



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**INEZ MOORE TENENBAUM  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District Superintendents  
District Transportation Supervisors  
Area and County Supervisors  
Driver Trainers

**FROM:** Donald N. Tudor, Director  
Office of Transportation

**DATE:** August 16, 2011

**RE:** School Bus Driver Medical Examinations: Physician Involvement

South Carolina school transportation regulations state that “School bus drivers shall be required to have a physical examination certified by a physician prior to the testing required to operate a school bus and every two years thereafter. The examining physician's certification shall be made on forms provided by the State Department of Education [SDE] or the United States Department of Transportation [USDOT]” (State Board of Education Regulation 43-80(N)).

Over the past year, this requirement and the associated language have generated numerous questions. This memorandum is an attempt to answer those questions.

**1. How frequently does a school bus driver have to get a medical exam?**

Under normal circumstances, a school bus driver must pass a medical exam every two years. The actual situation is that a school bus driver must pass the medical exam before his or her “Physician’s Certificate” expires, and this certificate normally expires two years from the date that the medical exam was conducted. For example, if you had your exam July 4, 2002, your next one must take place before July 4, 2004, which is the date your certificate expires.

The two-year period is the maximum, however. If the physician certifies that a bus driver has a medical condition—high blood pressure, for example—that warrants more frequent monitoring, the physician can set the expiration date of that driver’s “Physician’s Certificate” as soon as, say, three months from the date of the exam. In that case, the driver must get another medical exam before three months have passed because his or her “Physician’s Certificate” will expire at the end of that three-month period.

**2. Can the USDOT forms be used for the physician to fill out and sign?**

Yes, you may have your physician fill out and sign either the USDOT's forms or the SDE's forms, the SDE encourages the use of the SDE form. Both the USDOT and the SDE physician's report forms are titled "Medical Examination Report." The USDOT issues no official version of what is commonly called the "medical card." While Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations refer to this card as the "Medical Examiner's Certificate" (49 C.F.R. § 391.43), the medical cards that are typically available in doctors' offices may also be titled "Physician's Certificate," "Medical Examiner's\Physician's Certificate," or something similar.

**3. Do the "Medical Examination Report" and the medical card have to be signed by a physician?**

There are three medical professionals that can sign. In the state of South Carolina if you are a driver transporting public school children in a school bus that is owned by either the state, a school district, or a private contractor providing transportation services to a school district, a licensed medical doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner must sign both your "Medical Examination Report" and your medical card—regardless of what description appears under the line where the signature goes on these documents (you may see "Medical Examiner's Signature," for example). On the medical card, the physician's medical license number and the issuing state must also be stated.

**4. Who has to conduct the actual medical exam?**

The physician assistant, nurse practitioner or physician may perform the examination. However, physician assistants and nurse practitioners are required to work under the review of a physician.

**5. Who qualifies as a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant?**

In the nation as a whole, a qualified physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant are individuals who hold a license to practice medicine in these categories in South Carolina. To practice medicine in South Carolina, the individual must be licensed by the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners.

South Carolina's school bus driver medical examination requirements are more stringent than those of the USDOT because, unlike the federal transportation agency, the state of South Carolina believes that individuals who are responsible for transporting students must maintain a level of physical health that is monitored through the direct involvement of a licensed physician.

Copies of the SDE's "Medical Examination Report" and the medical card are attached.

If you have further questions regarding school bus driver medical exams, you may contact John Dozier by phone at 803-734-8245 or by e-mail at [jdozier@sde.state.sc.us](mailto:jdozier@sde.state.sc.us).

DNT/bc

Attachments

# SOUTH CAROLINA PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

Federal Register 49 CFR 391.41 and SC Section 59-5-60, Article 5, Transportation Regulation 43-80 N

## General Information

The purpose of this examination is to determine a driver's physical qualification to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in interstate commerce according to the requirements in 49 CFR 391.41-49. Therefore, the medical examiner must be knowledgeable of these requirements and guidelines developed by the FMCSA to assist the medical examiner in making the qualification determination. The medical examiner should be familiar with the driver's responsibilities and work environment and is referred to the section of the form, **The Driver's Role**. For purposes of this examination, to comply with South Carolina State Board of Education Transportation Regulation 43-80 N, the "medical examiner" must be a medical physician.

