

**NATIONAL REGISTRY OF
CERTIFIED MEDICAL
EXAMINERS**

PERIODIC TRAINING

Periodic Training Overview and Instructions

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (49 CFR 390.111(a)(5)(i)) require all certified Medical Examiners to maintain Medical Examiner certification by completing periodic training no sooner than four years and no later than five years after the date of issuance of the Medical Examiner certification credential. Successful completion of these four training modules provided by FMCSA satisfies this regulatory requirement.

The Periodic Training provided contains four pdf files, one for each module with a number of topics, that can be downloaded from your National Registry account for completion. Please be sure to thoroughly read each module and test your knowledge by completing the knowledge checks for each section.

Note: Once all 4 modules have been downloaded to your computer, be sure to save each module in a location you can easily access for future reference as the modules will no longer be available through your National Registry account once you have completed the training.

Once you have completed all four modules, you must print the certification of completion at the end of module 4, enter your name, sign and date, and save a copy on your computer for upload to your National Registry account. To receive credit for completion of the periodic training, you must then return to your National Registry account, select the periodic training menu item, upload your certificate of completion, and click “Certify Completion of Periodic Training.” Please be sure to retain a copy of your certificate of completion for your records.

Module 1: Introduction and Overview of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

Module 2: Maintaining Certification on the National Registry and Recent Updates to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

Module 3: Frequently Asked Questions

Module 4: Performing Driver Examinations and Complying with National Registry Requirements

Each topic contains knowledge checks regarding the information covered in that section to allow you to test your knowledge.

**NATIONAL REGISTRY OF
CERTIFIED MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

PERIODIC TRAINING

MODULE 1

**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF
THE FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER
SAFETY REGULATIONS**

Periodic Training

Module 1

Introduction and Overview of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

Introduction

This module will help you, the Medical Examiner (ME), to be proficient in:

1. Identifying, explaining, and providing examples of the applicable Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) and using current clinical best practices when you conduct a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) driver's physical qualification examination.
2. Explaining how the applicable FMCSRs and current clinical best practices affect your responsibilities as an ME preparing for, conducting, and documenting the results of a CMV driver's physical examination.

Topic 1.1: FMCSA and the Responsibilities of Medical Examiners and Drivers

This topic will assist you in reviewing your knowledge of FMCSA's mission and your responsibilities as a certified ME listed on the National Registry.

There will be a knowledge check regarding the information covered in the section to test your knowledge.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Mission

FMCSA was established as a separate administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation on January 1, 2000, pursuant to the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999.

The primary mission of FMCSA is to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks and buses.

FMCSA develops, implements, and enforces Federal regulations aimed at improving safety on our Nation's highways. FMCSA also ensures the uniform application of regulations.

FMCSA's Medical Program's Division Mission

The FMCSA's Medical Programs Division promotes safety through medical regulations and guidelines that ensure commercial CMV drivers operating in interstate commerce are physically qualified to do so.

The Medical Programs Division oversees regulations developed by FMCSA regarding physical qualification of interstate CMV drivers under its statutory authority.

The term CMV driver includes both commercial driver's license (CDL) and non-CDL holders as described in the table below.

<p>CDL driver holds a license to operate a CMV that 1) weighs 26,001 lbs. or more; or (2) is designed or used to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, or (3) is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials as defined in 49 CFR 383.5.</p> <p>These drivers have a Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) maintained by the State Driver's Licensing Agency (SDLA) that includes a medical certification status and required medical variances.</p>	<p>Non-CDL driver holds a license to operate a CMV that 1) weighs 10,001 lbs. or more; or (2) is designed or used to transport more than 8 passengers (including the driver) if the passengers pay for their transportation; or (3) is designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver, if the passengers do not pay for their transportation; or (4) requires placarding for hazardous materials as prescribed by the Secretary of Transportation.</p> <p>These drivers do not have a Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) maintained by the State Driver's Licensing Agency (SDLA).</p>
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Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

Regulations

The FMCSRs are regulations promulgated by FMCSA under its statutory authority. These regulations are legally binding on the public subject to their provisions, and FMCSA has the authority to compel compliance with the FMCSRs. These regulations function to ensure uniform application of the law and provide details of how the law is to be followed.

The FMCSRs under 49 CFR 391.41(b) provide the basic driver Physical Qualification Standards that must be met. The standards provide absolute disqualifying standards and those that allow for a discretionary determination by the ME. As defined in the regulations, there are two conditions that absolutely disqualify a driver.

Aside from these disqualifying conditions, you, as the ME, must use your medical knowledge and current clinical best practices to determine whether a driver meets the physical qualification standards.

Guidance

FMCSA's resources and the Medical Advisory Criteria are guidance intended to provide recommendations and information to assist MEs in applying the FMCSRs.

Unlike regulations, the recommendations and other guidance are not legally binding on the public.

Rather, such guidance is strictly advisory, not mandatory, and intended to provide information that helps to support the application of the standards in the regulations or to serve as a reference.

Additional Resources

For a list of additional resources, see the Medical Resource Table on the FMCSA website at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/medical/medical-regulations-and-guidance-resource-links>. This table provides quick access through links to the FMCSRs relevant to the physical qualification of interstate CMV drivers as well as other available resources including Medical Review Board (MRB) taskings and recommendations, and evidence reports.

Medical Advisory Criteria

The Medical Advisory Criteria in Appendix A to 49 CFR 391 are provided as an appendix to the regulations and provide information that is directly relevant to the physical qualification examination.

The Medical Advisory Criteria was established after consultation with physicians, States, and industry representatives, and in some areas, after consideration of recommendations from FMCSA's Medical MRB and Medical Expert Panels (MEPs).

FMCSA Informational Reports

FMCSA provides evidence reports and medical expert panel reports about medical conditions that may impact a driver's physical qualification.

Reports prepared for the Agency are made available to the public as a form of information sharing; reports represent a point in time and are not regulation. If the Agency adopts recommendations included in a report it would be reflected in the FMCSRs.

The content in these reports is informational and should not be treated as regulatory in nature. However, certified MEs may consider the information in these reports as a tool to assist them in making a physical qualification determination.

MEs may access these reports through the MRB's website or through the Medical Resource Table on the FMCSA website.

Again, these reports are provided to help the ME make a physical qualification decision, represent a point-in-time, and should not be treated as regulations.

Responsibility of the Medical Examiner

The certified ME has the sole authority to determine if a driver is physically qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce and to issue the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, to qualified drivers as proof of medical certification.

