

Highway/DPW Hiring Process Step-by-Step



This resource breaks down the highway/DPW hiring process into the following phases:

1. [Recruitment](#)
2. [Onboarding](#)
3. [Team building](#)
4. [Retention](#)
5. [Building the Pipeline for Future Staff](#)

These detailed steps will equip you to refine your hiring process, ensuring that your Highway/DPW team is skilled, cohesive, and ready to meet the demands of your community.

Recruitment

Additional Resources:

- [VLCT PACIF's Steps to Hiring Well](#)
- [Pre-Employment CDL Driver Qualification Checklist](#)
- [Commercial Motor Vehicle Operations Manual for Municipalities](#)
- [Commercial Motor Vehicle Operations Manual for Municipalities FAQs](#)

Engaging Job Descriptions:

- Craft detailed job descriptions that attract the right candidates by clearly outlining responsibilities and qualifications.
- Use templates from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns as a foundation. See VLCT's [Sample Job Descriptions](#).



Competitive Compensation and Benefits:

- Review existing pay scales or create new ones if necessary.
- Research salary ranges and benefits packages in similar positions across Vermont towns to remain competitive. See VLCT's [Compensation & Benefits Report](#).
- Research salary ranges and benefit packages for similar positions in the private sector.

Compelling Job Advertisement:

- See VLCT's [What to Include in an Employment Ad](#).
- Create advertisements that highlight job benefits, training opportunities, and the importance of roles like CMV Driver Licensing.
- Note available on-the-job training and background check requirements.
- Ensure compliance with wage disclosure laws effective July 1, 2025. [Act. 155](#), which the Governor signed into law on June 4, 2024, generally requires employers with five or more employees to disclose in their written advertisements for Vermont job openings the compensation (or range of compensation) they expect to pay for the position at the time they create the advertisement.

Legal Job Application Forms:



- For Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators, this is not a standard job application. [Download a sample CDL job application](#) or [contact VLCT PACIF](#) for more information.
- Inquiries about salary history are not allowed on employment applications, Vermont Law on Fair Employment Practices, 21 V.S.A. § 495m.
 - An employer shall not:
 - Inquire about or seek information regarding a prospective employee's current or past compensation from either the prospective employee or a current or former employer of the prospective employee;
 - require that a prospective employee's current or past compensation satisfy minimum or maximum criteria; or
 - determine whether to interview a prospective employee based on the prospective employee's current or past compensation.
- See VLCT's [Sample Employment Application](#) for non CDL Drivers.

Select Recruitment Channels:

- Utilize multi-channel recruitment by posting on town and [VLCT's website](#) (we get over 5,000 hits more month on our classifieds page!), newspapers, job boards, and social media.
- Partner with local schools and host job fairs to widen the reach.
- Encourage current employees to share the opening with their networks.

Conduct Interviews:



- See VLCT's guidance on [Lawful Interviews](#).
- Organize interviews with a consistent set of questions to evaluate skills and fit.
- Be mindful of Vermont's Open Meeting Law when conducting interviews.
- Maintain confidentiality of applicants.

Additional Checklist for CDL Drivers:

- The **driver qualification file elements** from previous employers in accordance with §391.23 (**required**). This includes employment record, accident history, and alcohol and drug testing records for the preceding three (3) years from any DOT regulated employer. If the records are not obtained from prior employer(s), evidence of the attempt must be retained. All above documents must be maintained per §391.53. Download the sample [Employment History and CDL Drug & Alcohol Testing Request form](#) or [contact VLCT PACIF](#) for more information.
- A **full pre-employment query of the FMCSA Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse** must be completed per §382.701(a)(1) (**required**). Employers are prohibited from hiring a driver who has a drug and alcohol violation, except where the Clearinghouse query demonstrates successful completion of substance abuse treatment, return-to-duty testing, and follow-up testing (see §382.701(d) for more information). The prospective driver must give specific consent for a full query and will need their own [Clearinghouse account](#) to do so.



- **Pre-employment motor vehicle records check** results for the prior three (3) years from each state in which the driver has operated a commercial motor vehicle in accordance with §391.23(a)(1) (**required**). This may require contacting states other than Vermont. A copy of the Vermont DMV [motor vehicle records request](#) is available on the Vermont DMV website.
- Acceptable **pre-employment drug test results or exemption form** filled out by previous employer (**required**). NOTE: VLCT recommends that each new employee undergo [pre-employment drug testing](#) and that the municipality not use the exemption. [Contact VLCT PACIF's testing partner](#) to schedule the pre-employment test.
- The certificate of driver's road test issued to the driver in accordance with §391.31(e), or a copy of the driver's CDL in accordance with §391.331 (**required**). VLCT/PACIF recommends that an actual road test be given to potential new hires.
- **The DOT certified medical examiner's certificate** of the driver's physical qualification to drive a commercial motor vehicle as required by §391.43(f) or a legible photographic copy of the certificate. Note: As outlined in the [FAQs section](#) of VLCT PACIF's [Commercial Motor Vehicle Operations Manual for Municipalities](#), this is a "best practice" recommendation, as municipalities are typically exempt from this requirement. VLCT PACIF suggests that the municipality establish a policy requiring CDL drivers to maintain their medical certification card. This best practice should start at hire and continue through the duration of employment.

Make an Offer:



- Choose the best candidate after thorough discussions and reference checks.
- Extend a formal offer with clear terms and conditions, including necessary credential provisions.

Action Tips:

- Regularly update job descriptions and compensation data to keep them current.
- Consider offering referral bonuses to employees who help recruit new hires.

Onboarding

Key Strategies:

- Comprehensive orientation sessions that introduce new hires to your town's culture and expectations and provide relevant safety training.
- Assign mentors for new hires.
- Regular feedback and check-in meetings.

Action Steps:

- Prepare an onboarding checklist, see [Sample New Hire Checklist](#)



- Schedule a welcome lunch or meet-and-greet

Team Building

Key Strategies:

- Plan team-building activities that encourage collaboration and camaraderie.
- Establish channels for open communication and regular feedback.
- Recognize and celebrate team and individual achievements to boost morale.

Action Tips:

- Plan quarterly team outings
- Implement a suggestion box for team ideas

Retention

Key Strategies:

- Offer competitive salaries and benefits to retain talent.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities.



- Conduct regular satisfaction surveys to identify and address areas for improvement.

Action Tips:

- Develop clear career advancement pathways.
- Implement recognition programs to appreciate and motivate employees.

Building the Pipeline for Future Staff

Key Strategies:

- Form partnerships with local training institutions to create a talent pipeline.
- Support apprenticeships and internships to develop future employees.
- Promote career opportunities in schools to attract young talent.
- Offer resources and partnerships with technical centers and driving schools for CMV training and testing, unless your municipality provides an entry level driver training program in house.

Action Tips:

- Host informational sessions on licensing and career paths.
 - Maintain strong relationships with educational institutions for ongoing recruitment.
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