In addition to reviewing the Health History section with the school bus driver and conducting the physical examination, the medical examiner (physician) should discuss common prescriptions and over-the-counter medications relative to the side effects and hazards of these medications while driving. Educate driver to read warning labels on all medications. History of certain conditions may be cause for rejection, particularly if required by regulation, or may indicate the need for additional laboratory tests or more stringent examination perhaps by a medical specialist. These decisions are usually made by the medical examiner (physician) in light of the driver's job responsibilities, work schedule and potential for the condition to render the driver unsafe.

Medical conditions should be recorded even if they are not cause for denial, and they should be discussed with the school bus driver to encourage appropriate remedial care. This advice is especially needed when a condition, if neglected, could develop into a serious illness that could affect driving.

If the medical examiner (physician) determines that the driver is fit to drive a school bus and is also able to perform non-driving responsibilities as may be required, the medical examiner (physician) signs the medical examination report and the certificate; the school bus driver must carry the certificate with his/her license. The certificate must be dated. Under current regulations, the certificate is valid for two years, unless the school bus driver has a medical condition that does not prohibit driving but does require more frequent monitoring. In such situations, the medical certificate should be issued for a shorter length of time. The physical examination should be done carefully and at least as complete as is indicated by the attached form. Contact the FMCSA at 202-366-1790 for further information (a vision exemption, qualifying drivers under 49 CFR 391.64, etc.).

## Interpretation of Medical Standards

Since the issuance of the regulations for physical qualifications of commercial drivers, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has published recommendations called Advisory Criteria to help medical examiners in determining whether a driver meets the physical qualifications for commercial driving. These recommendations have been condensed to provide information to medical examiners that 1. is directly relevant to the physical examination and 2. is not already included in the medical examination form. The specific regulation is printed in italics and its reference by section is highlighted.

## The School Bus Driver' Role

Responsibilities, work schedules, physical and emotional demands, and lifestyles among school bus drivers vary by the type of driving that they do. Some of the main types of driving include the following: operating a school bus in the early morning hours and again late afternoon hours to transport non-disabled students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve (2 1/2 hours from 6:00 to 8:30 a.m. and 2 1/2 hours from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.); operating a school bus off and on throughout the day from early morning to early evening to transport students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve (6:00 to 8:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., and 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.); or operating a school bus serving students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 years of age throughout the day and early evening (any of the times shown above).

The following factors may be involved in a driver's performance of duties: abrupt schedule changes and rotating work schedules, operating routes for the first time; extended operating time, starting at 5:30 a.m. and ending with driving students to and from an extracurricular trip at night; tight student pickup and delivery schedules, with irregularity in work, rest, and eating patterns, student behavior, adverse road, weather and traffic conditions, which may cause delays and lead to hurriedly loading or unloading in order to compensate for the lost time and get students to school or home on time; and environmental conditions such as excessive vibration, noise, and extremes in temperature.

There may be duties in addition to the driving task for which a driver is responsible and needs to be fit. Some of these responsibilities are: the safe monitoring of students at the school bus stop, the safe loading and unloading of students; inspecting the operating condition of the school bus before, during, and after delivery; and managing the emergency evacuation of students from the school bus; this can include the lifting of heavy students and the fast movement through the school bus interior. The above tasks demand agility, the ability to bend and stoop, the ability to maintain a crouching position to inspect the underside of the vehicle, frequent entering and exiting of the passenger loading door, and the ability to exit the emergency exits of the school bus.

In addition, a driver must have the perceptual skills to monitor a sometimes complex driving situation, the judgment skills to make quick decisions, when necessary, and the manipulative skills to control an oversize steering wheel, and maneuver a vehicle in crowded areas.

