



Florida Department of Transportation Research

Simulation as a Tool for Enhancing Commercial Driver Skills and Recertification: Follow-On to the Virtual Check Ride System
BD548-10

The purpose of this project was to validate the Virtual Check Ride System (VCRS) commercial driver's license (CDL) training and testing program. The program was developed by researchers at the Institute for Simulation and Training, University of Central Florida, under a previous project (BD548-03). The purpose of VCRS is to provide supplemental CDL training for drivers who want to enhance their performance skills and prepare for recertification examinations.

The United States Department of Transportation requires that all commercial vehicle operators in the US possess a CDL. To receive a CDL, operators must score 80% or higher on an extensive written and driving skills examination. They must take the driving skills portion of the exam in a vehicle of the type they plan to operate. Vehicle simulators are not allowed for the driving test. Computer technology, however, is allowed for additional post-license training. The VCRS is designed to help commercial carriers provide such training to their operators.

The VCRS includes review materials from the current CDL examination; a multiple-choice test on general operator knowledge; an interactive truck inspection test; and a simulation-based driving skills test. The FDOT Motor Carrier Compliance Office, the Florida Trucking Association, and specialists from several commercial carrier companies provided expertise in developing the VCRS content.

To validate the program, the researchers worked with commercial carrier trainers in the



The VCRS simulator tests both vehicle inspection and driving skills.

Orlando, Fla. area to conduct demonstrations, which provided data to be used to evaluate the program. Analysis of the data revealed that the VCRS can assess driver performance, identify deficiencies, and provide remedial training in a cost-effective manner. The researchers plan to test VCRS to determine its applicability for transit and motor coach companies. Also, several vocational education and training organizations are evaluating the program for possible use. VCRS is a valuable tool for skills and safety training, which has the potential to provide long-term safety and economic benefits.

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