

# PROSPECTIVE HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVER



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# Introduction

As professionals, heavy vehicle drivers must be committed to being responsible road users for whom safety is the prime concern. They have to make sound decisions in the face of potentially dangerous situations.

Good preparation is necessary, and that means prospective heavy vehicle drivers need to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills for these types of vehicles. They must also stay up to date on the rules and regulations governing road transportation.

This publication presents the procedure and the required conditions to be issued a Class 1, 2 or 3 licence to drive a heavy vehicle for:

- > any person who wishes to obtain, for the first time, a Class 1, 2 or 3 driver's licence;
- > any holder of a Class 3 licence who wishes to obtain a Class 1 or 2 licence;
- > any holder of a Class 2 licence who wishes to obtain a Class 1 licence.



**The holder of a licence issued by a jurisdiction outside Québec, who moves to Québec and wants to exchange his or her licence or have a new class added, must contact the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec by telephone; the numbers can be found at the end of this document.**

# Licence Classes and Endorsements

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## Class 1



A Class 1 licence authorizes its holder to drive a combination of vehicles, i.e.:

> a double-axle road tractor with a net weight of 4,500 kg or more hauling one or more trailers or semi-trailers;

or

> a triple-axle road tractor hauling one or more trailers or semi-trailers;

or

> a truck covered by Class 3 hauling a trailer or semi-trailer whose net weight is 4,500 kg or more and which is only used to transport equipment, tools or furnishings as part of its permanent equipment;

or

> a truck covered by Class 3 hauling any trailer or semi-trailer other than those described above, with a net weight of 2,000 kg or more.

Class 1 also authorizes the holder to operate all other types of road vehicles, except for motorcycles.

Note: A road tractor is a motor vehicle with no cargo space and that is permanently equipped with a fifth wheel.

## Class 2



A Class 2 licence authorizes its holder to drive:

> a bus with a seating capacity of more than 24 passengers;

> all other types of vehicles, except for vehicles covered by Class 1 and motorcycles.

## Certificate of competence to drive a school bus

In addition to a Class 2 licence, you must hold a certificate of competence to be authorized to drive a bus used for the transportation of school children. To obtain this certificate, you must pass the school bus driver training program and pay the fees. To register for the training program or to get information on the certificate, contact either of the following transport training centres:

### Centre de formation en transport de Charlesbourg

700, rue de l'Argon  
Charlesbourg (Québec)  
G2N 2G5

Telephone: 418-634-5580  
Toll-free: 1-866-849-5580  
Fax: 418-849-0290  
[www.cftc.qc.ca](http://www.cftc.qc.ca)

### Centre de formation du transport routier de Saint-Jérôme

17000, rue Aubin  
Mirabel (Québec)  
J7J 1B1

Telephone: 450-435-0167  
Toll-free: 1-877-435-0167  
Fax: 450-435-0933  
[www.formationcfr.com](http://www.formationcfr.com)

## Class 3



A Class 3 licence authorizes its holder to drive:

- > a straight-body truck, i.e. a double-axle truck with a net weight of 4,500 or more;
- > any truck with three or more axles;
- > a road vehicle hauling a trailer or semi-trailer:
  - with a net weight of less than 2,000 kg,
  - with a net weight of at least 2,000 kg but less than 4,500 kg which is only used to transport equipment, tools or furnishings **as part of its permanent equipment**;
- > all other types of vehicles, except for road vehicles covered by Class 1 and Class 2 and motorcycles.

## **F Endorsement**

Depending on the class of licence you hold, the F endorsement attests to your ability to drive a heavy vehicle equipped with air brakes.

## **M Endorsement**

Depending on the class of licence you hold, the M endorsement attests to your ability to drive a heavy vehicle equipped with a manual (standard) transmission.

## **T Endorsement**

The T endorsement attests to your ability to drive a road train, i.e. a double road train (a vehicle combination comprised of a tractor and two semi-trailers) that requires a special road train operating permit issued by the Ministère des Transports.



# 2

## Basic Requirements

In order to obtain a Class 1, 2 or 3 driver's licence, you must have:

> **a good driving record:**

- You must have fewer than **4 demerit points** entered on your driving record.
- Your driver's licence must not have been **suspended or revoked during the previous two years** as the result of accumulating demerit points or a driving-related *Criminal Code* offence.

