

Senate File 2426 - Reprinted

SENATE FILE 2426
BY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 2173)

(COMPANION TO LSB 5328HV BY
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION)

(As Amended and Passed by the Senate February 25, 2026)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to sufficient English language proficiency
2 requirements for commercial drivers, providing penalties, and
3 including applicability provisions.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 321.177, Code 2026, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 10. To any person to operate a commercial
4 motor vehicle if the person fails to demonstrate proficiency in
5 the English language under section 321.187B, subsection 1.

6 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **321.187B English language proficiency**
7 **examinations for commercial drivers.**

8 1. a. Except as provided in paragraph "b", the department
9 shall examine the English language proficiency of each person
10 who applies for issuance or renewal of a commercial driver's
11 license or commercial learner's permit. The examination
12 must require the person to demonstrate proficiency in the
13 English language sufficient to meet the requirements of 49
14 C.F.R. §391.11(b)(2). The department shall administer the
15 examination in a computer-based format.

16 b. The department shall not examine an applicant's English
17 language proficiency if the applicant submits proof, as
18 determined by the department, that the applicant is sufficiently
19 proficient in the English language by having previously
20 successfully completed the examination required under paragraph
21 "a".

22 c. The department shall deny the issuance or renewal of
23 a commercial driver's license or commercial learner's permit
24 unless the person applying for or renewing the license or permit
25 submits satisfactory proof, as determined by the department, that
26 the person is sufficiently proficient in the English language
27 based on successful completion of the examination required under
28 paragraph "a".

29 d. An applicant shall not be prohibited from retaking the
30 examination under paragraph "a", subject to the availability of
31 the examination as determined by the department.

32 e. The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to
33 administer this subsection.

34 2. The department shall not comply with a provision of this
35 section if compliance would cause the denial of federal funds or

1 services or otherwise violate federal law. The department shall
2 comply with federal law to the extent necessary to prevent the
3 denial of federal funds or services.

4 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **321.449C English language proficiency**
5 **— commercial drivers and commercial motor carriers.**

6 1. A person who is not able to demonstrate proficiency in
7 the English language sufficient to meet the requirements of
8 49 C.F.R. §391.11(b)(2) shall not operate a commercial motor
9 vehicle.

10 a. Except as provided in paragraph "b", a person who violates
11 this subsection commits a serious misdemeanor. The court shall
12 impose a fine of one thousand dollars and the court may order
13 imprisonment not to exceed one year.

14 b. In lieu of the criminal penalty under paragraph "a", a
15 peace officer shall issue an out-of-service order to a person
16 who violates this subsection if the person holds an unexpired
17 commercial driver's license or commercial learner's permit that
18 was issued by the department after the person successfully
19 completed the English language proficiency examination under
20 section 321.187B, subsection 1, paragraph "a".

21 2. A commercial motor carrier shall not employ or engage the
22 services of a commercial driver, including as an independent
23 contractor, who is not sufficiently proficient in the English
24 language in accordance with 49 C.F.R. §391.11(b)(2). A carrier
25 who violates this subsection commits a serious misdemeanor.
26 In addition to any other penalty, a carrier who violates this
27 subsection is subject to a civil penalty to be imposed and
28 collected by the department and deposited in the road use tax
29 fund, as follows:

30 a. Three thousand dollars for a first violation.

31 b. Five thousand dollars for a second violation.

32 c. Ten thousand dollars for a third or subsequent violation.

33 3. a. The commercial motor carrier who employed or engaged
34 the services of a person, including as an independent contractor,
35 who was operating a commercial motor vehicle in violation of

1 subsection 1 shall be notified of the vehicle's location by the
2 officer who made the stop, and may arrange for another person,
3 who is a commercial driver with sufficient proficiency in the
4 English language, to take possession of the vehicle. Prior to
5 taking possession of the vehicle, the commercial motor carrier
6 must pay the applicable civil penalty under subsection 2.

7 b. If a commercial motor carrier fails to pay the civil
8 penalty and provide a commercial driver with sufficient
9 proficiency in the English language within twelve hours after
10 notification, the owner of any cargo being transported in the
11 commercial motor vehicle shall be notified by the officer who
12 made the stop and the owner may arrange for the transfer of the
13 cargo to another vehicle.

14 c. If a commercial vehicle is removed from a highway in
15 response to a violation of this section, the state, the local
16 authority, and the owner of the cargo inside the vehicle shall
17 not be liable for any damages that result from the removal, or
18 for any reasonable action to transfer such cargo.

19 4. The department and a person whose duty includes enforcing
20 this section shall cease all actions relating to enforcing a
21 provision of this section if enforcing the provision would cause
22 the denial of federal funds or services or otherwise violate
23 federal law.

24 Sec. 4. APPLICABILITY. The section of this Act enacting
25 section 321.187B applies on and after March 1, 2027, or
26 the date the department of transportation submits to the
27 Iowa administrative code editor for publication in the
28 Iowa administrative bulletin a statement by the director of
29 transportation that the applicable phase of the department of
30 transportation's new records system is implemented, whichever
31 is earlier. The department shall also forward a copy of the
32 statement to the Iowa Code editor.