The FMCSA relies on MEs to assess and certify whether a driver is physically qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. It's important that MEs understand the physical qualification standards in the FMCSRs and how these relate to the mental and physical demands of operating a CMV.

MEs should consider the driver's medical history, response to treatment, current medications, current clinical best practices, and knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of commercial drivers. MEs are encouraged to consult with specialists and request additional information to determine the driver's qualifications.

When a medical variance (i.e., exemptions, skill performance evaluation certificates, and grandfathered exemptions issued by FMCSA) is required and the certifying ME has determined the driver meets all of the other physical qualification standards under 49 CFR 391.41(b) except for requiring a medical variance, the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is not valid until the driver receives the required medical variance from FMCSA. The ME is required to check the appropriate box on the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, that states only valid when accompanied by the required medical variance.

MEs listed on the National Registry are subject to performance reviews by FMCSA to ensure their compliance with the FMCSRs. This includes review of the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, and the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, from physical qualification examinations performed. MEs are required to retain the original Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, and a copy of the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, for at least 3 years from the date of the examination. The ME must also make all records and information in these files available to an authorized representative of FMCSA or an authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement agency representative, within 48 hours after the request is made.

Who Needs to Have an Exam?

The following individuals must be medically examined and certified as physically qualified to operate a CMV, according to 49 CFR 391.45 *Persons who must be medically examined and certified*:

- (a) Any person who has not been medically examined and certified as physically qualified to operate a CMV;
- (b) Any driver who has not been medically examined and certified as qualified to operate a CMV during the preceding 24 months unless the driver is required to be examined and certified in accordance with paragraph (c), (d), (e), (f) or (g) of this section;
- (c) Any driver authorized to operate a CMV only with an exempt intra-city zone pursuant to 49 CFR 391.62, Limited exemptions for intra-city zone drivers, if such driver has not been medically examined and certified as qualified to drive in such a zone during the preceding 12 months;
- (d) Any driver authorized to operate a CMV only by operation of the exemption in § 391.64, if such driver has not been medically examined and certified as qualified to drive during the preceding 12 months;
- (e) Any driver who has diabetes mellitus treated with insulin for control and who has obtained a medical examiner's certificate under the standards in 49 CFR 391.46, *Physical qualification standards for an individual with diabetes mellitus treated with insulin for control*, if such driver's most recent medical examination and certification as qualified to drive did not occur during the preceding 12 months;
- (f) Any driver who does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both, in § 391.41(b)(10)(i) and who has obtained a medical examiner's certificate under the standards in § 391.44, if such driver's most recent medical examination and certification as qualified to drive did not occur during the preceding 12 months;

- (g) Any driver whose ability to perform his/her normal duties has been impaired by a physical or mental injury or disease, and
- (h) On or after June 23, 2025, any person found by a medical examiner not to be physically qualified to operate a CMV under the provisions of paragraph (g)(3) of § 391.43 *Medical examination; certificate of physical examination*.

Medical Examiner Responsibilities for Examining Interstate and Intrastate Drivers

Certified MEs conduct physical qualification examinations and determine whether interstate CMV drivers are qualified according to the physical qualification standards listed in the FMCSRs.

CMV drivers can operate in interstate or intrastate commerce. As interstate drivers, they can either drive through more than one state or the cargo they carry can go through more than one State. With intrastate operations, the driver and the cargo they carry remains within the State. Another scenario that meets the definition of intrastate operations would be if the driver is employed by a municipality.

For now, just keep in mind that intrastate drivers need to meet the standards set forth by their particular State. However, most States have adopted the FMCSRs as their basic physical qualification standards.

To determine whether to apply the Federal or State standards, the ME should ask the CMV driver whether they drive in or intend to drive in interstate or intrastate commerce. If in doubt, the ME should apply the Federal standards for interstate drivers.

Exempt intracity zone drivers do not need to comply with the Federal physical qualification standards, unless required by their State or employer.

When Examining Interstate Drivers, Intrastate Drivers, and Drivers Employed by a Municipality

Certified MEs listed on the National Registry are trained and certified in performing examinations for interstate CMV drivers according to the FMCSRs.

However, MEs who choose to perform driver examinations for intrastate drivers who are in one of the few States that may not have adopted the FMCSRs or those States that have applied more stringent physical qualification standards are required to comply with State regulations and statutes for performing those examinations, to include being knowledgeable of State medical waivers. It is the responsibility of the ME conducting intrastate exams to ensure that they are properly trained in State regulations and statute requirements. If examinations for intrastate drivers are not conducted according to the State requirements, the SDLA may not accept the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, issued and may require the driver to return to the ME or to get another examination.

The FMCSRS do not require the ME to upload results of intrastate examinations into the National Registry. However, if an ME chooses to enter intrastate examination results to the National Registry using the CMV Driver Medical Examination Results Form, MCSA-5850, FMCSA will transmit the results to the SDLA. This will occur once the electronic connection with the SDLAs has been established under the Medical Examiner's Certification Integration final rule. FMCSA will act as a conduit only and will not verify the examination results.

What Happens After the Exam?

CLP/CDL applicants/holders are required to provide the SDLA with their Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, for posting to their CDLIS record. Once provided to the SDLA, the driver may carry their Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, as proof of certification for the first 15 days after it was issued. In addition, some SDLAs also require CLP/CDL applicants/holders to provide a copy of their Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875.

Non-CDL holders are NOT required to provide the SDLA with their Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, but are required to carry it with them at all times when operating a CMV.

Responsibility of the Driver

Interstate CMV drivers must comply with the physical qualification standards under 49 CFR 391.41 *Physical qualifications for drivers*, and are subject to medical certification prior to expiration of the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, or if they experience a change in their physical or mental health status.

Interstate CMV drivers are required to obtain their physical qualification examination and obtain an original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, from an ME listed on the National Registry, as noted under 49 CFR 391.43(a) *Medical examination; certificate of physical examination*. However, the motor carrier may require drivers to have their physical qualification examination conducted by the motor carrier's preferred MEs who are listed on the National Registry.

Drivers are required to provide a photo ID at the time of the physical qualification examination.

Drivers are required to disclose an accurate and complete health history on the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, and in discussions with the certified ME during any physical qualification examination.

Drivers are required to provide the certified ME medical information from Treating Clinicians as requested during the physical qualification examination.

