

# Update on Commercial Driver Medical Examination Rules and Reporting

## Summary

- **New forms required by April 20, 2016.**
- **Complete re-exam may be necessary depending on initial findings.**

Nearly 10 million commercial drivers in the U.S. are required to undergo mandatory physical examinations at least once every two years.



Under Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations, interstate drivers must be

examined and certified by a medical professional who completes specialized training and passes a competency test to be listed on the [National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners](#).

**Effective April 20, 2016**, examiners are required to use the following updated forms:

- [Medical Examination Report Form](#) (MCSA-5875), a long form completed as part of the exam.
- [Medical Examiners' Certificate](#) (MCSA-5876), a short form usually referred to as the Department of Transportation (DOT) card.
- Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Driver Medical Examination Results Form (MCSA-5850), an electronic form examiners complete through the National Registry website to report

exam results to the FMCSA. Paper copies are not required.

These forms have been revised as part of efforts to simplify electronic transmission of medical certification information from medical examiners to the FMCSA, and in turn, from the FMCSA to state driver licensing agencies. Full implementation of this reporting process is scheduled to be completed by **June 22, 2018**.

## What Do These Changes Mean?

1. Interstate drivers seeking medical certification or re-certification must be prepared to report for a complete examination. Providing all relevant medical documentation during the initial exam helps expedite the certification process.
2. Examiners will no longer issue a DOT card. Instead, they will issue a copy of the new MEC short form to medically qualified drivers.
3. Temporary disqualification is no longer an option. Revised rules now allow for a **"Determination Pending"** status. This provision gives examinees 45 days to produce any relevant medical documentation requested by the medical examiner. **If requested information is not submitted within 45 days, the driver must complete another full exam.** Either the driver or employer typically are responsible for exam costs.
4. **"Incomplete"** status is assigned if a driver doesn't complete an exam. If an incomplete exam is not assigned pending status, a full repeat exam is required to obtain certification.

5. DOT certifications are valid for two years, but a medical examiner may issue a short-term certification while monitoring a health condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes. **Drivers are required to complete a full new exam in order to extend short-term (less than 24 months) certification.**
6. Drivers with a current medical examiner's certificate can continue to operate a CMV until it expires or their pending status period ends, whichever comes first. If certification expires before a medical examiner makes a determination, the driver is not cleared to operate a commercial motor vehicle. Certified drivers are advised to complete their exam at least 45 days before their DOT card expires.
7. Examinees are required to:
  - sign a new privacy statement
  - specify whether they are a commercial driver's license (CDL) applicant or CDL holder
  - complete additional health history questions
  - specify their driving territory (national or state)
8. For vision, medical examiners are required to document any information received from an ophthalmologist or optometrist. They also must document the type of photo ID used to verify the examinee's identity.

## Background

Full adoption of the revised exam form and certificate, originally scheduled for Dec. 22, 2015, was postponed for 120 days by the FMCSA to allow time for medical examiners to become familiar with the new format and adjust electronic medical record systems to accommodate them. Until June 22, 2018, qualified commercial drivers will need to be issued an original medical examiner's certificate

following their exam. The Medical Examination Report Form must be retained on file at the medical examiner's office.

After June 22, 2018, drivers with a CDL or commercial learner's permit (CLP) will no longer receive a paper medical card. Instead, state motor vehicle records will be used to validate whether a CDL/CLP driver is medically qualified. Motor carriers and other employers will no longer need to verify that their CDL/CLP drivers were examined by a qualified medical professional on the National Registry. These changes will not affect non-CDL drivers, who will still receive a paper medical card.

## Exemptions and State Licensing



Interstate drivers who do not currently meet provisions under standards for diabetes, hearing, seizures and/or vision and are consequently unable to obtain medical certification

may apply for exemptions under federal programs. For information, refer to [Driver Exemption Programs](#) on the FMCSA website. Applicants may be required to provide medical exam results, employment history, driving experience and motor vehicle records.

Medical examiners are responsible for evaluating commercial drivers' fitness to drive and safely perform related non-driving tasks. FMCSA standards require states to issue commercial driver's licenses only after a driver passes state-administered knowledge and skills tests. Employers must ensure that drivers meet requirements for interstate commerce.