



Understanding DOT Physical Qualifications and Examinations

Department of Transportation (DOT) Physical Exams

Federal law requires that drivers of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) receive periodic physical examinations. This examination is defined as the "Department of Transportation (DOT) Medical Examination."

The DOT physical examination is highly regulated. Its purpose is to detect the presence of physical, mental, or emotional defects that would affect an applicant's ability to operate a commercial vehicle safely. The examiner must understand the regulations to prevent individuals from being inappropriately disqualified from their livelihood. Conversely, in the interest of public safety, the practitioner is responsible for identifying those individuals who do not meet the criteria.

During this test, the applicant's health history is carefully reviewed, including past or recent illnesses or injuries (including head

or brain injuries); vision, hearing or heart disorders; the presence of high blood pressure, muscular weakness or disease, diabetes, digestion, or respiratory problems; sleep disorders; and the health of the lungs, kidney, liver, and nervous system.

Depending on certain medical conditions or diseases, the Examining Provider may need additional testing, reports, specialty clearance prior to certification. We follow all the physical qualification regulations/standards and FMCSA guidelines to help promote the health and safety of our nation's Commercial Drivers.

FMCSA'S Mission:

The primary mission of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and busses.

Drivers Must Complete Sections 1 & 2 of the Medical Examination Report

- Drivers Information
- Health History
- For any YES answers need to give details

Dishonest responses

Deliberate omission or falsification of information may invalidate the examination and any certificate issued based on it.

Subject to civil penalty for making false statement or for concealing a disqualifying condition.

HIPAA

FMCSA does not prohibit employers from obtaining copies of the Physical form

- Employers must comply with state and federal laws regarding privacy of employee medical information

- A Signed Authorization is required to release Physical long form

Vision

- This is a required standard that must be used to determine certification.
- The required tests measure visual sharpness in each eye individually and both eyes together of at least 20/40 with or without corrective lenses
- Field of vision of at least 70° in the horizontal meridian of each eye.
- Color vision must be sufficient to recognize standard red, amber, and green traffic signal colors.
- When corrective lenses are used to meet the vision qualification requirement, the corrective lenses must be used while driving
- A medical examiner, ophthalmologist, or optometrist may perform and certify vision test results. The medical examiner determines certification status.
- Vision out of one eye only is disqualifying.



Hearing

- Must perceive a forced whispered voice in the better ear at not less than five feet. If tested in with an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 dB at 500/1000/2000 Hz with/out hearing aid in the better ear.
- Use of hearing aids to meet the hearing requirements is acceptable but must be used while driving.
- There is no waiver program for hearing at present

Sleep Apnea

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a serious sleep disorder that occurs when a person's breathing is interrupted during sleep. If left untreated it can result in numerous health problems. For commercial drivers with OSA it can have a sevenfold increased risk of accidents. Drivers suspected of having OSA will need to be evaluated with a sleep study.

A driver with an OSA diagnosis may be certified if the following are met:

1. Drivers treated with a CPAP and meeting minimum requirements of 4 hours of use on 70% of nights.

Drivers are disqualified if they have a diagnosis of OSA and are not in compliance with treatment plan.



Cardiovascular Conditions

High Blood Pressure

Stage 1 Hypertension

- BP 140-159 / 90-99 mmHg and no prior history of high blood pressure then:
 - 1 year certification
 - A follow up appointment with a primary care physician is needed for evaluation and treatment of high blood pressure
 - If prior diagnosis of high blood pressure of 140/90 – 159/99:
 - 3 month conditional certification
 - Follow up with primary care physician for evaluation and treatment of hypertension
 - Annual recertification if blood pressure is less than 140/90

Stage 2 Hypertension

- 160-179 / 100-109 mmHg
- Certify – yes but one time for three months only until satisfactory treatment is documented
- Annual certification if blood pressure is less than 140/90

Stage 3 Hypertension

- $\geq 180/110$ mmHg
- No certification, immediately disqualifying.
- Can certify if at recheck if $\leq 140/90$ mmHg, and treatment is well tolerated.
- 6 month certification

Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attack) Guidelines

- Minimum 2 month wait after Heart Attack
- No current anginal symptoms



- Cleared by cardiologist
- Tolerance to medication
- Stress test 4-6 weeks after Heart Attack and repeated at least every 2 years
- Annual examination, asymptomatic, cardiologist evaluation recommended

Cardiovascular Stents

- One week wait with approval by cardiologist
- Showing no symptoms
- No injury to vascular access site
- Negative exercise tolerance test 3-6 months post procedure and at least every 2 years
- Annual evaluation by cardiologist
- Tolerance of medications
- 1 year certification

Coronary Bypass

- At least 3 Months Post Bypass with clearance from cardiologist
- Tolerance to medications
- Annual qualification examination
- Yearly exercise tolerance test beginning at 5 years
- Additional stress testing if abnormal resting EKG, unsatisfactory exercise tolerance test or abnormal heart rhythms

Pacemakers

- Not disqualifying alone
- Annual recertification required
- Must have documented pacemaker checks

Defibrillators

- Implantable defibrillators are disqualifying



Additional Requirements

Diabetes

- Insulin is disqualifying unless driver has a diabetic waiver.
- Has no established medical history of, or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently **requiring insulin** for control.
- Diet and oral agents are not disqualifying but the driver must remain under adequate supervision. Poor control and/or hypoglycemia could be disqualifying. **Documentation will be needed to verify Diabetes control.**
- Byetta is an Incretin mimetic, not insulin, therefore is permitted under current FCMSA rules but will need a written statement from their treating physician documenting frequent monitoring and tolerance of medication.
- There is a diabetes exemption program for insulin treated diabetes.
- Annual recertification

Substance Abuse

- Disqualified if using a controlled substance such as amphetamine, narcotics or any derivative thereof, any other habit-forming drug, or any other substance to a degree which renders the driver incapable of safely operating a motor vehicle.
- Unqualified for duration of drug use.
- Cannot have a clinical diagnosis of alcoholism where the condition is not fully stabilized.

Cerebrovascular Diseases

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)

- No driving within one year
- Subsequent clearance by neurologist
- Annual recertification

Stroke

- Brainstem/ cerebellum Stroke – no driving within one year
- Most strokes – no driving within 5 years

- Need neurologist clearance
- Recertify annually

Vertigo (Dizziness)

- Benign Vertigo that resolves can requalify after 2 months w/o symptoms
- Meniere's and other chronic vertigo is disqualifying

Seizures

- Controlled and uncontrolled epilepsy – disqualify
- History of seizure disorder – qualified if off meds and no seizure for 10 years
- History of one seizure – off meds and no seizure for 5 years
- Febrile seizure – no restrictions

Narcolepsy

- Disqualifying

Resources

To view or obtain a copy of Medical Examination Report see link below:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safetyprograms/Medical-Report.pdf>

To view or obtain copy of Medical Examiner Certificate see link below:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safetyprograms/Medical-Examiners-Certificate.pdf>

The medical examination must be performed by a medical examiner listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners. To view examiner list see link below:

<https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov/NRPublicUI/home.seam>

To view diabetes exemption program see link below:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safetyprograms/Diabetes/diabetes-exemption-package0706.pdf>

To view monocular vision exemption program see link below:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safetyprograms/Vision/vision-exemption-package0706.pdf>

Please Note...

This is not a complete list of medical conditions evaluated during the DOT physical. These are just some of the more common medical issues seen during examinations. Any medical conditions that potentially affects the drivers' ability to operate a commercial vehicle may need further evaluation or documentation in order to determine certification status.