> **good health:**

- You must go to an SAAQ service centre to pass a **vision test** and to fill out a *Declaration of Illness or Impairment* form.

At that time, you will be given a form concerning your state of health that must be filled out by your doctor and returned to the SAAQ. This **report is required** to show that you meet the medical and visual acuity standards of the SAAQ, and that you are physically fit to drive a heavy vehicle.



# The Learner's Licence

3

After you have met the basic requirements set by the SAAQ regarding your health and driving record, and once you have learned the required theory, you can register for a **knowledge test**. After you pass this test, you can be issued a learner's licence for the class of licence sought.

This licence authorizes you to drive a heavy vehicle, **for a minimum learning period**, as long as you are **accompanied by a person who has held a driver's licence of the appropriate class for at least two years**. The accompanying rider must also have the appropriate endorsement(s) for the vehicle used.

## Solid preparation

You must learn the theoretical and practical knowledge required to drive a heavy vehicle. The *Highway Safety Code*, the vehicle circle check, driving techniques and defensive driving rules are all part of the knowledge you must acquire before moving on to the practical part of the training.

To properly prepare for your test, we recommend that you study the *Driver's Handbook* and *Driving a Heavy Vehicle*. These guides are sold by Publications du Québec (1-800-463-2100) and in bookstores.

## To register for the knowledge test

To register for the knowledge test, you must make an appointment with the SAAQ.

If you want to obtain the F endorsement, you can register for the knowledge test for this endorsement at the same time. If not, you will have to make another appointment, as you must pass this test before taking the road tests.

### You can register using either of the following services:

Online service: [saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/online-services/citizens](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/online-services/citizens)

Automated telephone service:

- > Québec area: 418-643-5213
- > Montréal area: 514-873-5803
- > Elsewhere in Québec: 1-888-667-8687

## On the day of the test

You must go to the selected SAAQ service centre at the time of the appointment and:

- > **Show proof of identity by presenting your plasticized Québec driver's licence with photo or two pieces of ID from the following:**

- your Health Insurance Card;
- your birth certificate issued by the Directeur de l'état civil, if you were born in Québec, or by the equivalent issuing authority if you were born elsewhere in Canada;
- your Canadian passport;
- proof of Canadian citizenship or confirmation of status issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

- > **Pass the knowledge test, which includes 32 multiple-choice questions; the passing mark is 75%.**

This test covers traffic rules and the techniques involved in driving a heavy vehicle. You must show that you know what to do in various driving situations.

- > **Pay the required amounts, either in cash or by cheque or with a debit card (except in mobile service units), for:**
  - the knowledge test(s) (additional fees will be charged if the F endorsement knowledge test does not take place at the same appointment);
  - the learner's licence.

## If you fail the test

You must wait at least **seven days** before being allowed to retake the test.

You must then make another appointment with the SAAQ and pay for the new test fees.

# Obtaining a Class 1, 2 or 3 Driver's Licence

Once you have the required driving experience, and after a learning period appropriate for the class of licence sought, you can apply for a Class 1, 2 or 3 driver's licence.

You must then pass **two road tests**, one on the vehicle circle check and the other on driving a heavy vehicle.

> **A minimum amount of driving experience** is required\*

Experience in driving a passenger vehicle (Class 5) is required in order to obtain a licence to drive a heavy vehicle.

## Required driving experience according to licence class

### Class 1

The applicant must have **36 months** cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence (passenger vehicle)

OR

**24 months** cumulative experience if he or she has completed the following training:

- a) the truck driving training program which leads to the Diploma of Vocational Studies issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation; or
- b) a 300-hour course on driving a heavy vehicle covered by Class 1 on the public roadway.

This program must include at least 40 hours of driving given by a heavy vehicle driving school AND a professional internship for the number of hours needed to complete the required 300 hours.

For more information, call one of the following numbers:

- > Québec area: 418-643-7620
- > Montréal area: 514-873-7620
- > Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-361-7620

\* Probationary licence holders who have less experience may, under certain conditions, participate in the Programme enrichi d'accès à la conduite de véhicules lourds. This enriched heavy vehicle driver training program offers training and support to allow drivers to obtain one of these classes. For more information, visit <https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/transportation-goods/enriched-heavy-vehicle-driver-training-program/>.