Drivers who have been determined to be qualified by a certified ME listed on the National Registry will receive the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876. This form is proof of medical certification and the following actions must be taken:

CLP/CDL applicants/holders must provide this form to their SDLA prior to the expiration of their current Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, and can carry it with them as proof of medical certification for the first 15 days after it was issued. Note: Some SDLAs also require CLP/CDL applicants/holders to provide a copy of their Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875.	Non- <u>CDL</u> holders must carry the original, or a copy, of their current Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, while operating a CMV in interstate commerce as proof that they are physically qualified.
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Upcoming Regulatory Changes Affecting Drivers

On June 23, 2025, FMCSR changes occur that will require MEs to take different actions.

The chart below outlines the changes that will occur.

Before June 23, 2025	Beginning June 23, 2025
All qualified CMV drivers, to include CLP/CDL and non-CDL drivers are issued the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, as proof of medical certification.	CLP/CDL applicants/holders will no longer be issued the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, as proof of medical certification. MEs will continue to provide non-CDL holders with the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876.
CLP/CDL applicants/holders must provide the SDLA with their Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, for posting to the driver's CDLIS MVR.	Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, information for CLP/CDL applicants/holders will be electronically transmitted from the National Registry to the SDLA for posting to the driver's CDLIS MVR.
For CDL holders, motor carriers must verify that the ME who signed and issued the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is listed on the National Registry. A Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, that has not been signed and issued by a certified ME is not valid.	Motor carriers will no longer be required to verify that the ME who signed and issued the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is listed on the National Registry. For non-CDL holders, however, motor carriers will still need to verify that the ME who signed and issued the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is listed on the National Registry. A Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, that has not been signed by a certified ME is not valid.

These changes will be covered in greater detail in Module 2: Recent Changes to FMCSRs.

Topic 1.1: Knowledge Check

Question 1: Use of Resources Provided by FMCSA

True or False: Medical evidence and medical expert panel reports provided by FMCSA about certain medical conditions—such as obstructive sleep apnea, traumatic brain injury, and stroke—outline specific laboratory ranges that must be used to qualify a driver and are regulatory in nature:

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is b. False. Medical evidence and medical expert panel reports provided by FMCSA about conditions that could impair a driver's physical qualification are provided as resources to help MEs,

but these resources are not regulation. This information is not legally binding, but certified MEs may consider the information in these reports as a tool to assist them in making a physical qualification determination.

Certifying MEs consider the medical history of the driver, the driver's response to treatment, current medications, applicable regulations, current clinical best practices, and knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of commercial driving, and then decide on a case-by-case basis whether the driver should be medically certified to safely operate a CMV.

Question 2: Responsibility of the Medical Examiner

A driver comes to your office for an examination. Which of the following may you consider as you conduct this examination to determine whether the driver meets the physical qualification standards to safely operate a CMV in interstate commerce?

- a. The driver's medical history, response to treatment, and current medication regimen
- b. Current clinical best practice guidelines
- c. Laboratory and anatomical reference ranges prescribed by FMCSA
- d. Consultation with the driver's primary care provider and Treating Clinicians

The correct answers are a, b, and d. FMCSA relies on MEs to assess and certify drivers. The ME may consult with specialists and request additional information to help make that determination. MEs consider the medical history of the driver, the driver's response to treatment, current medication regimen, current clinical best practices, and knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of CMV drivers in order to determine whether the driver meets the physical qualification standards to safely operate a CMV.

Question 3: Responsibility of the Medical Examiner

True or False: MEs who perform driver physical qualification examinations are expected to fully understand and apply the physical qualification standards in the FMCSRs.

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is a. True.

Question 4: ME Compliance

You are contacted by a representative of the FMCSA who requests driver examination forms for an examination you performed two years ago. You have since changed employers and are no longer working for the company at which you conducted the examination. Who is responsible for providing the documentation FMCSA requested?

- a. You, the examining ME
- b. The driver
- c. The driver's employer
- d. The driver's SDLA
- e. Your former employer

The correct answer is a. You the examining ME. According to FMCSRs, you are responsible for retaining the original Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, and a copy of the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, for at least three years from the date of the examination. This regulatory requirement does not prohibit an ME from maintaining all records and information in these files at his or her former or current employer's medical records department, as long as the ME continues to have the ability to request that the employer provide all records and information in these files to FMCSA or an authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement agency representative. MEs continue to be responsible for providing the files and records when requested, even if they are maintained at an employer's medical records department. You must make all records and information in these files available within 48 hours of a request.

Question 5: Role of the Driver — CDL Vs. Non-CDL

A driver either holds a CDL or is a non-CDL driver. Identify whether each of the following drivers is a CDL or non-CDL driver:

1. Avery Smith operates a vehicle that is 34,000 pounds and has a CDLIS MVR that is maintained by the SDLA.
 - a. CDL
 - b. Non-CDL
2. Jo Smith operates a vehicle that is 12,000 pounds and does not have a CDLIS MVR maintained by the SDLA.
 - a. CDL
 - b. Non-CDL

The correct answers are:

For statement 1: a. CDL

For statement 2: b. non-CDL

Question 6: What Are the FMCSRs

True or False: FMCSA has the authority to compel compliance with its regulations. These regulations function to ensure uniform application of the law and to provide details of how the law is to be followed.

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is a. True. The FMCSRs are regulations promulgated by FMCSA under its statutory authority. These regulations are legally binding on the public subject to their provisions, and FMCSA has the authority to compel compliance with the FMCSRs. These regulations function to ensure uniform application of the law and provide details of how the law is to be followed.

Question 7: Who Receives the Original Paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876

True or False: After June 23, 2025, only non-CDL drivers will be provided the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, as proof of medical certification.

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is a. True. Beginning June 23, 2025, CLP/CDL applicants/holders will no longer be issued the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, as proof of medical certification. MEs will continue to provide non-CDL holders with the original paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876.

Topic 1.2: Physical Qualifications for Drivers

This topic will help you review your knowledge of the 13 physical qualifications standards for CMV drivers described in the FMCSRs, which include two absolute standards for disqualifying drivers.

There will be a knowledge check regarding the information covered in the section to test your knowledge.

Note: SPE and medical exemptions are covered in the second half of this module.

Physical Qualifications for Drivers

FMCSA relies on the certifying ME to evaluate and determine whether an underlying medical condition, medication, or combination of medications and substances used by a driver will impair their ability to safely operate a CMV. In addition, FMCSA requires the certifying ME to record and report results of physical qualification examinations performed.

