



CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

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Public Works team completes first entry-level driver training course

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg Public Works recently rolled out a new program focused on getting more staff ready to roll behind the wheel of one of the department's many public service vehicles.

Eight Public Works employees now hold a commercial driver's license (CDL) after the department completed its first entry-level driver training course (ELDT) this summer. The effort assisted current and new hires obtain their CDL, with most Public Works staff being required to obtain a CDL within six months of their hire date to perform primary duties like driving a sanitation truck and similar vehicles.

For the Public Works team, the program makes the department more prepared to deal with upcoming challenges such as winter weather – while saving taxpayer dollars.

"This course is not only important to Public Works, but to the city as well, because one of our responsibilities is to remove snow and ice from the roadways," Public Works Manager of Field Operations Rick Hottinger explained. "We've hired people without CDL's before and they would struggle tremendously getting their license on their own. We found it much more cost effective to perform this training in-house, rather than using an outside training service."

Public Works created a ELDT program after the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration updated their regulations in February to require individuals who have not previously held a CDL to complete an entry-level course. The Harrisonburg Human Resources Department researched and found the City could become a registered training provider, which would allow Public Works to better prepare employees to obtain their CDL.

"Rick has done an excellent job creating this course," Public Works Assistant Director Aaron Rhoney said. "He gets to work one-on-one with new employees and feel confident in the people that we're putting in trucks."

Now that the first iteration of the course is complete, Public Works is gearing up to start their second ELDT course next week to get all field staff licensed and prepared to drive Public Works vehicles, especially those equipped with



The inaugural class of the Public Works entry-level drivers training course. (Above, from left) Jose Lopez, Austin Price, Dakota Dellinger, Jonathan Gray, Jakob Lambert, Christopher Tansey, and Christopher Almodovar. Trenton Conley is not pictured.

snowplows. Offering training such as this, especially at a time when many organizations are seeing a shortage of trained employees with CDLs, is vital for City services. With the addition of the Public Works program, the City now has CDL training programs in two departments – with the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation being the other. Harrisonburg Public Utilities and Parks & Recreation also are planning to offer similar courses as the need arises. Employees are paid while they train.

Multiple positions requiring a CDL are currently available for those interested in applying at the City's employment webpage, <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/harrisonburg>.

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 51,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*

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