

# Federal Audit Finds One-Third Of Minnesota's Non-Domiciled CDLs Were Illegally Issued

- By Seijah Drake
- December 4, 2025



The Department of Transportation (DOT) announced Monday that a sweeping federal audit uncovered widespread illegal issuance of commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) to non-citizens in Minnesota — a finding that could cost the state up to \$30.4 million in federal highway funding.

According to Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, the Department's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) discovered that one out of every three non-domiciled CDLs reviewed in Minnesota should never have been issued. The audit was part of the Trump administration's broader crackdown on what officials describe as "unqualified non-citizens" putting Americans at risk on the roadways.

## **DOT: Minnesota Must "Follow the Law or Lose Funding"**

In its official release, the Department gave Minnesota 30 days to come into compliance — including revoking the improperly issued CDLs — or face substantial federal penalties.

Officials outlined two options for the Walz administration going forward: follow federal CDL standards, or lose federal highway funding.

Duffy criticized Democratic Gov. Tim Walz, accusing his administration of enabling systematic abuse of the licensing system.

“Our audit exposes yet another example of foreigners taking advantage of Minnesota services under Governor Walz’s watch,” Duffy said.

“Minnesota failed to follow the law and illegally doled out trucking licenses to unsafe, unqualified non-citizens — endangering American families on the road. That abuse stops now under the Trump Administration. The Department will withhold funding if Minnesota continues this reckless behavior that puts non-citizens gaming the system ahead of the safety of Americans.”

### **Audit Finds Licenses Issued to Drivers With Expired or Unverified Legal Status**

In a letter addressed to Walz and Minnesota Public Safety Commissioner Bob Jacobson, FMCSA officials detailed the violations uncovered in the audit.

According to the findings, Minnesota issued non-domiciled CDLs to individuals whose lawful presence in the U.S. had expired, whose lawful presence could not be verified, and who were legally prohibited from holding a non-domiciled CDL at all.

Federal officials said the state’s actions constituted a direct violation of federal safety standards designed to keep dangerous drivers from operating commercial vehicles. FMCSA Administrator Derek D. Barrs said the state’s failures were blatant:

“Minnesota is openly and blatantly defying our rules, plain and simple. Under the Trump Administration, states have two choices: meet our standards or face the consequences. Following the law is not optional.”

### **DOT Orders Immediate Corrective Action**

The Department is now demanding that Minnesota take several steps immediately, including a halt on all issuance of non-domiciled CDLs, identification of all

unexpired non-domiciled CDLs that fail to meet federal requirements, and a complete corrective action plan approved by federal regulators.

Failure to comply could trigger suspension of more than \$30 million in highway funding — a rare but enforceable penalty under federal law.

### **Audit Part of Larger Nationwide Review After Deadly Crashes**

Minnesota's audit is part of the DOT's nationwide investigation into state CDL issuance practices following several deadly crashes linked to foreign commercial drivers operating illegally or without proper vetting.

In November alone, federal and state authorities arrested nearly 250 foreign commercial truck drivers, according to law enforcement reports.

The Walz administration has not yet issued a statement responding to the federal findings or to the threat of funding loss.