

# **Alberta Air Brake Program**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How has the Alberta Air Brake Program changed?**

The current Air Brake Course consists of a classroom and practical training session. Students are evaluated by an authorized organization through a knowledge test and a practical skills test. Students are issued forms, which Registry Agents use to add the “Q” endorsement to Alberta operator’s licences.

In consultation with industry stakeholders, the current program has been updated with new content, instruction methods, and evaluation processes.

The revised content consists of an updated student air brake manual, a new instructor air brake manual, and a new classroom presentation.

The new instruction methods consist of decreasing the maximum classroom and practical training session sizes and ensuring the classroom presentation is more engaging through the use of an electronic visual presentation.

The new evaluation processes consist of the knowledge test location being moved to Registry Agent offices, while the practical skills test is still conducted by the authorized organization.

### **2. When will these changes be implemented?**

As of May 15, 2012, the revised Air Brake Program will be implemented and air brake knowledge tests will be conducted by Registry Agents.

### **3. What is the purpose of the changes?**

The Alberta Air Brake Program has been updated to ensure information is current and to provide Albertans with a higher standard of air brake education. This higher standard includes creating more opportunities for students to engage with instructors, more advanced teaching methods, and greater accountability to ensure Albertans are receiving the standard of education necessary to operate vehicles equipped with air brakes.

#### **4. What do these changes mean for new drivers of vehicles equipped with air brakes?**

The process for individuals participating in the Alberta Air Brake Program for the first time is almost identical. Since 1990, all drivers of air brake equipped vehicles must complete the Alberta Air Brake Program. Once completed, an air brake “Q” endorsement is added to the driver’s Alberta operator’s licence.

The current Air Brake Course is offered by authorized organizations. It consists of a classroom and practical training session. Drivers are evaluated by the organization through a knowledge test and a practical skills test. Drivers are issued Notice of Driver Education Course Completion forms, which Registry Agents use to add the “Q” endorsement onto their Alberta operator’s licences.

With the revised program, knowledge tests have been moved to Registry Agent offices. These tests will be similar to other knowledge tests conducted by Registry Agents using the Driver Knowledge Testing System. Upon the successful completion of the Air Brake Course, drivers are issued Notice of Air Brake Program Completion forms. Once drivers have this form and have passed the knowledge test, Registry Agents can add the “Q” endorsement onto their Alberta operator’s licences.

#### **5. How long is my air brake endorsement valid?**

Once an Albertan has successfully completed the Alberta Air Brake Program, the air brake endorsement is kept on their Alberta operator’s licence permanently.

#### **6. How long will the *Notice of Driver Education Course Completion* forms previously issued be valid?**

Registry Agents will honour *Notice of Driver Education Course Completion* forms as proof of successful completion of the Alberta Air Brake Program, provided they have been issued prior to May 15, 2012 and are received prior to July 10, 2012.

After July 10, 2012, no *Notice of Driver Education Course Completion* forms will be considered as proof of successfully completing the Alberta Air Brake Program. Students must contact their authorized air brake organization.

## **7. How will the effectiveness of the new program be monitored?**

By having drivers complete the air brake knowledge test at Registry Agent offices, pass and fail statistics can be gathered. Analysis of these statistics will be used to determine whether the program is ensuring Albertans have an understanding of how to operate vehicles equipped with air brakes.

## **8. Will the price of an air brake course increase?**

The Air Brake Program's course is delivered by private organizations, authorized to provide the course by the Government of Alberta. The Government of Alberta does not regulate the price of the course. All price increases are determined by individual organizations. Since the price of the course differs throughout the province, it is recommended that Albertans compare air brake courses for schedules and fees.

## **9. Are air brake programs required in other jurisdictions?**

Every province and most territories in Canada require drivers of vehicles equipped with air brakes to participate in an air brake program.

### **Knowledge Test**

## **10. What is the format of the air brake knowledge test?**

The air brake knowledge test will be similar to other licence class knowledge tests conducted at Registry Agent offices. These tests have 30 multiple choice questions randomly generated from a bank of test questions. 25 questions must be answered correctly to pass the test. The test will automatically end if 6 questions are answered incorrectly. There is no time limit on the test or the number of times it can be taken. There will be a fee for each attempt at the test. The test will continue to be only available in English.

## **11. Why has the air brake knowledge test moved to Registry Agent offices?**

The air brake knowledge test was moved to Registry Agent offices to create greater accountability within the Air Brake Program. Air brake courses are delivered by various authorized organizations throughout the province. By having Albertans complete a standardized knowledge test at a Registry Agent office, the Government of Alberta can ensure all Albertans have been consistently taught the same information on vehicles equipped with air brakes.

Using the Driver Knowledge Testing System also enables the Government of Alberta to gather additional statistics, such as the pass and fail rates. These

statistics will be used to ensure that the existing program is meeting the needs of Albertans.

## **12. How much will the air brake knowledge test cost?**

The air brake knowledge test will cost the same as other licence class knowledge tests conducted by Registry Agents. Each attempt at the test will consist of a \$5.00 government fee and up to a \$12.00 Registry Agent service charge plus GST.

The prices associated with various Registry Agent services are located in the *Registry Agent Product Catalogue* on the Government of Alberta website at: [http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/pdf/registries/Product\\_Catalogue.pdf](http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/pdf/registries/Product_Catalogue.pdf).

## **13. Are there limits on the number of times I can take the air brake knowledge test at Registry Agent offices?**

Knowledge tests offered at Registry Agent offices do not have a limit on the number of attempts allowed. However, there is a limit of one test per day.

## **14. Can I take the air brake knowledge test in a language other than English or use a translator?**

Like Alberta's commercial Class 1, 2 and 4 knowledge tests, the air brake test is only available in English and the use of a translator is not permitted.

Commercial drivers are expected to have an adequate command of the English language sufficient to understand legislation and communicate with law enforcement and other officials.

## **15. Can I have an English assist air brake test?**

Like Alberta's commercial Class 1, 2 and 4 knowledge tests, an English assisted air brake test may be available if individuals have a limited ability to read or speak English.

If you feel you qualify for an English assisted test, contact Driver Programs and Licensing Standards of Alberta Transportation in Edmonton at 780-427-8901 or Calgary at 403-297-6670 (for toll free calls from anywhere in Alberta, first calling 310-0000) and discuss this option with a Driver Programs Administrator.

## **16. Will I be able to have a paper test?**

Paper tests will not be available in order to ensure the integrity of the test is preserved.

**17. Will I be able to have an oral test?**

Oral tests are not available at Registry Agent locations. Please contact Driver Programs and Licensing Standards of Alberta Transportation in Edmonton at 780-427-8901 or Calgary at 403-297-6679 (for toll free calls from anywhere in Alberta, first dial 310-0000) and discuss this option with a Driver Programs Administrator as some exceptions may apply.

**18. How long is my Notice of Air Brake Program Completion form valid?**

Notice of Air Brake Program Completion forms do not have expiry dates.

However, the passed results of the knowledge test can only be used for a limited time. The form must be used to apply the air brake “Q” endorsement within 12 months of passing the knowledge test. After 12 months, the knowledge test must be retaken before the Alberta operator’s licence can be upgraded.

**19. What do I do if I lose my *Notice of Air Brake Program Completion form*?**

Contact the driver training school or employee driver training agency that issued the form. Their representatives will work with Alberta Transportation review your file.

Please note that authorized air brake organizations are only required to retain records for two years. If the form is lost after two years, a replacement may no longer be available.

March 22, 2012