## Classes 2 and 3

The applicant must have 24 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence (passenger vehicle).

### > A minimum learning period is mandatory

This learning period is required for you to acquire the skills that are essential to driving a heavy vehicle. Before applying for a Class 1, 2 or 3 driver's licence, you must have **held a learner's licence for three months, or for one month if you meet the requirements for the class sought.**

### Length of the required learning period

#### Class 1

The applicant must have held a Class 1 learner's licence for **3 months**

OR

for **1 month** if the applicant:

- > is registered in the truck driving training program which leads to the Diploma of Vocational Studies issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation and has successfully completed all mandatory sections of the program required to drive on the road without an accompanying rider; or
- > is aged 25 or over; or
- > has 60 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence; or
- > holds a Class 2 or 3 driver's licence.

## Class 2

The applicant must have held a Class 2 learner's licence for **3 months**

OR

for **1 month** if the applicant:

- > is aged 25 or over; or
- > has 60 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence; or
- > holds a Class 3 licence; or
- > has successfully completed the Conduite d'autobus (bus driving) program leading to the Skills Training Certificate issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation.

For an applicant who meets one of these first three requirements, **the one-month period may be substituted by a training program that includes at least 20 hours of driving on the public roadway with a vehicle covered by a Class 2 licence.**

This training must be given by a heavy vehicle operator, within the meaning of the *Act respecting owners, operators and drivers of heavy vehicles*, who has been assigned a satisfactory rating by virtue of this Act, and has not been the subject of any interventions by the SAAQ within the previous two years under the administrative policy adopted by virtue of this Act.

## Class 3

The applicant must have held a Class 3 learner's licence for **3 months**

OR

for **1 month** if the applicant:

- > is aged 25 or over; or
- > has 60 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence ; or
- > is registered in the truck driving training program which leads to the Diploma of Vocational Studies issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation and has successfully completed all mandatory sections of the program required to drive on the road without an accompanying rider; or
- > has successfully completed the Conduite de camions porteurs (straight-body truck driving) program offered by the Centre de formation en transport de Charlesbourg and the Centre de formation du transport routier de Saint-Jérôme.

## Getting practical experience

In order to gain practical experience driving a heavy vehicle on the road, you must be **accompanied by a person who has held, for at least two years, a valid driver's licence of the appropriate class for the type of vehicle driven.**

Moreover, when you are practising with a vehicle equipped with air brakes (F endorsement) or a manual transmission (M endorsement), the accompanying rider's driver's licence must have the appropriate endorsement. This rider must also be prepared to provide advice and assistance when you are driving a heavy vehicle.

Every day, before driving a heavy vehicle, **make sure a circle check of the vehicle was carried out** (either by you or a person designated by the operator) **within the prescribed time frame. This is mandatory.** Your practical experience will help you develop a technique that will prepare you to inspect the vehicle **safely and efficiently.**

It is important to practise driving a heavy vehicle as often as you can on different types of roads and under various conditions.

## To register for the two road tests

To register for the heavy vehicle circle check and driving tests, you must make an appointment with the SAAQ and provide the file number that appears on your learner's licence under "No de dossier." Also mention any endorsement you wish to have entered on your next licence.

You can register using either of the following services:

Online service: [saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/online-services/citizens](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/online-services/citizens)

Automated telephone service:

- > Québec area: 418-643-5213
- > Montréal area: 514-873-5803
- > Elsewhere in Québec: 1-888-667-8687

If you want to have the F endorsement entered in your driving record, you must pass the knowledge test for this endorsement before taking the road tests.

## On the day of the tests

You must go to the selected service centre at the time of the appointment.

### Remember to bring:

- > your valid learner's licence AND one of the following:
  - your driver's licence with photo;
  - your Health Insurance Card;
  - your birth certificate issued by the Directeur de l'État Civil, if you were born in Québec, or by the equivalent issuing authority if you were born elsewhere in Canada;
  - your Canadian passport;
  - proof of Canadian citizenship or confirmation of status issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada;
  - a government-issued piece of identification.
- > **the original of the vehicle's valid and signed registration certificate, as well as proof of liability insurance coverage for the vehicle or combination of vehicles you will be using for the road tests.**
- > Means for paying the required amounts, either in cash or by cheque or with a debit card (except in mobile service units), for:
  - the circle check test;
  - the heavy vehicle driving test;
  - the issuance of your new licence.