## Medical Examination Report FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVER FITNESS DETERMINATION

<b>1. DRIVER'S INFORMATION</b> Driver completes this section									
Driver's Name (Last, First, Middle)			Social Security No.		Birthdate M / D / Y	Age	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> New certification <input type="checkbox"/> Recertification <input type="checkbox"/> Follow Up	Date of Exam
Address		City, State, Zip Code		Work Tel: (    ) Home Tel: (    )		Driver License No.		License Class <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> Other	State of Issue

<b>2. HEALTH HISTORY</b> Driver completes this section, but medical examiner is encouraged to discuss with driver.																																																																																																																								
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I certify that the above information is complete and true. I understand that inaccurate, false or missing information may invalidate the examination and my Medical Examiner's Certificate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Driver's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

**Medical Examiners Comments on Health History** (The medical examiner must review and discuss with the driver any "yes" answers and potential hazards of medications, including over-the-counter medications, while driving)

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### TESTING (Medical Examiner completes Section 3 through 7)

**3. VISION** Standard: At least 20/40 acuity (Snellen) in each eye with or without correction. At least 70° peripheral in horizontal meridian measured in each eye. The use of corrective lenses should be noted on the Medical Examiner's Certificate.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** When other than the Snellen chart is used, give test results in Snellen-comparable values. In recording distance vision, use 20 feet as normal. Report visual acuity as a ratio with 20 as numerator and the smallest type read at 20 feet as denominator. If the applicant wears corrective lenses, these should be worn while visual acuity is being tested. If the driver habitually wears contact lenses, or intends to do so while driving, sufficient evidence of good tolerance and adaptation to their use must be obvious. Monocular drivers are not qualified.

Numerical readings must be provided.

ACUITY	UNCORRECTED	CORRECTED	HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VISION
Right Eye	20/	20/	Right Eye °
Left Eye	20/	20/	Left Eye °
Both Eyes	20/	20/	°

Applicant can recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber colors?  Yes  No

Applicant meets visual acuity requirement only when wearing:

Corrective Lenses

Monocular Vision:  Yes  No

Complete next line only if vision testing is done by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Date of Examination \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Ophthalmologist or Optometrist (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_ License No./State of issue \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**4. HEARING** Standard: a) Must first perceive forced whispered voice  $\geq 5$  ft., with or without hearing aid, or b) average hearing loss in better ear  $\leq 40$  dB  
 Check if hearing aid used for tests.  Check if hearing aid required to meet standard.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** To convert audiometric test results from ISO to ANSI, -14 dB from ISO for 500 Hz, -10 dB for 1,000 Hz, -8.5 dB for 2,000 Hz. To average, add the readings for 3 frequencies tested and divide by 3.

Numerical readings must be recorded.

a) Record distance from individual at which forced whispered voice can first be heard.	Right Ear		Left Ear		
	Feet	Feet	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz
			Average:		Average:

b) If audiometer is used, record hearing loss in decibels. (acc. to ANSI Z24.5-1951)

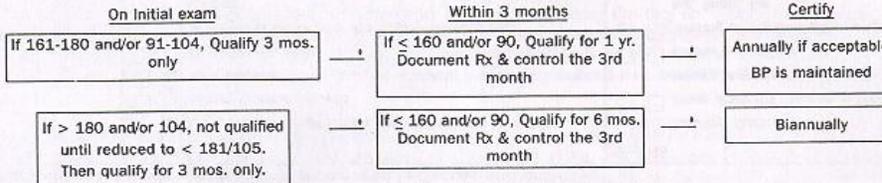
**5. BLOOD PRESSURE / PULSE RATE** Numerical readings must be recorded.

#### GUIDELINES FOR BLOOD PRESSURE EVALUATION

Blood Pressure	Systolic	Diastolic
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Driver qualified if  $\leq 160/90$  on initial exam.

Pulse Rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular
	<input type="checkbox"/> Irregular



Medical examiner should take at least 2 readings to confirm blood pressure.

**6. LABORATORY AND OTHER TEST FINDINGS** Numerical readings must be recorded.

Urinalysis is required. Protein, blood or sugar in the urine may be an indication for further testing to rule out any underlying medical problem.

URINE SPECIMEN	SR. GR.	PROTEIN	BLOOD	SUGAR
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Other Testing (Describe and record)

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**7. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ (in.)      Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ (lbs.)

The presence of a certain condition may not necessarily disqualify a driver, particularly if the condition is controlled adequately, is not likely to worsen or is readily amenable to treatment. Even if a condition does not disqualify a driver, the medical examiner may consider deferring the driver temporarily. Also, the driver should be advised to take the necessary steps to correct the condition as soon as possible particularly if the condition, if neglected, could result in more serious illness that might affect driving.

Check YES if there are any abnormalities. Check NO if the body system is normal. Discuss any YES answers in detail in the space below, and indicate whether it would affect the driver's ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely. Enter applicable item number before each comment. If organic disease is present, note that it has been compensated for. See *Instructions To The Medical Examiner* for guidance.