The following FMCSRs are related to these tasks:

- 49 CFR 391.41 *Physical qualifications for drivers*
- 49 CFR 391.43 *Medical examination: certificate of physical examination*
- 49 CFR 391.44 *Physical qualification standards for an individual who does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both.*
- 49 CFR 391.45 *Persons who must be medically examined and certified*
- 49 CFR 391.46 *Physical qualification standards for an individual with diabetes mellitus treated with insulin for control*
- 49 CFR 391.49 *Alternative physical qualification standards for the loss or impairment of limbs*
- 49 CFR 391.64 *Grandfathering for certain drivers who participated in a vision waiver study program.*

In this section, we will review the physical qualification standards for drivers set out in 49 CFR 391.41, and how you have the ability to use discretion in applying some of the standards.

Physical Qualifications for Drivers

49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers* lists 13 physical qualifications that a CMV driver must meet to be deemed medically qualified and issued a Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876. The regulation states:

(b) A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person -

(1) Has no loss of a foot, a leg, a hand, or an arm, or has been granted a skill performance evaluation certificate pursuant to [§ 391.49](#);

(2) Has no impairment of:

(i) A hand or finger which interferes with prehension or power grasping; or

(ii) An arm, foot, or leg which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or any other significant limb defect or limitation which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or has been granted a skill performance evaluation certificate pursuant to [§ 391.49](#);

(3) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently treated with insulin for control, unless the person meets the requirements in [§ 391.46](#);

(4) Has no current clinical diagnosis of myocardial infarction, angina pectoris, coronary insufficiency, thrombosis, or any other cardiovascular disease of a variety known to be accompanied by syncope, dyspnea, collapse, or congestive cardiac failure;

(5) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of a respiratory dysfunction likely to interfere with his/her ability to control and drive a commercial motor vehicle safely;

(6) Has no current clinical diagnosis of high blood pressure likely to interfere with his/her ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely;

(7) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of rheumatic, arthritic, orthopedic, muscular, neuromuscular, or vascular disease which interferes with his/her ability to control and operate a commercial motor vehicle safely;

(8) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or any other condition which is likely to cause loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a commercial motor vehicle;

(9) Has no mental, nervous, organic, or functional disease or psychiatric disorder likely to interfere with his/her ability to drive a commercial motor vehicle safely;

(10)

(i) Has distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye without corrective lenses or visual acuity separately corrected to 20/40 (Snellen) or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of

vision of at least 70° in the horizontal meridian in each eye, and the ability to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber; or

(ii) Meets the requirements in [§ 391.44](#), if the person does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both, in [paragraph \(b\)\(10\)\(i\)](#) of this section;

(11) First perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear at not less than 5 feet with or without the use of a hearing aid or, if tested by use of an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1,000 Hz, and 2,000 Hz with or without a hearing aid when the audiometric device is calibrated to American National Standard (formerly ASA Standard) Z24.5 - 1951;

(12)

(i) Does not use any drug or substance identified in [21 CFR 1308.11](#) Schedule I, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or other habit-forming drug; or

(ii) Does not use any non-Schedule I drug or substance that is identified in the other Schedules in [21 CFR part 1308](#) except when the use is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner, as defined in [§ 382.107 of this chapter](#), who is familiar with the driver's medical history and has advised the driver that the substance will not adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle; and

(13) Has no current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism.

Physical Qualifications for Drivers - 49 CFR 391.44

On January 21, 2022, the FMCSA published the Qualifications of Drivers; Vision Standard final rule, allowing individuals who do not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the existing distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both, to be physically qualified to operate a CMV without obtaining an exemption from FMCSA (87 FR 3390). The new alternative vision standard eliminates the need for a Federal vision exemption program and allows certified MEs, in consultation with an ophthalmologist or optometrist and utilizing the new Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871, to evaluate and determine whether to grant a Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, for up to one year. For additional information about the new alternative vision standard, you can view an informational webinar that provides an overview of the final rule at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/medical/new-vision-standard-overview-webinar>.

As referenced in 49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers*, 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), to be qualified, a driver must have distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye without corrective lenses or visual acuity separately corrected to 20/40 (Snellen) or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of vision of at least 70° in the horizontal meridian in each eye, and the ability to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber; or meet the requirements in § 391.44 if the person does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both, in paragraph (b)(10)(i). Below are some details of 49 CFR 391.44; *Physical qualification standards for an individual who does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both.*

For individuals to be qualified under 49 CFR 391.44, in addition to the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, the certified ME must receive the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871, signed and dated by an ophthalmologist or optometrist and begin the physical qualification examination within 45 days after the ophthalmologist or optometrist signs and dates the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871.

Although the ophthalmologist or optometrist provides information on the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871, it is the responsibility of the certifying ME to ensure all of the requirements under 49 CFR 391.44 are followed. In doing so, the ME should be aware of the disqualifying provisions. The individual is not physically qualified to operate a CMV if:

- His or her distant visual acuity is not at least 20/40 (Snellen), with or without corrective lenses, and the field of vision is not at least 70° in the horizontal meridian, in the better eye.
- He or she is not able to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber.
- His or her vision deficiency is not stable.
- Sufficient time has not passed since the vision deficiency became stable to allow the individual to adapt to and compensate for the change in vision.

The final rule also requires individuals physically qualified under the alternative vision standard for the first time to complete a road test conducted by the employer before operating in interstate commerce. When required, this road test is administered by the motor carrier, after the ME has conducted the physical qualification examination and issued a Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, so the ME has no role in this requirement.

At least annually, an individual who does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both, in § 391.41(b)(10)(i) must be medically examined and certified by an ME as physically qualified to operate a CMV in accordance with § 391.43. The examination must begin not more than 45 days after an ophthalmologist or optometrist signs and dates the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871.

Physical Qualifications for Drivers - 49 CFR 391.46

As referenced in 49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers*, 49 CFR 391.41(b)(3), to be qualified, a driver must not have an established medical history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently requiring insulin for control; unless the person meets the requirements in 49 CFR 391.46. Below are some details of 49 CFR 391.46; *Physical qualification standards for an individual with diabetes mellitus treated with insulin for control*.

For individuals diagnosed with insulin-treated diabetes mellitus, in addition to the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, the certified ME must receive the Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus Assessment Form, MCSA-5870 within 45 days after it is signed by the Treating Clinician.

Although the Treating Clinician provides information related to the treatment of the driver's diabetes mellitus, it is the responsibility of the certifying ME to ensure all of the requirements under

49 CFR 391.46 are followed. In doing so, the ME should be aware of the disqualifying provisions. The individual is not physically qualified to operate a CMV if:

- He or she is not maintaining a stable insulin regimen and not properly controlling his or her diabetes mellitus.
- He or she has been diagnosed with severe non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy or proliferative diabetic retinopathy.

