

Bus Driver

Get a commercial license paid for by your employer and drive a route every day.

TYPICAL PAY

\$47,920

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$29k to \$66k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 1 year

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

School buses, transit buses, bus yards, district depots

How you get there

- 1 Meet the basics** Now
 Age 18 for driving inside one state, 21 to cross state lines. A clean driving record matters more than any diploma.
- 2 Apply to a district or transit agency** Weeks
 They hire people with no experience and train them, because almost everyone is short of drivers.
- 3 Entry-level driver training** 3 to 8 weeks
 A federally required course, both classroom theory and behind the wheel, taken before your first commercial license or new endorsement.
- 4 Permit, then license** 1 to 2 months
 Written tests for a commercial learner permit, then a skills and road test for a CDL (commercial driver's license), usually Class B.
- 5 Endorsements and clearances** Weeks
 Add the passenger and school bus endorsements, pass the medical examination, the background check and a fingerprint clearance.

Pros and cons

- + Free training and a paycheck within weeks, no tuition at all
- + A public pension and benefits in most districts
- + Holidays and summers match a school calendar
- Split shifts eat your whole day for part-time hours
- Unpaid weeks in summer unless you find other work
- Managing student behavior while driving is genuinely stressful

Good to know

School buses are the most regulated vehicles on the road

Federal standards cover the seat height, the padding, the roof strength, the flashing lights and the stop arm. That yellow is a specific color chosen in the 1930s because it is easiest to see at dawn.

Passing a stopped bus is illegal in every state

When the stop arm swings out and the red lights flash, traffic in both directions has to stop in most situations. Districts now mount cameras on the arm to catch drivers who do not.

Optional boosts

Passenger and school bus. Air brakes. Class A upgrade. Hazardous materials.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Bus Drivers, School (53-3051.00)

California Department of Motor Vehicles: commercial driver licenses

National Association for Pupil Transportation

Apprenticeship.gov: United States Department of Labor

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/bus-driver>



Scan for the full clicker