BODY SYSTEM	CHECK FOR:	YES*	NO	BODY SYSTEM	CHECK FOR:	YES*	NO
1. General Appearance	Marked overweight, tremor, signs of alcoholism, problem drinking, or drug abuse.			7. Abdomen and Viscera	Enlarged liver, enlarged spleen, masses, bruits, hernia, significant abdominal wall muscle weakness.		
2. Eyes	Pupillary equality, reaction to light, accommodation, ocular motility, ocular muscle imbalance, extraocular movement, nystagmus, exophthalmos, strabismus uncorrected by corrective lenses, retinopathy, cataracts, aphakia, glaucoma, macular degeneration.			8. Vascular system	Abnormal pulse and amplitude, carotid or arterial bruits, varicose veins.		
3. Ears	Middle ear disease, occlusion of external canal, perforated eardrums.			9. Genito-urinary system	Hernias.		
4. Mouth and Throat	Irremediable deformities likely to interfere with breathing or swallowing.			10. Extremities - Limb impaired. Driver may be subject to SPE certificate if otherwise qualified.	Loss or impairment of leg, foot, toe, arm, hand, finger. Perceptible limp, deformities, atrophy, weakness, paralysis, clubbing, edema, hypotonia. Insufficient grasp and prehension in upper limb to maintain steering wheel grip. Insufficient mobility and strength in lower limb to operate pedals properly.		
5. Heart	Murmurs, extra sounds, enlarged heart, pacemaker.			11. Spine, other musculoskeletal	Previous surgery, deformities, limitation of motion, tenderness		
6. Lungs and chest, not including breast examination.	Abnormal chest wall expansion, abnormal respiratory rate, abnormal breath sounds including wheezes or alveolar rales, impaired respiratory function, dyspnea, cyanosis. Abnormal findings on physical exam may require further testing such as pulmonary tests and/or xray of chest.			12. Neurological	Impaired equilibrium, coordination or speech pattern; paresthesia, asymmetric deep tendon reflexes, sensory or positional abnormalities, abnormal patellar and Babinski's reflexes, ataxia.		

\* COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Note certification status here. See *Instructions to the Medical Examiner* for guidance.

- Meets standards in 49 CFR 391.41; qualifies for 2 year certificate.
  - Does not meet standards
  - Meets standards, but periodic evaluation required.  
 Due to \_\_\_\_\_ driver qualified only for:  
 3 months       1 year  
 6 months       Other
  - Temporarily disqualified due to (condition or medication): \_\_\_\_\_
- Wearing corrective lenses
  - Wearing hearing aid
  - Accompanied by a \_\_\_\_\_ waiver/exemption
  - Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate
  - Driving within an exempt intracity zone.
  - Qualified by operation of 49 CFR 391.64
- Physician's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Physician's Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

If meets standards, complete a Medical Examiner's Certificate according to 49 CFR 391.43(h). (Driver must carry certificate when operating a commercial vehicle.)

**Medical Physician's Finding of Qualification - Sections 391.43(g) and (h)**  
 (g) If the medical examiner finds that the person he/she examined is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle in accordance with §391.41(b), the medical examiner shall complete a certificate in the form prescribed in paragraph (h) of this section and furnish one copy to the person who was examined and one copy to the school district or private contractor that employs him/her.  
 (h) The medical examiner's certificate shall be substantially in accordance with the following form. Existing forms may be used until current printed supplies are depleted or until October 1, 2001, whichever occurs first.

## Instructions to the Medical Examiner

### §391.41 Physical Qualifications for Drivers

(a) A person shall not drive a commercial motor vehicle unless he is physically qualified to do so and, except as provided in §391.67, has on his person the original, or a photographic copy, of a medical examiner's certificate that he is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle.

(b) A person is physically qualified to drive a motor vehicle if that person:

(1) Has no loss of a foot, a leg, a hand, or an arm, or has been granted a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate (formerly Limb Waiver Program) pursuant to §391.49.

(2) Has no impairment of: (i) A hand or finger which interferes with prehension or power grasping; or (ii) An arm, foot, or leg which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or any other significant limb defect or limitation which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or has been granted a SPE Certificate pursuant to §391.49.