In addition:

- The individual is not physically qualified to operate a CMV up to the maximum 12-month period under 49 CFR 391.45(e) until he or she provides the Treating Clinician with at least the preceding 3 months of electronic blood glucose self-monitoring records while being treated with insulin.
- The individual who does not provide the Treating Clinician with at least the preceding 3 months of electronic blood glucose self-monitoring records while being treated with insulin is not physically qualified to operate a CMV for more than 3 months. If 3 months of compliant electronic blood glucose self-monitoring records are then provided by the individual to the Treating Clinician and the Treating Clinician completes a new Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus Assessment Form, MCSA-5870, the ME may issue a Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, that is valid for up to the maximum 12-month period allowed by 49 CFR 391.45(e).

Physical Qualifications for Drivers - Disqualifying Conditions

From that list of 13 standards, there are two standards that if not met, are considered absolute disqualifiers. In other words, the ME has no discretion in making a physical qualification decision. These two standards are:

- 49 CFR 391.41(b)(8) *Epilepsy/Seizures, or any condition likely to cause loss of consciousness; and*
- 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) *Hearing*

For conditions other than these two absolute disqualifiers, it is up to the ME's discretion whether a condition is likely to impair safe driving.

Drivers who do not meet any of the two standards listed above but are otherwise qualified to drive may qualify to receive an exemption from FMCSA to operate a CMV in interstate commerce.

If an ME finds that the driver meets all the other physical qualification standards, the ME should issue the driver a Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, with the only when "Accompanied by a waiver/exemption" box checked and specify the type of waiver/exemption (i.e., hearing, seizure). The Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is not valid until the driver obtains approval of the required exemption and is issued the exemption document.

Exemptions will be covered in greater detail later in the training.

Medications

The ME must consider whether medications, and or substances a driver is taking, will impair the driver's ability to safely operate a CMV.

As described in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(12), a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV if they do not use any drug or substance identified in 21 CFR §1308.11 Schedule I, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or other habit-forming drug.

With that said, MEs may disqualify drivers who take any medication or combination of medications and substances that may interfere with safe driving.

The FMCSRs **do not** include a list for prohibited medications by manufacturer name. All medications must be assessed by the ME to determine the risk of adverse side effects which include, but are not limited to, dizziness, drowsiness, and sleepiness, and the direct impact those potential side effects have on safe CMV operation.

The ME may confer with the driver's treating medical specialist who is familiar with the driver's health history and verify, if applicable, completion of substance abuse treatment. FMCSA provides an optional form, the 391.41 CMV Driver Medication Form, MCSA-5895, that the ME may use to obtain additional information from the driver's prescribing physician regarding medications prescribed to the driver.

However, the final decision to certify the driver rests with the certifying ME.

Drug Testing Requirements

DOT-mandated testing for controlled substances is not part of the physical qualification examination process and is not mandated by FMCSA. Such testing falls under 49 CFR 40, which mandates the drug and alcohol testing procedures for conducting workplace drug and alcohol testing for the Federally regulated transportation industry.

MEs are not prohibited from conducting non-DOT drug/alcohol testing as a part of the medical certification process (e.g., to confirm a clinical diagnosis of alcoholism, or if the driver reports past use of illicit drugs) to assist in making a qualification determination.

The non-DOT drug and or alcohol testing process does not require the use of a certified Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) under the provisions of Part 40 or 49 CFR § 382 *Controlled substances and alcohol use and testing* of the FMCSRs. Drivers may be required to provide documentation from a professional qualified to render a substance abuse evaluation or an opinion concerning successful treatment received from an appropriate rehabilitation program.

Topic 1.2: Knowledge Check

Question 1: Disqualifiers

The absolute disqualifying conditions listed in 49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers* are:

- a. Use of multiple medications that are not identified in 21 CFR §1308.11 as *Schedule I*

- b. Epilepsy/seizure or any condition likely to cause loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a CMV or inadequate hearing
- c. Diagnosis of diabetes mellitus treated with insulin
- d. None of the above

The correct answer is b. Epilepsy or inadequate hearing. These conditions are absolute disqualifiers. In other words, you must disqualify a driver that has one of these conditions. For other conditions that could impair a driver's ability to drive, such as those listed in options a. and c., it is at your discretion to decide whether a driver is physically qualified.

Question 2: Length of Certification

In conducting an examination of a driver diagnosed with diabetes mellitus that is treated with insulin for control, you reviewed input from the Treating Clinician on the Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus Assessment Form, MCSA-5870, reviewed urine and serum laboratory results, and determined that the driver has maintained a stable regimen and their diabetes is adequately controlled. You can certify this individual up to a timeframe that does not exceed:

- a. 6 months
- b. 12 months
- c. 24 months
- d. At the ME's discretion

The correct answer is b. 12 months. Drivers diagnosed with diabetes that require insulin for control may be certified for up to the maximum 12-month period under 49 CFR 391.45(e).

Question 3: Medication List

True or False: The FMCSRs provide a list of prohibited medications by name.

- a. True
- b. False

The answer is b. False. The FMCSRs do not include a list for prohibited medications by name. The Agency relies on the certifying ME to evaluate and determine whether an underlying medical condition, medication, or combination of medications and substances used by an individual driver will impair his or her ability to safely operate a CMV. MEs may disqualify a driver who takes any medication or combination of medications and substances that may impair or interfere with safe driving practices. All medications must be assessed to determine the potential risk of adverse side effects, which include, but are not limited to, dizziness, drowsiness, and sleepiness, and the direct impact the potential side effects have on CMV driving and operation safety.

Question 4: Hearing

If hearing is tested using a calibrated audiometric device, what is the maximum allowable hearing loss in the better ear for a person who is physically qualified to drive?

- a. 35 decibels
- b. 45 decibels
- c. 40 decibels
- d. 42.5 decibels

The correct answer is c. 40 decibels. A person is physically qualified to drive a CMV if they first perceive a forced whisper in the better ear at not less than five feet with or without the use of a hearing aid or if tested with an audiometric device, they must not have an average hearing loss in the better ear of more than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, and 2000 Hz with or without a hearing aid. The audiometric device must be calibrated to the American National Standard Z24.5 – 1951.

Question 5: Controlled Substances

FMCSA mandates that drivers be tested for controlled substances as part of the physical qualification examination process:

- a. By the ME
- b. By the motor carrier employing the driver
- c. Neither of the above

The correct answer is c. Neither of the above. DOT-mandated testing for controlled substances is not part of the physical qualification examination process and is not mandated by FMCSA. Such testing falls under 49 CFR 40, which mandates the drug and alcohol testing procedures for conducting workplace drug and alcohol testing for the Federally regulated transportation industry.

