

## **DOT Update for Drivers and Motor Carriers**

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Learn how updates to the Department of Transportation (DOT) medical examination rules affect drivers and motor carriers.

### **Are the new cardiac and high blood pressure guidelines actual regulations with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)?**

The new heart disease guidelines are just that – guidelines. They are recommendations for the medical examiner on what the examiner should know about heart condition risks. We encourage all medical examiners to follow the medical review board recommendations as the standard of care for DOT drivers. If an incident occurs, the medical examiner will be assessed according to that rule. They can deviate from the recommendations, but they will need to justify their decision on the DOT examination papers.

### **What are the cardiac stress test requirements for drivers after they have coronary artery bypass surgery?**

According to the 2013 Member Expert Panel recommendations, drivers usually don't need a cardiac stress test during their follow-up care. But there are exceptions for circumstances such as recurring cardiac symptoms, a worsening condition or a provider feeling a test is necessary. That's why medical examiners need to have a statement from the driver's provider. The statement must affirm that the driver's cardiac condition is stable and they can safely operate a motor vehicle.

### **How long can a non-insulin diabetic be certified?**

Since diabetes is a progressive medical condition that can change quickly, most medical examiners will give a one-year card. If the medical examiner is familiar with the driver, then they may make an exception. The FMCSA watches these cases very carefully.

### **Can I get a vision waiver for monovision? Is monocular vision an automatic disqualification?**

Monovision means one eye is corrected for far vision and one eye is corrected for near vision. This does not disqualify the driver as long as they can wear proper corrective contacts or glasses. Monocular vision means the driver can only see through one eye. This vision problem is not an automatic disqualification since the driver can get a vision waiver from the FMCSA.

### **Do seasonal drivers need a medical card?**

All drivers who transport products they don't own are required to have a medical card. Farmers are not required to have a DOT medical card since they are transporting their own product, but there is a limit (150 miles) on how far they can drive from their place of business. If they drive beyond that mileage limit, then they are required to have a DOT medical card.

Custom harvester drivers are exempt from the K restriction by the FMCSA under an independent ruling in October 2018. These drivers still need to follow the FMCSA guidelines for having a medical card.

### **What are the instances of drivers with commercial driver's licenses (CDL) who don't need a medical card to operate?**

First, figure out whether you operate in interstate or intrastate commerce and if you're exempted or non-exempted from either the federal or state requirements. You must certify to your state driver's licensing agency that you fall into one of these categories:

**Exempted intrastate** is when you only operate in a city, county, state or federal vehicle and are exempt from the FMCSA driver qualification requirements. FMCSA regulations require self-certification.

**Non-exempted intrastate** is when you operate only in intrastate commerce and are required to meet FMCSA driver qualifications.

Other categories:

- **Interstate non-exempted.** You're an interstate non-exempted driver and must meet the federal DOT medical card requirements.
- **Interstate exempted.** You're an interstate exempted driver and don't have to meet the federal DOT medical card requirements.
- **Intrastate non-exempted.** You're an intrastate non-exempted driver and are required to meet the medical requirements for your state.
- **Intrastate exempted.** You're an intrastate exempted driver and don't have to meet the medical requirements for your state.

### **How high can A1C levels be before a driver is disqualified?**

If their A1C is 10 or greater, the driver will be disqualified. However, they can follow up with their doctor and get their blood sugar levels under control. Once the levels go below 10, the FMCSA medical review board states they are safe to drive a commercial motor vehicle.

### **Why are eyes tested separately?**

This rule is found in 49 CFR 391.41, which states that each eye (uncorrected or corrected) must be 20/40 or better to get and keep a CDL.

### **Do K intrastate drivers need to have a medical card?**

A K restriction is a CDL intrastate only where the driver is limited to driving within that state that he is licensed in. For intrastate drivers, it depends on the state's weight criterion. Some states use the same 10,001-pound criterion\* as the FMCSA regulations. Other states have increased the weight limit to 12,000 pounds or up to 26,001 pounds (this does not coincide with the CDL requirements). A few states have grandfather clauses or other exemptions that may exempt certain individuals from the medical requirement.

\*The weight criterion for which a physical is needed is 10,001 pounds. So, interstate drivers of vehicles between 10,001 and 26,001 pounds (not hauling hazmat) need to have a medical exam but do not need to have a CDL.