(3) Has no established history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently requiring insulin for control;

(4) Has no current clinical diagnosis of myocardial infarction, angina pectoris, coronary insufficiency, throm-

bosis, or any other cardiovascular disease of a variety known to be accompanied by syncope, dyspnea, collapse, or congestive cardiac failure.

(5) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of a respiratory dysfunction likely to interfere with his ability to control and drive a commercial motor vehicle safely.

(6) Has no current clinical diagnosis of high blood pressure likely to interfere with his ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.

(7) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of rheumatic, arthritic, orthopedic, muscular, neuromuscular, or vascular disease which interferes with his ability to control and operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.

(8) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or any other condition which is likely to cause loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a commercial motor vehicle.

(9) Has no mental, nervous, organic, or functional disease or psychiatric disorder likely to interfere with his ability to drive a commercial motor vehicle safely.

(10) Has distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye without corrective lenses or visual acuity sepa-

rately corrected to 20/40 (Snellen) or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of vision of at least 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian in each eye, and the ability to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green and amber.

(11) First perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear not less than 5 feet with or without the use of a hearing aid, or, if tested by use of an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1,000 Hz and 2,000 Hz with or without a hearing aid when the audiometric device is calibrated to American National Standard (formerly ASA Standard) Z24.5-1951;

(12) (i) Does not use a controlled substance identified in 21 CFR 1308.11 Schedule I, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or any other habit-forming drug. (ii) Exception: A driver may use such a substance or drug, if the substance or drug is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner who: (A) Is familiar with the driver's medical history and assigned duties; and (B) Has advised the driver that the prescribed substance or drug will not adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle; and

(13) Has no current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism.

## Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations — Advisory Criteria —

### Loss of Limb: §391.41(b)(1)

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no loss of a foot, leg, hand or an arm, or has been granted a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate pursuant to Section 391.49.*

### Limb Impairment: §391.41(b)(2)

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no impairment of: (i) A hand or finger which interferes with prehension or power grasping; or (ii) An arm, foot, or leg which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with*

*operating a commercial motor vehicle; or (iii) Any other significant limb defect or limitation which interferes with the ability to perform normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle; or (iv) Has been granted a Skill Performance Evaluation Certificate pursuant to Section 391.49.*

A person who suffers loss of a foot, leg, hand or arm or whose limb impairment in any way interferes with the safe performance of normal tasks associated with operating a commercial motor vehicle is subject to the Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate Program pursuant to section 391.49, assuming the person is otherwise qualified.

With the advancement of technology, medical aids and equipment modifications have been developed to compensate for certain disabilities. The SPE Certification Program (formerly the Limb Waiver

Program) was designed to allow persons with the loss of a foot or limb or with functional impairment to qualify under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) by use of prosthetic devices or equipment modifications which enable them to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle. Since there are no medical aids equivalent to the original body or limb, certain risks are still present, and thus restrictions may be included on individual SPE certificates when a State Director for the FMCSA determines they are necessary to be consistent with safety and public interest.

If the driver is found otherwise medically qualified (391.41(b)(3) through (13)), the medical examiner must check on the medical certificate that the driver is qualified only if accompanied by a SPE certificate. The driver and the employing motor carrier are subject to appropriate penalty if the driver operates a motor vehicle in inter-

state or foreign commerce without a current SPE certificate for his/her physical disability.

#### **Diabetes: §391.(b)(3)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently requiring insulin for control.*

Diabetes mellitus is a disease which, on occasion, can result in a loss of consciousness or disorientation in time and space. Individuals who require insulin for control have conditions which can get out of control by the use of too much or too little insulin, or food intake not consistent with the insulin dosage. Incapacitation may occur from symptoms of hyperglycemic or hypoglycemic reactions (drowsiness, semiconsciousness, diabetic coma or insulin shock).

The administration of insulin is, within itself, a complicated process requiring insulin, syringe, needle, alcohol sponge and a sterile technique. Factors related to long-haul commercial motor vehicle operations, such as fatigue, lack of sleep, poor diet, emotional conditions, stress, and concomitant illness, compound the diabetic problem. Thus, because of these inherent dangers, the FMCSA has consistently held that a diabetic who uses insulin for control does not meet the minimum physical requirements of the FMCSRs.