MEs are not prohibited from conducting non-DOT drug/alcohol testing as a part of the medical certification process (e.g., to confirm a clinical diagnosis of alcoholism, or if the driver reports past use of illicit drugs) to assist in making a qualification determination.

The non-DOT drug and or alcohol testing process does not require the use of a certified SAP under the provisions of Part 40 or 49 CFR § 382 *Controlled substances and alcohol use and testing* of the FMCSRs. Drivers may be required to provide documentation from a professional qualified to render a substance abuse evaluation or an opinion concerning successful treatment received from an appropriate rehabilitation program.

Topic 1.3: Laboratory and Anatomical Reference Ranges

This topic will help you review when and how to use additional laboratory and anatomical reference ranges.

There will be a knowledge check regarding the information covered in the topic so you can test your knowledge.

Using Laboratory and Anatomical Reference Ranges to Determine Driver Physical Qualification

With the exception of the two absolute disqualifying standards, FMCSA does not establish or regulate specific laboratory and anatomical reference ranges for determining driver physical qualification.

FMCSA does, however, provide information on specific medical conditions you may consider when making a physical qualification determination. You may choose to use the information provided in these resources or any other current clinical best practices when making a qualification decision.

When to Request Additional Diagnostic Testing for a Condition

On the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, and during the examination, the driver is required to fully disclose their medical history and report conditions that the ME should be aware of, and consider, in making a qualification decision.

A complete history provides the ME the opportunity to identify potential issues that may require further assessment or consultation with the treating medical professional before rendering a qualification decision.

In the Driver Health History Review section of Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, the ME is required to identify and comment on all medical history and any yes or not sure responses provided by the driver in the Driver Health History section of the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875.

If the ME suspects a driver may have a medical condition that could impair their ability to safely operate a CMV but requires additional information related to the condition, the ME may consult with specialists to gather any additional information and/or request any additional evaluations needed to determine whether a driver is physically qualified.

You might consider requesting an additional evaluation when:

- The condition or the severity of the condition is unclear; or
- The potential treatment or control of a medical condition may affect the driver's ability to safely operate a CMV.

Examples of additional diagnostic testing that are not required by regulation, include, but are not limited to:

- Cardiac stress testing
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Sleep study for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)
- Pulmonary function testing

Example of when Additional Diagnostic Testing/Evaluation is needed - when a driver is spilling glucose into his/her urine

The following is an example of when an ME should consult with the Treating Clinician to obtain additional information to make a physical qualification determination.

A driver presents for a physical qualification examination. During the examination, a laboratory urine result is found to be positive for glucose. The ME should consult with the Treating Clinician to obtain additional information concerning a diagnosis of diabetes. This request could include information such as recent serum and urine laboratory results, and any diagnosis of diabetes. Review of this information would indicate whether the driver has been diagnosed with diabetes, and if so, if it has been properly treated and is adequately controlled. The ME should consider all relevant information and make a qualification decision based on medical judgement, and the circumstances of each individual driver.

Example of when Additional Diagnostic Testing may be considered - when a driver is suspected of having OSA

OSA is another example of when an ME might consider additional evaluation to make a physical qualification determination.

The FMCSRs, 49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers*, do not include a physical qualification standard for weight, neck circumference or body mass index for a driver diagnosed with, or with suspected OSA.

The FMCSRs do not include requirements for MEs to screen CMV drivers for OSA or provide requirements regarding whether to refer a driver for OSA testing. The FMCSRs also do not include preferred diagnostic testing methods, preferred treatment methods, or requirements by which to assess compliance for OSA treatment. When making a medical certification determination, the ME may consider the driver's responses to the questions about sleep disorders on the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, and readily identifiable risk factors for OSA identified during the physical examination.

Qualifying determination decisions to refer drivers with risk factors for OSA to a sleep specialist, rest with the medical judgment of the ME.

Considerations for an ME when making a physical qualification determination should include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Does the driver report or the ME identify multiple risk factors for or symptoms of OSA?
- Are symptoms reported likely to interfere with the driver's ability to control and drive a CMV safely?
- If a driver is diagnosed with moderate-to-severe OSA, has treatment been shown to be adequate, effective, safe, and stable?

In addition to current clinical best practices, for additional guidance on certification of drivers with moderate-to-severe OSA, one source MEs could consider is the November 21, 2016 OSA advisory recommendations. They are available at <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/advisory-committees/mrb/final-mrb-task-16-01-letter-report-mcsac-and-mrb>.

Topic 1.3: Knowledge Checks - Laboratory and Anatomical Reference Ranges

Question 1: When to Request Additional Diagnostic Testing

As an ME, you may request additional diagnostic testing as part of a physical qualification examination in the following circumstances (select all that apply):

- a. When the condition or severity of a condition is unclear
- b. When the potential treatment or control of a medical condition may affect the driver's ability to safely operate a CMV

- c. To assess whether disqualifying conditions—hearing loss and epilepsy/seizure meet the thresholds defined by FMCSA

The correct answers are a and b. In the case of hearing loss and epilepsy/seizure, the current standards are absolute, providing no discretion to the ME.

Question 2: Discretionary Decisions

In the case of absolute disqualifying conditions, the ME has no discretion in making a qualification decision. In making a discretionary determination, not to include absolute disqualifying conditions, a ME should (select all that apply):

- a. Consider whether a particular condition would interfere with the driver's ability to safely operate a CMV.
- b. Seek further testing and evaluation for medical conditions of which the ME is unsure.
- c. Consider resources, current clinical best practices, and advisory criteria provided by FMCSA.
- d. Automatically disqualify the driver.

The correct answers are a, b, and c. An ME's responsibility during the physical qualification examination is to determine whether a driver has a disease or disorder that interferes with their ability to safely operate a CMV, increases the risk for sudden death, or increases the risk for the onset of gradual or sudden incapacitation, thus endangering public safety. In making this determination, MEs may request additional medical information from the Treating Clinician to be used in conjunction with other resources and current clinical best practices.

Question 3

What are the weight, neck circumference, and BMI requirements listed in the FMCSRs for drivers with or suspected OSA?

- a. 170 lbs. in men and 150 lbs. in women
- b. Neck circumference of 25.5 cm in men and 32 cm in women
- c. 22-29 BMI in Adults
- d. None of the above

The correct answer is d, none of the above. The FMCSRs, 49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers*, do not include a physical qualification standard for weight, neck circumference or body mass index for a driver diagnosed with, or with suspected OSA. Qualifying determination decisions to refer drivers with risk factors for OSA to a sleep specialist, rest with the medical judgment of the ME.