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please cancel at least 48 hours ahead of time, or charges will apply.

## Report to your road test with a vehicle that is up to standards

You must report to the road test appointment with:

- > a vehicle that corresponds to the class of licence and endorsement(s) sought;
- > **a vehicle or combination of vehicles that is completely free of any mechanical defects;**
- > a mechanical inspection certificate for the vehicle that is valid and in compliance with the *Highway Safety Code*.

For transporting goods, you must report to the test appointment with a vehicle that is equipped to carry a load.

For Class 3, the vehicle must be equipped with a flatbed, a dumper or a box for holding cargo.

Passengers are not allowed during road tests, nor can vehicles used to transport dangerous substances be used for those tests.

If the vehicle used does not meet SAAQ standards, you will be denied the tests.

## Summary description of the tests

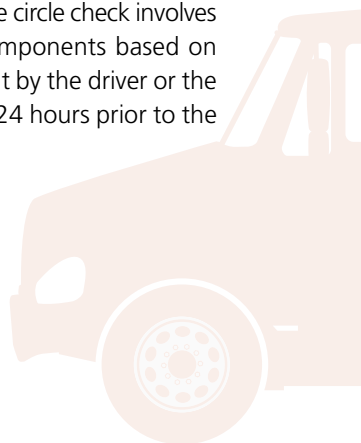
Before registering for the road tests, you must have passed the knowledge tests.

### The circle check test

The SAAQ requires every prospective heavy vehicle driver to pass a circle check test. This test assesses your ability to inspect a heavy vehicle before getting on the road. The circle check involves an inspection of 19 or 20 mechanical components based on vehicle type. It must generally be carried out by the driver or the person designated by the operator within 24 hours prior to the vehicle's use.

**The passing mark is 75%.**

**There is a fee for the test.**



To help you pass this test:

- > carefully inspect all 19 or 20 circle check components and practise identifying the defects specified by regulation for each item;
- > **conduct a safe and effective inspection.** You will be allowed 20 minutes to check a Class 1 vehicle, and 15 minutes to check a Class 2 or 3 vehicle.

**Throughout the test, you must describe to the examiner what you are doing during your circle check. The examiner will listen and observe.**

### **The heavy vehicle road test**

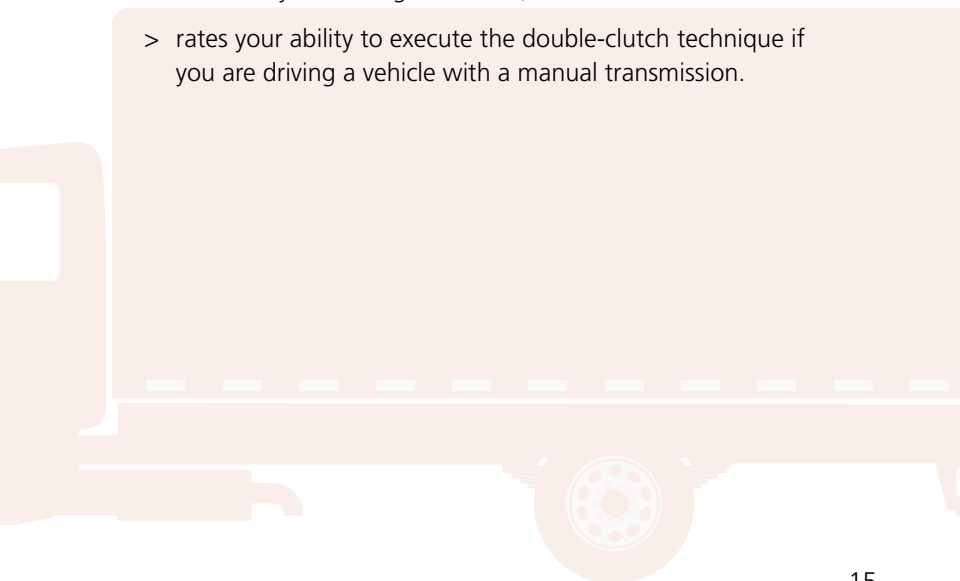
This test assesses your ability to perform common “on- and off-highway” manoeuvres when driving a combination of road vehicles, a bus or a straight-body truck. The test also assesses your observance of traffic rules and your defensive driving skills.

