



KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

Are You SURE You've Got a License to Drive That Thing?

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Y&CC of Stuart

What do you drive at work? I'm not talking about your big gest Big Bertha or any other oversized titanium monster that you bought on the home shopping channel. I'm talking about your company trucks.

It seems that every time I go to a superintendent's meeting there are more pick-up trucks than any other vehicle in the parking lot. Let's face it. A truck is a practical vehicle to have. You can haul people, fertilizer, mulch and many other things.

When I started at the Yacht & Country Club, the company vehicle was a 1986 Chevy Blazer. The Blazer was nice but not a practical work vehicle. If I wanted to haul anything of size I would have to drive the dump truck, a 1982 Ford 350.

The dump truck had the size but was really on its last legs. As a matter of fact, our head mechanic, Ken Kolinski, had to build a complete new dump body for the truck. He did a great job and this helped, but it still did not change the fact that one door was welded shut and if you had to stop in a hurry you could always pretend you were Fred Flintstone and put your feet through the floor board to stop.

As budget time approached I decided to put in a capital request for two new work vehicles. The dump truck was a simple replacement of the cab and chassis. After all, Ken had just built a new dump body and with a few modifications it would fit perfectly with the new cab and chassis of a 1999 Ford F350.

To replace the Blazer I definitely wanted a truck... but what type and size? To get a better price, I decided to stay with Ford for the make of the truck. As far as size, I wanted to try to anticipate what would be the maximum amount of weight that I would want to haul or tow.



Craig Weyandt, superintendent of the Y&CC of Stuart stands by his new Ford pick up truck that he could buy – but not drive until he upgraded his driver's license to a Class D status. The upgrade requires taking a written test and paying a fee

I thought to myself, "What if the dump truck is busy and I want to get a pallet of sod or fertilizer?" We also have a Vermeer 935 chipper that requires a 500-pound tow hitch capacity.

After looking at all the capabilities that I wanted, I had no choice but to go with the 1999 Ford 250, 3/4 ton Super Duty Truck. I think the name says it all and if I were Tim Allen, I would be grunting right now. The proposals were made, pictures taken and turned in for approval in the fall of 1998 for the purchase in 1999.

I did my homework, shopped for the best prices, justified my needs and was confident in my selection process. I won't let the suspense kill you, I got the trucks. However, there was one thing that I missed. If I wanted to drive the vehicles off property to get sod, rock or any other material, I didn't have the proper driver's license! That's right. It turns out I needed a Class D license to drive either truck.

In the 1999 Florida Statutes, 322.54 Classification 2d states:

"Any person, except a person who possesses a valid Class A, valid Class B, or valid Class C driver's license, who drives a truck or a truck tractor having a gross vehicle weight rating, a declared weight, or an actual weight, whichever is great-

est, of 8,000 pounds or more but is less than 26,001 pounds, or which has a width of more than 80 inches must possess a valid Class D driver's license.

"Any person who possesses a valid Class D driver's license may be subject to the appropriate restrictions and endorsements, drive any type of motor vehicle other than the type of motor vehicle for which a Class A, Class B, or Class C driver's license is required, within this state."

So what does all that legalese mumbo-jumbo mean in laymen's terms? It means that if you have a truck with a sticker on the inside of the door that says it is rated for over 8,000 pounds, if the registration is rated at over 8,000 pounds, or if the physical weight of the vehicle is over 8,000 pounds (which ever is greater) you must possess a Class D license to operate the vehicle.

This is the first time I had ever heard of a Class D license and I wouldn't be surprised if this is the first time for a few others. To change you license to a Class D requires taking a written test and paying a small fee for the new card. To be on the safe side, double check your company trucks' weight ratings and make sure all potential drivers are licensed properly.