Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Examinations: Your NEW Vital Role in Keeping America’s Roads Safe
Some Thoughts on Performing CMV Physical Examinations . . . Before We Start!

- It does not matter how many exams you have or have not performed; you will learn in this program.
- There are examiners who will spout the book facts, but never look at or attempt to understand the driver, restricting a driver for no reason.
- There are examiners on the opposite end of the spectrum who mean well, but have no idea what they are doing.
- There are charlatans who will rubber stamp anything for a profit.

- Listen to and observe the driver.
- Use your ability to reason and common sense in making your certification decisions.
- The goal is to keep the driver working if at all possible. You should only limit a driver if you detect a condition that may cause an incapacitating event.
Oklahoma – Elderly sisters, dead. Truck driver, heart attack.
Texas – Tour bus crash. Numerous fatalities.

Bus driver, under the influence of alcohol.
Chicago – Young mother, killed. Driver, diabetic reaction.
Driver Safety Facts
Large Truck Crash Causation Study (LTCCS)

• Data collected between April 2001 and December 2003
• Analysis brief presented January 2006
• Reported to congress March 2006

This Study Revealed:

- #1 cause of fatalities in the United States involving CMVs was due to driver fatigue

- Ways to reduce fatigue in drivers
  - Schedules
  - Question routines during medical examination and discuss with managers
  - < 2% of injuries were caused by health-related driver issues
## CMVs on the Road Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registered Vehicles &amp; Companies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005 All Vehicles</td>
<td>247,421,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 Large Trucks</td>
<td>8,481,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 Buses</td>
<td>807,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Active Interstate Truck and Bus Companies</td>
<td>692,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Active Hazardous Material Companies</td>
<td>72,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Active Passenger Carrier Companies</td>
<td>5,211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** FHWA, *Highway Statistics 2005*, Table VM-1; and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), *Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS)*.

**Note:** Registered vehicles are those that have been registered through a State motor vehicle department.

### 2006 Police-Reported Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crash Type</th>
<th>Large Trucks</th>
<th>All Vehicles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatal</td>
<td>4,321</td>
<td>38,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>77,000</td>
<td>1,746,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Damage Only</td>
<td>287,000</td>
<td>4,189,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>368,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,974,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and General Estimates System (GES).

**Note:** A large truck is defined as a truck with gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) > 10,000 pounds.

## CMVs on the Road Today

### 2009 Preliminary Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crash Type</th>
<th>Large Trucks</th>
<th>All Vehicles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatal</td>
<td>3,197</td>
<td>30,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>1,517,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Damage Only</td>
<td>232,000</td>
<td>3,957,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>286,197</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,504,797</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Note:** A large truck is defined as a truck with gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) > 10,000 pounds.

### CMVs on the Road Today

#### COVERAGE

12,135,000 U.S. Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>FMCSA</td>
<td>10,941,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>FAA</td>
<td>525,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipeline</td>
<td>PHMSA</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad</td>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>97,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>132,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Examples of Safety-Sensitive Positions

• Aviation
  – Flight crew members, flight attendants, air traffic controllers, flight instructors, aircraft maintenance

• Motor Carriers
  – OTR truck drivers, school bus drivers
  – Includes Canadian & Mexican drivers operating in the United States

• Railroad
  – Engine, train, signal services, dispatchers, operators
Examples of Safety-Sensitive Positions

- **Mass Transit**
  - Subway/bus vehicle operators, controllers, all maintenance workers, armed security

- **Pipeline**
  - Operations, maintenance, emergency response personnel, some international workers

- **Coast Guard**
  - Alcohol testing is only performed in the event of a serious marine incident or marine casualty on any individual employed on board who is directly involved in the incident

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A DOT Primer for NRCME Examinee Candidates

...what you need to know before you start.
This DOT Primer Module . . .

. . . is available in the Online Resource Library. Please print and bind the module for future reference.
Examiner, please note: All subcategories of the U.S. Department of Transportation are distinct and separate entities.
It Is Important to Know . . .

. . . all of the individual DOT subgroups have different requirements for the employees they regulate. No 2 organizations have exactly the same rules and regulations governing physical exams, drug testing, and breath alcohol testing.
For Purposes of the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners . . .

. . . this NRCME Plus Online Training System™ program will only provide training as it pertains to the NRCME requirements of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

No other DOT programs are covered in this training system.
FMCSA Regulations
-- The DOT “Bible” --

49 CFR 391.41 – Physical Qualifications for Drivers
49 CFR 391.43 – Medical Examination; Certificate of Physical Qualification

• Contains all of the rules and regulations for drivers and physicians
• You may obtain a copy at: www.fmcsa.dot.gov or print from the Online Resource Library.