**The passing mark is 75%.**

**There is a fee for the test.**

Throughout the test, the examiner:

- > assesses your driving skills during commonly executed manoeuvres;
- > monitors your observance of traffic rules and use of approved driving techniques;
- > monitors your driving behaviour;
- > rates your ability to execute the double-clutch technique if you are driving a vehicle with a manual transmission.



## Tests for the addition of an endorsement to a Class 1, 2 and 3 licence

### > For the F endorsement

Passing a knowledge test specifically for this endorsement is required before taking the road test.

**There is a fee for this test if it is not taken at the same time as the learner's licence knowledge test.**

A vehicle equipped with air brakes must be used for both road tests.

For the Class 1 licence, you must use a truck and trailer that are fully equipped with air brakes.

**The passing mark for each test is 75%.**

**There is a fee for the addition of an F endorsement to a licence class.**

### > For the M endorsement

A vehicle equipped with a manual transmission must be used for the heavy vehicle road test.

**The passing mark is 75%.**

**There is a fee for the addition of an M endorsement to a licence class.**

### > If you fail the test(s)

You only have to retake the test you failed.

You must wait at least seven days before being allowed to retake the test.

### > For the T endorsement

You must hold a Class 1 driver's licence for at least five years before you can drive a road train. You must also pass a mandatory training course offered in a transport training centre (Charlesbourg or Saint-Jérôme). For more information on the course, contact one of the training centres.

**A T endorsement can be added to your licence on presentation of the attestation of successful completion of the training course at an SAAQ service centre. Fees apply to add this endorsement to your driver's licence.**

# A Few Reminders

## Licence validity

If you drive a vehicle that does not correspond to the class of driver's licence you hold or for which you do not have the appropriate endorsement to drive certain types of heavy vehicles, **you are liable to penalties provided for under the *Highway Safety Code***.

In addition to a fine of \$438 to \$865,\* the peace officer could have the vehicle you are driving seized and impounded for 30 days. Towing and impounding charges will have to be paid by the vehicle owner.

## Demerit points

The SAAQ enters demerit points on the driving record of drivers who commit certain offences under the *Highway Safety Code*.

## Québec's public automobile insurance plan

Insurance coverage for bodily injury sustained in an automobile accident is provided by Québec's public insurance plan.

The public plan, in effect since March 1, 1978, provides all Quebecers with compensation for bodily injuries they sustain in a motor vehicle accident, no matter where it occurs in the world and whether they are drivers, passengers, cyclists or pedestrians. The plan administered by the SAAQ is a no-fault scheme that compensates all victims regardless of who is responsible for the accident.

Québec driver's licence holders and owners of vehicles registered in Québec pay the costs of the public automobile insurance plan. These costs are therefore covered by the insurance contribution collected from driver's licence and vehicle registration issuance and renewal fees.

\* This amount, subject to change, includes the fine provided for under the *Highway Safety Code*, court fees, as well as a contribution to IVAC (Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels). Please note that other fees may apply.

## **Mandatory third-party liability insurance coverage**

The *Automobile Insurance Act* requires all owners of a motor vehicle operated in Québec to carry liability insurance of at least \$50,000. For carriers, the minimum amount of mandatory liability insurance is one million dollars, and two million dollars for the transportation of dangerous substances. Policies providing this third-party coverage, covering property damage caused by the vehicle to another party, are offered by private insurance providers.



