor Control Commission. Vehicles that display a valid MDOT registration sticker authorize the customer to have an open alcoholic beverage within the passenger compartment. However, limousine companies cannot supply the alcohol. Section 257.226(b) states that limousine company vehicles with any type of temporary registration are not permitted to operate with passengers on board. Limousines are required to have commercial fee registration plates attached prior to operating.

If the vehicle is used to transport packages (other than those belonging to passengers), contact the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), Motor Carrier Division, at 517-241-6030 for an MPSC authority. Limousine carriers must comply with certain federal motor carrier safety regulations (FMCSR) that are enforced by the Michigan State Police, Traffic Services Division. Contact them at 517-336-6195 for requirements.

## **Do I have to have my company name on my limousine or bus?**

Yes. Michigan Vehicle Code, Section 257.723, states, in part:

(1) All commercial vehicles with a 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 is considered to be in compliance with the above paragraph. These requirements can be found at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregulations/administration/fmcsr/fmcsrruletext.asp?rule\\_toc=759&section=390.21&section\\_toc=1748](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregulations/administration/fmcsr/fmcsrruletext.asp?rule_toc=759&section=390.21&section_toc=1748).

(4) A person who violates this section is responsible for a civil infraction.

## **Do I need to have a USDOT number? If so, do I need to have the number on my vehicle even if I don't interstate travel?**

Any vehicle, providing inter or intra-state for-hire passenger service, with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 10,001 pounds or is designated to transport nine or more passengers, including the driver, must apply for and display a Michigan intrastate USDOT number. To get this number, either 1) contact the Michigan Public Service Commission toll free at 888-464-8736, or 2) select the "FMCSA Registration & Updates" link at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov) and complete the registration process.

## **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.

## **What are the state's limousine driver requirements?**

In addition to the driver carrying a current copy of their driving record, a person who operates a limousine must have a chauffeur's license and, if the vehicle has either a gross vehicle weight rating or an actual gross weight of 10,001 pounds or more, must have a medical card.

**Who can inspect my limousine to meet the inspection requirements?**

Every limousine must be inspected annually by a mechanic certified under the motor vehicle service and repair act. The motor vehicle repair facility must be registered under the motor vehicle service and repair act, and be designated by the state as an inspection station, or meets the requirement through an approved local ordinance program. All currently licensed repair facilities can be found at <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/lrsa/Default.aspx?id=RF>.

Carriers should check Motor Vehicle Mechanic Certificates that must be displayed at the licensed repair facility to ensure that the mechanic certificate is not expired and that the mechanic is certified as follows:

**Mechanic Certifications Required to Conduct Limousine Inspections**

<b>Vehicles less than 10,000 pounds GVWR</b>	<b>Vehicles more than 10,000 pounds GVWR</b>
AUTO Front End, Suspension and Steering Systems	AUTO Front End, Suspension and Steering Systems, and HDT Drive Train
AUTO Brakes and Braking Systems	AUTO Brakes and Braking Systems and HDT Brakes and Braking Systems
	HDT Suspension and Steering Systems

**Where do I get the limousine safety inspection forms?**

The limousine safety inspection forms are located at [www.michigan.gov/busandlimo](http://www.michigan.gov/busandlimo). Both pages of the form must be taken to the inspection station with the vehicle.

**My company wishes to go across state lines or international borders. What do I need to do?**

You must have a federal Interstate Operating Authority (MC number) and a federal USDOT Number if the vehicle seats more than eight, including the driver. This can be completed by filing online at: [www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov), then select the "Registration and Licensing" section. After securing the MC number, you also must designate a process agent to legally represent you in every state that you wish to operate in/through. 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 discovered operating in interstate operations without having the required interstate operating authority shall be placed "out-of-service" pursuant to 49 C.F.R. 392.9(a). In addition, the carrier may be subject to federal penalties in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 14901.*

Carriers operating equipment having two axels and a gross vehicle weight or a registered gross vehicle weight exceeding 26,000 pounds or with three axels 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.

### **What if I want to go into Canada?**

Operations into Canada must be conducted using Canada's rules and regulations, in addition to having a federal Interstate Operating Authority. Ontario requires U.S. carriers to have a Commercial Vehicle Operator Registration (CVOR). To register, print off the application form and guide available online at [www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/guideline/appendixm.htm](http://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.

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

The Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) Program requires individuals and companies that operate commercial motor vehicles in *interstate* or international commerce to register their business with the Michigan Public Service Commission and pay an annual fee based on the size of their fleet. A commercial motor vehicle is defined as a) having a gross vehicle weight of 10,001 pounds or more, or 2) is designed to transport more than 10 passengers, including the driver. It applies to for-hire, private, and for-hire-exempt carriers, including farmers and agricultural operations. Persons subject to UCR must register each calendar year. Questions about the program should be directed to the Michigan Public Service Commission at 517-241-6030. You also may register online at [www.ucr.in.gov](http://www.ucr.in.gov).

### **After getting my authority what is required thereafter?**

#### Bus Carrier:

Every carrier who holds a certificate of authority shall pay to MDOT an annual renewal fee equal to \$25 times the number of buses used by the carrier.

#### Limousine Carrier:

Every carrier who holds a certificate of authority shall pay to MDOT an annual renewal fee equal to \$50 times the number of limousines used by the carrier.

The period for all registration renewals is from Jan. 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 vehicle operated by the carrier shall pass an annual safety inspection that meets MDOT's specifications for safe operating character and condition. Each motor carrier, through their insurance provider, shall maintain and provide continuous insurance coverage as required by MCL

474.109 (Motor Bus Transportation Act) and MCL 257.1913 (Limousine Transportation Act). Carriers should complete a Delete Vehicle Form if a carrier has removed any vehicles from revenue service (sold, wrecked, etc.).

**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.

**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).

**What are 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.