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Important Governmental Acronyms

- BAT – Breath Alcohol Test/Technician
- CMV – Commercial Motor Vehicle
- CPCT – Certified Professional Drug Collector/Trainer
- DATIA – Drug and Alcohol Testing Industry Association
- DOT – Department of Transportation
- FMCSA – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- MRO – Medical Review Officer
- NRCME – National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners
- SPE – Skill Performance Evaluation
- TPA – Third Party Administrator
- WIPT – Working Integrated Product Team

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The Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999 established the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

The FMCSA’s mission is to ‘reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses.’

In August 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, otherwise known as “SAFETEA-LU.”
FMCSA was mandated to establish and maintain a current national registry of medical examiners qualified to perform examinations and issue medical certificates for CMV drivers.
NRCME was established to provide comprehensive and uniform CMV driver physicals

NRCME implemented on May 21, 2012

A training program must be completed and the NRCME examination must be successfully passed

FMCSA certification will last for 10 years, with 5-year update training required

Every 10 years, examiner must re-take the FMCSA certification exam
Currently

- There are 200,000 examiners for > 6 million drivers in the United States.
- That is 1 examiner for every 30 drivers.

After NRCME

- There will be an estimated 50,000 examiners for nearly 12 million drivers by 2015.
- That is 1 examiner for every 240 drivers.
By Becoming a Certified NRCME Examiner . . .

- You will be federally qualified to perform physical examinations on FMCSA-regulated employees.
- The NRCME status May or May Not be recognized in the other subcategories.
- Do not assume you are qualified to perform a physical exam on another DOT entity-regulated employee until you have reviewed That Entity’s specific examiner requirements.
Physical Examination Requirements

- Certification examinations for new hires not to exceed 2 years from the date of the exam
- Re-certification examinations at the time interval indicated by the previous certification
- Drug testing for new hires and random testing for reasonable suspicions and follow-ups, and at re-certification
- Breath alcohol testing for new hires (optional), random testing, and testing for reasonable suspicion
- Driver must have physical exam before returning to work after an illness or injury that interferes with driving even if driver’s medical certificate has not expired
Each and Every Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Must Be Medically Recertified to Drive at a Maximum of 2 Years

There are no provisions for certification > 2 years
DOT/FMCSA vs. Non-DOT

- DOT (interchanged frequently with FMCSA) has federally mandated procedures, recommendations, and guidelines for DOT physical examinations.
- Certain qualifications must be met to establish a driver as DOT-regulated.
- Drivers who do not meet these protocols are not DOT-regulated and are often referred to as non-DOT drivers/employees.
- A federally supplied examination form is free and available at:
For questions or more information, contact:

Elaine Papp

at

Elaine.Papp@dot.gov
Qualifications for Drivers

- Must have been trained in an approved DOT/FMCSA training program (commercial or college).
- Must possess valid driver’s license denoting ability to pilot a commercial motor vehicle > 10,001 lbs. OR a vehicle that transports ≥16 passengers (including driver), or carries hazardous material.
- Farmers are exempt for local hauling in 150 nautical mile radius of their farm. If for hire, they must have a CMV physical examination.
- If a farmer reasonably suspects his/her load will be shipped across state lines, the farmer may need to possess Medical Examiner’s Certificate. Check with each state.
- Must possess current Medical Examiner’s Certificate at all times while operating CMV.
- Must be in random drug and alcohol testing program if CMV > 26,001 lbs.
- > 10,001 lbs: Physical exam only (example: service vehicles, delivery trucks).
- < 10,001 lbs: No physical exam required unless CMV placarded as a hazardous materials handler or carrying ≥ 16 passengers.
- > 26,001 lbs: Physical exam and random drug/alcohol testing program (example: 18 wheeled tractor-trailers).

A Person is Physically Qualified to Drive a Motor Vehicle If That Person:

There are 13 physical requirements listed in 391.41 section B. Some examples are:

- Has no loss of foot, leg, hand, or arm (unless SPE has been granted)
- Has no arm, hand or foot/leg problems that interfere with the operation of a CMV
- Has no diagnosis of diabetes mellitus that requires insulin for control
- Has no myocardial conditions that could produce syncope, dyspnea, collapse, or congestive cardiac failure
Skill Performance Evaluations (SPEs)

- Drivers with physical impairments that affect their ability to safely operate CMVs according to their medical examiners, or with missing limbs (e.g., hand or finger, arm, foot or leg), are required to obtain SPE certificates.
- Drivers are tested at regional centers throughout the United States (locations supplied in the Online Resource Library).
No Need to Buy the Form!

