



Driver Abstracts and their Value in the Hiring Process

When selecting a candidate for a position that will operate a motor vehicle, reviewing Driver Abstracts should be a regular part of your hiring practice. A Driver Abstract or Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) can serve as a key indicator of past driving performance and whether a driver might be at risk of collision or other moving violations.

Reviewing this information can not only help determine whether a candidate is suitable for the role, but it can also help strengthen your organization and reduce risk. To ensure you're hiring the most qualified candidates, review these documents prior to hiring and implement routine checks as a condition of employment. These practices will provide peace of mind that your driving staff are as safe as they can be behind the wheel.

What is a Driver Abstract and how can they be obtained?

In short, a Driver Abstract is a government endorsed document that summarizes a driver's history and includes details such as:

- Personal Information – name, date of birth, etc.
- Licence number

- Licence classification
- Date licensed
- License expiration date
- Licence status – Is the licence suspended, expired or in good standing?
- Restrictions – Is the driver required to wear glasses when driving?
- Endorsements – for example “Z” for the Air Brake
- Medical due date
- Driving violations/convictions
- Demerit points

Knowing this information gives you insight as to what kind of driver the candidate is and if they potentially pose an increased risk of violating traffic regulations while operating company vehicles or equipment.

A Driver Abstract can be obtained from your provincial government or the Ministry of Transportation. The fee to obtain a driving record is relatively low. In most provinces, the cost of a Driver's Abstract is under \$20. Many provinces offer the documents digitally, which can be obtained right away or hard copy by mail.

How can you use a Driver Abstract to improve hiring processes and reduce your risk?

Checking a Driver Abstract can be one of the best predictors of driving behaviours. To limit your organization's risk, abstracts should be checked as part of the hiring process. A driver's abstract should be no more than 30 days old at the time of hiring. To ensure staff with driving responsibilities continue to maintain clean or safe driving records, routine abstract checks should be implemented as a term of employment. Signed documentation stating employees agree to these terms confirms your drivers are aware and allows you access to their records. **Canada's National Safety Code, Standard 15** requires abstracts to be reviewed on an annual basis for existing drivers, however, industry best practice is a quarterly review.

Reviewing Driver Abstracts can also serve as an excellent tool to help identify training needs across your team. By taking the time to understand where your drivers may struggle or have issues, you can adjust or implement training programs to reduce your risk of future incidents.

Ensuring your drivers have violation free abstracts allows your organization to better manage its risk. Although collisions do happen, historically safe drivers are less likely to encounter trouble on the road as opposed to drivers with a tendency to speed or participate in other unsafe driving behaviours.

Types of violations and determining what is acceptable.

A Driver Abstract will show all types of vehicle violations. Some violations are more severe than others. It is up to your organization to determine the threshold of tolerance for violations. Ideally, drivers with a clean (no violations) Driver Abstract are preferred.

Major violations make a driver unacceptable for hire. These can include:

- Failing to remain at the scene of a collision
- Failing to stop for police
- Reckless/careless driving
- Speeding over 30km/h
- Stunt driving charges (over 50km/h)
- Failing to stop for emergency vehicles or school bus
- Driving under influence/impaired
- Distracted driving

Certain types of moving violations might be tolerated but be aware that multiple incidents can indicate a general disrespect of driving rules and regulations. These violations include but are not limited to:

- Speeding over 15 km/h to 29 km/h
- Improper or excessive lane changes
- Following the vehicle ahead too closely
- At-fault collisions (any collision where the driver is cited with a violation, or negligently contributes to the incident OR any single-vehicle collision that is not caused by actual equipment failure)
- Running a red light or stop sign
- Failure to yield
- Driving without a seatbelt

There is no hard or fast rule to determine what is acceptable for your organization. The types of violations outlined in this article are provided as a reference guide.

Considerations for hiring parameters

Management should develop a list of hiring specifications required for the position. Legal counsel, Human Resources, and your Risk Management Team should also be consulted when determining acceptable hiring criteria for driving positions. Consider the following when determining your hiring parameters:

- Age – what is the minimum age for this position?
- License class specification – i.e., G, D, A or Class 1, 2, 3, etc.
- Years of verifiable driving and work related experience
- Acceptable demerit points – No more than 2 demerit points in the last 3 years
- Convictions/infractions – No more than 2 convictions for the same or similar offence
- No driving-related criminal code convictions
- No careless driving or stunt driving charges
- No at-fault collisions in the past 3 years
- No more than 2 non-at-fault collisions in the past 3 years
- No license suspensions

There may be instances where your organization chooses to make accommodations for a candidate. These instances should be documented and included in your hiring parameters for reference when making future exceptions.

Hiring can be an overwhelming task. Reviewing Driver Abstracts can help ensure that anyone who may get behind the wheel of a company vehicle is qualified to do so. This easy to obtain document will not only elevate your hiring and review practices but reduce your risk and potential liability.

For more information contact **Fleet.Solutions@intactpublicentities.ca**.

Additional Resources

Accessing Driver Abstracts by province:

- **Alberta**
- **British Columbia**
- **Manitoba**
- **New Brunswick**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador**
- **Nova Scotia**
- **Ontario**
- **Prince Edward Island**
- **Québec**
- **Saskatchewan**
- **Northwest Territories**
- **Nunavut**
- **Yukon**

Third-party service providers are also available to obtain abstracts on your behalf.

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