

OBTAINING AN OCCUPATIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

This information provided by Texas Department of Public Safety

An occupational license, also called an essential need license, is a special type of restricted license issued to individuals whose driver license has been suspended, revoked or denied for certain offenses other than medical or delinquent child support.

NOTE: Individuals may still qualify for an occupational license even if their driver license has been suspended for surcharges.

An occupational license authorizes the operation of a non-commercial motor vehicle in connection with an individual's:

1. Work,
2. School-related activities, or
3. Performance of essential household duties.

Request an Occupational License

Requests for an occupational license must be made to the Justice of the Peace, county or district court where the individual lives or to the court of original jurisdiction where the offense occurred.

If the Justice of the Peace, county or district court determines the individual is eligible to apply for an occupational license, then a court order will be issued. The court order is not the occupational license. A court order is only the order which authorizes the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to issue the occupational license.

Issuance of an Occupational License

The court order and all required items must be submitted to DPS before an occupational license will be issued. The court order may be used as a driver license for 30 days from the date of the judge's signature while the request for an occupational license is processed.

Individuals must submit the following items to DPS:

1. A certified copy of the petition and a certified copy of the court order granting the occupational license.
 - a. The judge has the authority to grant an occupational order.
 - b. If the individual is participating in a special drug court program, then the petition is not required.
2. A Financial Responsibility Insurance Certificate (SR-22). Individuals should contact their local insurance agent or provider to obtain an SR-22 or visit the Texas Department of Insurance for a complete list of providers authorized to write liability insurance for the State of Texas.
3. Payment of the occupational license fee. New or renewal \$10 per year issued up to two years (Must pay reinstatement fees first. See step 4)
 - a. An occupational license is typically issued for one year or less; the maximum length of issuance is two years.
 - b. The court must grant the issuance of an occupational license beyond one year.

4. Payment of reinstatement fees. See <https://www.txsurchargeonline.com> for fees.

Required documents can be submitted by mail, fax or email. All documents submitted by email must be in PDF format. Individual must write their name, date of birth and driver license number on all documents so their record can be properly identified.

Mailing Address:

Texas Department of Public Safety
Enforcement and Compliance Service
P.O. Box 4087
Austin, TX 78773-0320
Fax Number: 512-424-2848
Email: driver.improvement@dps.texas.gov

Waiting Periods

An occupational license is issued once the request is processed unless one of the following situations applies:

1. The individual's driver license was previously suspended as a result of an alcohol- or drug-related offense then there is a 90-day waiting period.
2. The individual's driver license was in suspension as a result of an intoxication-related conviction then there is a 180-day waiting period.
3. There are at least two administrative license revocations on the individual's driver record then a mandatory one-year waiting period applies.

Individuals Not Eligible

If an individual's driving privilege is currently suspended, revoked, cancelled or denied under any law in the State of Texas, then an occupational license will not be issued to operate a commercial vehicle.

Driver Eligibility Status

For individuals who are required to submit compliance documents (i.e. certificate of completion, SR-22, etc.), their driver eligibility status will change from "ineligible" to "eligible" on the License Eligibility website once all documents have been processed and fees have been paid.