

Foreign Language Driver Examinations

The Department of Public Safety's goals are to promote public safety and to ensure safe driving on all Texas roadways. While the Department is committed to serving the needs of all eligible driver license applicants, the primary focus for the examination process is the determination of an individual's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle on the public roadways of Texas.

The driver license examination process is a highway safety activity. It is essential that individuals issued a driver license are knowledgeable of traffic laws, rules and traffic control signs as they operate vehicles on the public roadways of this state. A driver who can physically operate a vehicle but is unable to identify and understand traffic laws and highway signs in English places the public's safety at risk.

The Texas Transportation Code, Section 521.162, requires the Department to administer driver examinations in Spanish to applicants who are unable to take the regular examination in English. A multitude of other languages and translation interpretations create difficulties for the Department to evaluate an individual's knowledge of traffic laws and ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. It is also difficult to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the examination process when the examination is provided in numerous languages. Department personnel are not qualified to translate examinations into multiple foreign languages; therefore, the Department has relied upon the use of interpreters in conjunction with oral examinations. The use of interpreters affects the integrity of the examinations as there is no control to ensure the veracity and precision of the translation. Accordingly, limiting the driver examinations to English and Spanish will not only enhance highway safety but also maintain the integrity of the driver license examination process

Due to the highway safety concerns with multiple language driver examinations, effective July 21, 2008, the Department will administer driver license examinations only in English and Spanish in accordance with statute.