# In Summary

## Requirements for obtaining a driver's licence

Basic requirements	Learner's licence	Class 1
<p><b>A good driving record:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; with fewer than 4 demerit points;</li> <li>&gt; with no licence suspensions or revocations in the previous two years due to the accumulation of demerit points or <i>Criminal Code</i> offences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Good health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; vision test;</li> <li>&gt; declaration of illness;</li> <li>&gt; medical examination report.</li> </ul>	<p>Pass a knowledge test</p>	<p>Hold a Class 1 learner's licence for <b>3 months</b></p> <p>OR</p> <p>for <b>1 month</b> if the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; is registered in the truck driving training program which leads to the Diploma of Vocational Studies issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation and has successfully completed all mandatory sections of the program required to drive on the road without an accompanying rider; or</li> <li>&gt; is aged 25 or over; or</li> <li>&gt; has 60 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence; or</li> <li>&gt; holds a Class 2 or 3 driver's licence.</li> </ul> <p>Has <b>36 months</b> cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence</p> <p>OR</p> <p><b>24 months</b> cumulative experience, and has successfully completed one of the following programs:*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the truck driving training program which leads to the Diploma of Vocational Studies issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation; or</li> <li>b) training that includes 300 hours of driving on the public roadway at the wheel of a heavy vehicle covered by a Class 1 licence.</li> </ul> <p>This program must include at least 40 hours of driving training given by a heavy vehicle driving school AND a professional internship that includes the number of hours needed to complete the required 300 hours.</p> <p>*The applicant must have either program approved by the SAAQ.</p>
<p><b>Pass two road tests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the vehicle circle check</li> <li>• driving a heavy vehicle</li> </ul>		

## Class 2

Hold a Class 2 learner's licence for **3 months**

OR

for **1 month** if the applicant:

- > is aged 25 or over; or
- > has 60 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence; or
- > holds a Class 3 driver's licence; or
- > has successfully completed the Conduite d'autobus (bus driving) program leading to the Skills Training Certificate issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation.

For an applicant who meets one of the first three requirements, **the one-month period may be substituted by a training program\* that includes at least 20 hours of driving on the public roadway** with a vehicle covered by a Class 2 licence.

\* This training must be provided by an SAAQ-authorized heavy vehicle operator.

Has **24 months** cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 driver's licence.

## Class 3

Hold a Class 3 learner's licence for **3 months**

OR

for **1 month** if the applicant:

- > is aged 25 or over; or
- > has 60 months cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 licence; or
- > is registered in the truck driving training program which leads to the Diploma of Vocational Studies issued by the Ministère de l'Éducation and has successfully completed all mandatory sections of the program required to drive on the road without an accompanying rider; or
- > has successfully completed the Conduite de camions porteurs (straight-body truck driving) program offered by the Centre de formation en transport de Charlesbourg and the Centre de formation du transport routier de Saint-Jérôme.

Has **24 months** cumulative experience as a holder of a Class 5 driver's licence.

## F - M - T endorsements

## F Endorsement

Pass the knowledge test on air brakes;

Pass two road tests with a vehicle equipped with air brakes:

- > driving a heavy vehicle;
- > vehicle circle check.

## M Endorsement

Pass a road test with a vehicle equipped with a manual (standard) transmission:

- > driving a heavy vehicle.

## T Endorsement

Hold a Class 1 licence **for at least 5 years;**

Pass a mandatory training program offered in one of the transport training centres (Charlesbourg or Saint-Jérôme).

For more information, contact one of the training centres.

## To find out more

To find out more about heavy vehicles and the obligations of drivers, you can obtain, free of charge, the following documents at SAAQ service centres:

- > Road Vehicle Mechanical Inspection Guide
- > Obligations of Heavy Vehicle Users
- > Conduct Review Policy for Heavy Vehicle Owners and Operators
- > Conduct Review Policy for Heavy Vehicle Drivers and Excellence Program for Heavy Vehicle Drivers
- > Circle Check Guide

### For more information:

Website:	<a href="http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca">saaq.gouv.qc.ca</a>
Québec area:	418-643-7620
Montréal area:	514-873-7620
Elsewhere:	1-800-361-7620 (Québec, Canada, United States)

## Protection of personal information

All personal information gathered by authorized Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) personnel is handled confidentially. The SAAQ requires this information to apply the *Automobile Insurance Act*, the *Act respecting the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec* and the *Highway Safety Code*. Under the *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information*, this information may be conveyed to the SAAQ's licensing agents and other Government departments or agencies, or used for statistical, survey, study, audit or investigative purposes. Failure to provide this information can result in a refusal of service. You may consult, correct or obtain a copy of any personal information concerning you.

For more information, consult the Policy on Privacy on the SAAQ's website at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca) or contact the SAAQ's call centre.