Many companies offer pre-printed DOT medical examination forms. These can be purchased at the examiner’s expense, but it is recommended that an examiner paste the following link onto the examiner’s computer browser (bookmark and save to “Favorites”) for quick, free access. Or print from the Online Resource Library.

At End of Each Examination, Examiner Must Fill Out Driver’s Certificate

A free, pre-printed medical examiner’s certificate is attached at the end of the medical examination form.
However . . .

- Due to the fragile copy paper on which this medical examiner’s certificate is printed, it is highly recommended that the examiner purchase pre-printed certificates.
- Self-laminating medical examiner’s certificates will hold up for 2 years and are waterproof.
- FMCSA does not supply these types of certificates.
Distribution of Certificate

• A copy of the medical examiner’s certificate is provided to:
  – the driver (short form)
  – the employer

• Examiner retains original certificate. This to prevent fraudulent adulteration of the certificate.

• Exam is to be kept for 3 years by the examiner.

• Make sure the driver signs the certificate.
• The driver’s employer is only required to possess a copy of the medical examiner’s certificate (short form), but the employer may also want to have a copy of the long form.

• In general, HIPAA does not apply to DOT exams when dealing with the employer or another provider.

• Any third party requesting a copy must have a signed release from the driver.

• It is recommended that the driver sign the release in all instances. The employer may release without permission. Make sure you are protected – get a release!
Federal Reporting

• Each month, the examiner must submit demographics of examinations performed in that month (Form MCSA-5850)
• This form will be available online for each examinee
• A screenshot of the form is located in the Online Resource Library
• NRCME Plus Online Training System™ will be giving updates on this mandate and its implementation
Authority Mandate

Each examiner – upon mandate from a local, state, or federal request – must provide a copy of the long form within 48 hours of official notice. No release is required.
To Make Life Easier . . .

- NRCME Plus Online Training System™ suggests you begin scanning and storing your long forms digitally in PDF format.
- In a PDF system, forms can be sorted and queried by data fields for quick and easy access.
- Forms can then be emailed directly from PDF storage software to the requesting authority.

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Remember These Basic Standards When Performing a DOT Examination

**IMPORTANT!!**

**Non-Discretionary Standards**
- Immediately disqualify the driver when conditions are met.
- The examiner must follow the standards as published.

**Discretionary Guides/Recommendations**
- Limitations are steered by recommendations and guidelines from the FMCSA panel publications and examiner’s best judgment for public safety.
Non-Discretionary Driver Disqualifiers
(Immediate Disqualification)

- History of epilepsy/seizures
- Failed hearing exam
- Failed vision exam
- Active insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
Discretionary Exam Findings

- Those items in the examination that are outside of the non-discretionary disqualifiers
- Examiner bases driver certification, limitations, or referral for further evaluation on:
  - Current medical knowledge and practice
  - FMCSA panel guides
  - FMCSA recommendations
  - NRCME training
Remember:

• Does this examinee meet DOT criteria?
• Are my abnormal findings non-discretionary, or do I have laterality in my decision making?
• When I have laterality with discretionary standards, am I closely following the panel recommendations?
• When unsure of a finding, do I have the proper resources at hand to make a sound and fair decision?
• Am I doing everything I can to predict/prevent an incapacitating event without being unreasonable or unfair to the driver?
• Am I taking everything into consideration, including medication interactions, when making my decision?
• **Do not waffle on a decision once made. Let no one sway your ruling.**
• Do I have the proper incremental certification time for my discretionary findings?
• Once satisfied, are my supportive documents from primary or specialist providers initialed, dated, and attached to the physical evaluation form?
5 Steps to Certification of DOT Driver

1. Identify the potential problem

2. Diagnostic fact finding or requesting information, e.g.
   - Arterial blood gas analysis (ABG)
   - HbA1c, Hgb, etc.
   - Stress exercise tolerance test (ETT)
   - Sleep studies
   - Drug test

3. Discretionary or non-discretionary standards

4. Unequivocal decision

5. Administration/certification

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Now that you have a basic background in DOT structure, nomenclature, and NRCME background and basic physical exam requirements, you are ready to begin the formal NRCME training.