

Ontario's Crackdown on Fraudulent Commercial Licenses and the U.S. Ban on Trucking Work Visas Leave Drivers in Limbo

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On 22 August 2025, the U.S. State Department announced a pause on the issuance of certain work visas for foreign commercial truck drivers. The pause targets H-2B, E-2, and EB-3 visas. Canadian and Mexican drivers operating under B-1 visitor visas will be unaffected and will continue to be able to move goods across borders.

The policy change seemingly follows a series of widely publicized road accidents in the United States involving foreign drivers. In Florida, a fatal crash occurred when a truck driver without proper documentation allegedly made an illegal U-turn, killing three people. In Alabama, another truck crash caused multiple fatalities, and reports suggested that the driver and passenger—both on work visas—could not communicate effectively in English.

Shortly after the U.S. work visa ban was implemented, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (**"MTO"**) announced that at least 185 commercial driver's licenses had been suspended after it was suspected that these licenses had been obtained dishonestly during the Class A testing and/or training processes. In a letter sent to affected drivers, the MTO said that the driver's "failure to abide by the regulatory framework" has "undermined the confidence of the Ministry of Transportation in your ability and your intention to drive safely."

These actions come on the heels of an already struggling industry rampant with driver shortages. The driver shortage in the U.S. is estimated to be approximately 60,000 drivers countrywide. In Canada, a report released by Trucking HR Canada in early 2025 noted that trucking and logistics industry continues to deal with a shortage of qualified drivers. Although foreign drivers on affected visas represent only a small fraction of U.S. truck drivers, these drivers fill an important need in markets where shortages are felt the most, such as in remote areas. Employers relying on foreign workers could face increased competition for domestic drivers. Consumers may ultimately see higher prices, particularly in perishable goods that depend on timely deliveries. In Ontario, a significant portion of the trucking workforce is made up of immigrants who fill a large labour gap.

The United States government has made it clear that the visa pause will be accompanied by stricter vetting protocols. It is expected that these protocols will involve more rigorous English language testing, documented proof of prior experience, and increased background checks. In Ontario, affected drivers who have had their Class A commercial driver's licenses suspended must successfully complete a vision test, knowledge test, and a driving test to have their licences reinstated. There is also an ongoing investigation by the MTO into trucking schools that do not properly train drivers. One affected driver told Truck News he paid \$5,000 cash for training at a school that claimed authority to conduct official road tests, receiving no receipt for the transaction.

The future of the work permit ban in the U.S. and on the suspension of the licences in Ontario remains uncertain. There have been no further announcements and/or directives from the U.S. government as it concerns the work permit ban since it was announced on 22 August 2025. The Ontario licence suspensions are undoubtedly linked to the MTO's ongoing investigation into trucking schools and so it is likely that any additional actions in this regard will tie heavily into the findings of the investigation. Suspended drivers in Ontario can seek reinstatement after 90 days by completing proper testing and training requirements through

authorized facilities. A PDF version is available for download [here](#).

(This blog is provided for educational purposes only, and does not necessarily reflect the views of Gardiner Roberts LLP).

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