Question 4

During an examination for a driver, a laboratory urine result is found to be positive for glucose. How should the ME determine if the driver is physically qualified?

- a. Consult the laboratory reference ranges developed by FMCSA for diabetes mellitus
- b. Immediately disqualify the driver because diabetes is a disqualifying condition under 49 CFR 391.41(b) *Physical qualifications for drivers*
- c. Determine that the driver is qualified for one year

- d. The ME should consult with the Treating Clinician to obtain additional information concerning a diagnosis of diabetes and if so, if it has been properly treated and is adequately controlled.

The answer is d. The ME should consult with the Treating Clinician to obtain additional information concerning a diagnosis of diabetes. This request could include information such as recent serum and urine laboratory results, and any diagnosis of diabetes. Review of this information would indicate whether the driver has been diagnosed with diabetes, and if so, if it has been properly treated and is adequately controlled. The ME should consider all relevant information and make a qualification decision based on medical judgement, and the circumstances of each individual driver.

Topic 1.4: Medical Variances

This topic will review medical variances which include medical exemptions, Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificates, and grandfathered drivers who previously participated in the vision waiver study program, and the process by which drivers can apply for and be granted these medical variances.

There will be a knowledge check regarding the information covered in the topic so you can test your knowledge.

Medical Variances

Under 49 CFR 391.41 *Physical qualifications for drivers*,

- (3) A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if:
 - (i) That person meets the physical qualification standards in [paragraph \(b\)](#) of this section and has complied with the medical examination requirements in [§ 391.43](#); or
 - (ii) That person obtained from FMCSA a medical variance from the physical qualification standards in [paragraph \(b\)](#) of this section and has complied with the medical examination requirement in [§ 391.43](#).

Medical variances are defined as an exemption from part 391, an SPE Certificate which is an alternative physical qualification standard for the loss or impairment of limbs as outlined in 49 CFR 391.49, and drivers grandfathered who participated in the vision waiver study program (March 31, 1996) as outlined in 49 CFR 391.64.

Drivers who require either an exemption or SPE Certificate must have both the signed Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, and an exemption or SPE Certificate. The two documents together allow the driver to be qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce.

Medical Exemptions

A medical exemption provides temporary relief from one or more regulations for interstate CMV drivers. An individual may apply for an exemption from any of the qualification standards listed in 49 CFR 391.41 *Physical qualifications for drivers*. FMCSA has the following two established exemption programs.

- Epilepsy and Seizure Exemption Program [49 CFR 391.41(b)(8)]
- Hearing Exemption Program [49 CFR 391(b)(11)]

Federal exemptions provide drivers who do not meet the requirements in the regulations with an opportunity to seek an exemption on a case-by-case basis.

FMCSA's decision to grant or deny applications for exemptions from the regulation is based on an individualized assessment of each applicant's medical information.

The Agency is required to publish exemption requests in the Federal Register for public comment, review the comments received, and publish the Agency's final decision.

Under the FAST Act, FMCSA may grant an exemption from the FMCSRs for a five-year period if it finds "such exemption would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved absent such exemption." The statute also allows the agency to renew exemptions at the end of the five-year period. FMCSA grants medical exemptions from the FMCSRs for a two-year period to align with the maximum duration of a driver's medical certification.

As discussed above, requests for medical exemptions are considered and issued through the FMCSA Medical Programs Division, not by the ME.

Exemptions—Responsibility of the ME

As with any medical variance, as an ME, you are involved in the exemption process by determining if the driver is otherwise medically qualified, meaning that the driver meets all the other physical qualification standards except for the requirement for the specific exemption.

It is your responsibility to indicate that a driver must apply for and obtain an exemption from the specific standard and specify the type of exemption required (i.e., hearing or seizure), by selecting "Accompanied by a waiver/exemption" and specifying the type of exemption required on the Medical Examination Determination section of the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875.

You are also responsible for indicating on the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, that the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is only valid when accompanied by a waiver/exemption by selecting "Accompanied by a waiver/exemption" and specifying the type of exemption required. The Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876 will not be valid until the driver receives an exemption from FMCSA.

By checking this box on the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, you certify that the driver:

- Fails to meet the hearing or seizure standard;
- Meets all other physical requirements cited in 49 CFR 391.41(b); and
- Must also have a valid Federal medical exemption to drive.

The Medical Examiner's Certificate is not valid until the driver applies for and is issued the exemption.

The application process for an exemption differs for each exemption program, and may include requests for medical examination information, and motor vehicle records which drivers must submit with their application. If driver's request additional information, you may direct them to the medical page on the FMCSA website.

Please note that on January 21, 2022, FMCSA published the Qualifications of Drivers; Vision Standard final rule. This final rule eliminated the need for a Federal Vision Exemption Program and allows certified MEs, in consultation with an ophthalmologist or optometrist, to issue a Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, to individuals with monocular vision under the alternative vision standard.

Exemptions - "Grandfathering"

Grandfathered exemptions are for drivers who participated in FMCSA's Vision Waiver Study Program that ran from 1992 to 1996. At the conclusion of the waiver program, approximately 1,900 drivers received a letter confirming participation in the program and granting a continued exemption from the vision standard, as long as the driver continues to meet the other physical qualification standards and can meet the vision qualification requirements with one eye. The driver who was grandfathered also must have an annual physical qualification examination and an annual eye examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. The driver must provide the ME with a copy of these results during the physical qualification examination. The ME is responsible for reviewing the results of the evaluation conducted by an ophthalmologist or optometrist as part of the physical qualification examination; determining if the driver is otherwise qualified under 49 CFR 391.41; and issuing a Medical Examiner's Certificate, MCSA-5876 for up to 12 months.

To obtain a copy of the letter from FMCSA identifying the driver as a participant in the vision waiver program, the driver may call (202) 366-4001 or email fmcamedical@dot.gov.

Elimination of the Vision Grandfather Provision (49 CFR 391.46(b))

Due to the publication of the Qualifications of Drivers; Vision Standard final rule, the vision grandfather provision will be eliminated on March 22, 2023. Any Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, issued under the vision grandfather provision is void and MEs no longer need to check the box on the Medical Examiner's Certificate associated with 49 CFR 391.64.

Exemptions - Interstate Versus Intrastate

Please note that medical exemptions issued by FMCSA are for drivers who operate in or intend to operate in interstate commerce.