Hypoglycemic drugs, taken orally, are sometimes prescribed for diabetic individuals to help stimulate natural body production of insulin. If the condition can be controlled by the use of oral medication and diet, then an individual may be qualified under the present rule. (See Conference Report on Diabetic Disorders and Commercial Drivers and Insulin-Using Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

#### **Cardiovascular Condition: §391.41(b)(4)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has not current clinical diagnosis of myocardial infarction, angina pectoris, coronary insufficiency, thrombosis or any other cardiovascular disease of a variety known to be accompanied by syncope, dyspnea, collapse or congestive cardiac failure.*

The term "has no clinical current diagnosis of" is specifically designed to encompass: "a clinical diagnosis of": 1, a current cardiovascular condition, or 2, a cardiovascular condition which has not fully stabilized regardless of the time limit. The term "known to be

accompanied by" is defined to include: a *clinical diagnosis* of a cardiovascular disease 1, which is accompanied by symptoms of syncope, dyspnea, collapse or congestive cardiac failure; and/or 2, which is likely to cause syncope, dyspnea, collapse or congestive cardiac failure.

It is the intent of the FMCSRs to render unqualified a driver who has a current cardiovascular disease which is accompanied by and/or likely to cause symptoms of syncope, dyspnea, collapse, or congestive cardiac failure. However, the subjective decision of whether the nature and severity of an individual's condition will likely cause symptoms of cardiovascular insufficiency is on an individual basis and qualification rests with the medical examiner and the motor carrier. In those cases where there is an occurrence of cardiovascular insufficiency (myocardial infarction, thrombosis, etc.), it is suggested before a driver is certified that he/she have a normal resting and stress electrocardiogram (ECG), no residual complications and no physical limitations, and is taking no medication likely to interfere with safe driving.

Coronary artery bypass surgery and pacemaker implantation are remedial procedures and thus, not unqualifying. Coumadin is a medical treatment which can improve the health and safety of the driver and should not, by its use, medically disqualify the commercial driver. The emphasis should be on the underlying medical condition(s) which require treatment and the general health of the driver. The FMCSA should be contacted at 202-366-1790 for additional recommendations regarding the physical qualification of drivers on coumadin. (See Conference on Cardiac Disorders and Commercial Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>).

#### **Respiratory Dysfunction: §391.41(b)(5)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis or a respiratory dysfunction likely to interfere with ability to control and drive a commercial motor vehicle safely.*

Since a driver must be alert at all times, any change in his/her mental state is in direct conflict with highway safety. Even the slightest impairment in respiratory function under emergency conditions (where greater oxygen supply is necessary for performance) may be detrimental to safe driving.

There are many conditions that interfere with oxygen exchange and may result in incapacitation, including emphysema, chronic asthma, carcinoma, tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis and sleep apnea. If the medical examiner detects a respiratory dysfunction, that in any way is likely to interfere with the driver's ability to safely control and drive a commercial motor vehicle, the driver must be referred to a specialist for deep vein thrombosis and/or pulmonary thromboembolism is not unqualifying once optimum dose is achieved, provided lower extremity venous examinations remain normal and the treating physician gives a favorable recommendation. (See Conference on Pulmonary/Respiratory Disorders and Commercial drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesreg/medreports.htm>).

#### **Hypertension: §391.41(b)(6)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no current clinical diagnosis of high blood pressure likely to interfere with ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.*

Hypertension alone is unlikely to cause sudden collapse; however, the likelihood increases when target organ damage, particularly cerebral vascular disease, is present. This regulatory criteria is based on FMCSA's Cardiac Conference recommendations, which used the report of the 1984 Joint National Committee on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure.

A blood pressure of 161-180 and/or 91-104 diastolic is considered mild hypertension and the driver is not necessarily unqualified during evaluation and institution of treatment. The driver is given a 3-month period to reduce his/her blood pressure to less than or equal to 160/90; the certifying physician should state on the medical certificate that is only valid for that 3-month period. If the driver is subsequently found qualified with a blood pressure less than or equal to 160/90, the certifying physician may issue a medical certificate for a 1-year period, but should confirm blood pressure control in the third month of this 1-year period. The individual should be certified annually thereafter. The expiration date must be stated on the medical certificate.

