

TRUCK TALK

A Publication of
Continental Western Group®



AUGUST 2012

Medical Examiners Rule

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced a new safety rule that requires healthcare professionals who perform medical examinations for interstate truck and bus drivers to be trained, tested and certified on the specific physical qualifications that affect a driver's ability to safely operate the vehicle. The final rule also creates a national online database of medical examiners that have completed the FMCSA certification process.

Medical examiners perform approximately 3 million examinations on commercial truck and bus drivers each year. A DOT medical exam looks at a range of conditions to determine a driver's medical fitness, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory and muscular functions, vision and hearing. FMCSA Administrator Anne S. Ferro said "truck and bus drivers deserve highly trained medical examiners that think safety first. By holding medical examiners accountable to high standards of practice, we raise the bar for safety and save lives through increased commercial driver and vehicle safety".

This rule has an impact on many segments of the transportation industry:

- ✓ Medical examiners who need to obtain certification in order to continue issuing medical certificates for truck and bus drivers
- ✓ CMV drivers who need to obtain medical certificates from examiners on the National Registry
- ✓ Motor carriers who must ensure their interstate drivers have been certified by a medically certified examiner on the registry
- ✓ Training and testing organizations that will deliver these aspects of the program

The National Registry Schedule is now available online at: <http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/schedule.aspx> This website details the schedule of implementation from the date of the initial publication in the Federal Register (April 20, 2012), to the enforcement date of the rule, which is May 21, 2014. At that time, all medical examiners who wish to conduct FMCSA medical examinations for CMV drivers must be trained according to the FMCSA regulations and guidelines, pass a certification test and be listed on the National Registry. Also, by May 21, 2014, all Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers seeking a medical examination certificate must use a certified medical examiner on the National Registry.

At this time, the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners rule applies only to interstate drivers. Intrastate drivers must continue to follow State requirements concerning medical certification.

The medical examiners certificate will contain the same medical information as the current driver medical certificate, but will now also include the Medical Examiner's National Registry number.

The Medical Examiner will not inform the driver's State licensing agency that the driver has passed a physical examination. It is up to the CMV drivers who are required to have a CDL to provide the medical examiners certificate to the State agency issuing the license.

By May 21, 2014, all certified medical examiners must be on the National Registry database, and drivers must obtain a medical examination from a certified examiner. Medical examiners that fail to maintain federal standards will be removed from the registry.

For General Information on the National Registry, please go to:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/news/news-releases/2012/National-Registry.aspx>

To access the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners, please go to:

<http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/>

For Frequently Asked Questions about the National Registry, please go to:

http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/National_Registry_FAQ.pdf

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