For intrastate only drivers, FMCSA does not have authority to grant exemptions from intrastate requirements of individual States. Drivers must contact their SDLA to obtain information regarding State medical waivers. Therefore, exemptions issued by FMCSA do not provide regulatory relief for drivers who plan to limit their operations to intrastate commerce.

As discussed earlier in this training, if you choose to perform a physical qualification examination for an intrastate only driver who is licensed in a State that has variances from the FMCSRs, it is your responsibility to understand any relevant State requirements.

FMCSA will not process applications for medical exemptions for drivers that intend to only operate in intrastate commerce.

SPE Certificate

The SPE certificate is for interstate CMV drivers with an amputation or a fixed-limb impairment that interferes with safe operation of a CMV, and the impairment is not related to a progressive condition. Receipt of the SPE Certificate demonstrates that the driver is qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. The SPE certificate is issued for up to a two-year period and is renewable.

Amputations and fixed-limb impairments are addressed under 49 CFR 391.41(b):

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person -

- (1) Has no loss of a foot, a leg, a hand, or an arm, or has been granted a skill performance evaluation certificate pursuant to [§ 391.49](#);
- (2) Has no impairment of:
 - (i) A hand or finger which interferes with prehension or power grasping;

The applicant must demonstrate precision prehension (the ability to turn switches on and off) and power grasp prehension (the ability to hold on to and maneuver the steering wheel) separately with each upper limb. Power grasp is the clamping force produced by wrapping the fingers of both hands around the steering wheel against the counter-pressure offered by the palm and thumb or by use of a type of assistive device.

- (ii) An arm, foot, or leg which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or any other significant limb defect or limitation which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or has been granted a skill performance evaluation certificate pursuant to [§ 391.49](#);

When evaluating a driver, it should be noted that under § 391.41(b)(1) only drivers with loss of all five fingers are considered to have the loss of a hand. Drivers with the loss of fewer than all fingers should be medically evaluated under § 391.41(b)(2) to determine whether there is an impairment, defect, or limitation of a limb. This is an important distinction because an amputation under § 391.41(b)(1) is always medically disqualifying, whereas a condition classified as an impairment is subject to the ME's medical judgment of whether the condition interferes with the normal driving tasks. If the ME determines that the condition does interfere with normal driving tasks, the driver examination forms should be filled out accordingly and the driver should submit an SPE Certificate application.

To be eligible for an SPE certificate, a driver with loss of a hand or arm must have a prosthesis that allows the driver to demonstrate precision prehension (e.g., the ability to manipulate knobs and switches) or power grasp prehension (e.g., the ability to hold and maneuver the steering wheel).

Requests for SPE Certificates, application processing, and issuance are coordinated through the FMCSA Service Centers. The application process is described under 49 CFR 391.49 *Alternative physical qualification standards for the loss or impairment of limbs*. If driver's request additional information, you may direct them to the medical page on the FMCSA website.

SPE Certificate—Responsibility of the ME

In addition to determining if an SPE Certificate is needed under 49 CFR 391.41(b)(1) and (2), you must determine if the driver is otherwise medically qualified.

When completing the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875, the ME is required to document the specifics of the need for an SPE Certificate including the cause of the limb amputation or impairment.

To certify that a driver requires an SPE Certificate and is otherwise medically qualified, mark the “accompanied by an SPE Certificate” option on the Medical Examiner’s Certificate, Form MCSA-5876.

By checking this box on the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, you certify that the driver:

- Fails to meet one or more of the limb requirements of 49 CFR 391.41(b)(1) or (2);
 - Meets all other physical requirements cited in 49 CFR 391.41(b); and
 - The Medical Examiner’s Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, is not valid until the driver applies for and receives an SPE Certificate.
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Topic 1.4: Knowledge Check - Medical Variances

Question 1: Types of Exemptions

You are examining a driver, Timothy Parker, who meets the physical qualification standards outlined in the FMCSRs with the exception that he does not meet the hearing standard. How should you fill out the Medical Examiner Determination section of his Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875?

- a. Check the box “determination pending” and require additional evaluation by an optometrist
- b. Check the box “Accompanied by a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate”
- c. Check the box “Qualified by Operation of 49 CFR 391.64 Federal”
- d. Check the box “Accompanied by a _____ waiver/exemption” and indicate “hearing” as the type of exemption

The correct answer is d. Check the box “Accompanied by a _____ waiver/exemption” and indicate “hearing” as the type of exemption. Timothy is responsible for applying for the Federal hearing exemption and can find additional information on how to do so on FMCSA’s website.

Question 2: Who Evaluates Requests for Medical Variances

Medical exemptions provide temporary relief from one or more of the FMCSRs. Requests for a medical exemption are considered by:

- a. The ME
- b. A driver’s SDLA
- c. FMCSA’s Medical Programs Division
- d. The motor carrier employing the driver

The correct answer is c. Requests for medical exemptions are considered and issued through FMCSA's Medical Programs Division, not by the ME.

The role of the ME is to determine if the driver is otherwise qualified if accompanied by the medical exemption.

Question 3: Interstate Drivers Versus Intrastate Drivers

True or False: As an ME, you should determine whether a driver is applying as an interstate or intrastate CMV driver when conducting a physical qualification examination.

- a. True
- b. False

The correct answer is a. True. An SDLA may set its own medical waiver requirements for intrastate CMV drivers. Please note that all Federal exemption programs are for drivers who intend to operate CMVs in interstate commerce. FMCSA does not have authority to grant waivers to drivers from States' intrastate requirements. Therefore, FMCSA exemptions do not permit regulatory relief for drivers who plan to limit their operations to intrastate commerce.

Question 4: SPE Certificate

An interstate CMV driver requires a physical qualification examination, the driver is missing their left arm. You conduct your examination according to the FMCSRs and determine that the driver is otherwise medically qualified. You should take the following actions (select all that apply):

- a. Place the driver in pending determination and request that the driver provide a note from a psychiatrist that the left arm is a fixed deficit.
- b. Mark the "accompanied by an SPE Certificate" option on the Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876.
- c. Note on the "Driver Health History Review" section of the Medical Examination Report Form, MCSA-5875 that driver is missing their left arm and why.
- d. Inform the driver that they must apply for an SPE Certificate from FMCSA and inform them that they can find the application on the FMCSA website.

The correct answers are b c, and d. Based on the physical qualification examination, a missing limb is a fixed deficit, so an SPE Certificate is needed. In addition, the ME is required to provide the specifics regarding the reason the driver needs an SPE Certificate and must inform the driver that they need to apply for an SPE Certificate from FMCSA.