A blood pressure of greater than 180 systolic and/or greater than 104 diastolic is considered moderate to severe. The driver may not be qualified, even temporarily, until his/her blood pressure has been reduced to less than 181/105. The examining physician may temporarily certify the individual once the individual's blood pressure is below 181 and/or 105. For blood pressure greater than 180 and/or 104, documentation of continued control should be made every 6 months. The expiration date must be stated on the medical certificate. Commercial drivers who present for certification with normal blood pressures but are taking medication(s) for hypertension should be certified on the same basis as individuals who present with blood

pressures in the mild or moderate to severe range. Annual recertification is recommended if the medical examiner is unable to establish the blood pressure at the time of diagnosis.

An elevated blood pressure finding should be confirmed by at least two subsequent measurements on different days. Inquiry should be made regarding smoking, cardiovascular disease in relatives, and immoderate use of alcohol. An electrocardiogram (ECG) and blood profile, including glucose, cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, creatinine and potassium, should be made. An echocardiogram and chest x-ray are desirable in subjects with moderate or severe hypertension.

Since the presence of target damage increases the risk of sudden collapse, group 3 or 4 hypertension retinopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy not otherwise explained (echocardiography or ECG by Estes criteria), evidence of severely reduced left ventricular function, or serum creatinine of greater than 2.5 warrants the driver being found unqualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce.

Treatment includes nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic modalities as well as counseling to reduce other risk factors. Most antihypertensive medications also have side effects, the importance of which must be judged on an individual basis. Individuals must be alerted to the hazards of these medications while driving. Side effects of somnolence or syncope are particularly undesirable in commercial drivers.

A commercial driver who have normal blood pressure 3 or more months after a successful operation for pheochromocytoma, primary aldosteronism (unless bilateral adrenalectomy has been performed), renovascular disease, or unilateral renal parenchymal disease, and who shows no evidence of target organ may be qualified. Hypertension that persists despite surgical intervention with no target organ disease should be evaluated and treated following the guidelines set forth above. (See Conference on Cardiac Disorders and Commercial Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

#### **Rheumatic, Arthritic, Orthopedic, Muscular, Neuromuscular or Vascular Disease: §391.41(b)(7)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of rheumatic, arthritic, orthopedic, muscular, neuromuscular or vascular disease which interferes with ability to control and operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.*

Certain diseases are known to have acute episodes of transient muscle weakness, poor muscular coordination (ataxia), abnormal sensations (paresthesia), decreased muscular tone (hypotonia), visual disturbances and pain which may be suddenly incapacitating.

With each recurring episode, these symptoms may become more pronounced and remain for longer periods of time. Other diseases have more insidious onsets and display symptoms of muscle wasting (atrophy), swelling and paresthesia which may not suddenly incapacitate a person but may restrict his/her movements and eventually interfere with the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. In many instances these diseases are degenerative in nature or may result in deterioration of the involved area.

Once the individual has been diagnosed as having a rheumatic, arthritic, orthopedic, muscular, neuromuscular or vascular disease, then he/she has an established history of that disease. The physician, when examining an individual, should consider the following: 1. the nature and severity of the of the individual's condition (such as sensory loss or loss of strength); 2. the degree of limitation present (such as range of motion); 3. the likelihood of progressive limitation (not always present initially but may manifest itself over time); and 4. the likelihood of sudden incapacitation. If severe functional impairment exists, the driver does not qualify. In cases where more frequent monitoring is required, a certificate for a shorter time period may be issued. (See Conference on Neurological Disorders and Commercial Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

#### **Epilepsy: §391.41(b)(8)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or any other condition which is likely to cause loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a motor vehicle.*

Epilepsy is a chronic functional disease characterized by seizures or episodes that occur without warning, resulting in loss of voluntary control which may lead to loss of consciousness and/or seizures. Therefore, the following drivers cannot be qualified: 1. a driver who has a medical history of epilepsy; 2. a driver who has a current clinical diagnosis of epilepsy; or 3. a driver who is taking antiseizure medication.

If an individual has had a sudden episode of nonepileptic seizure or loss of consciousness of unknown cause which did not require antiseizure medication, the decision as to whether that person's condition will likely cause loss of consciousness or loss of ability to control a motor vehicle is made on an individual basis by the medical examiner in consultation with the treating physician. Before certification is considered, it is suggested that a 6-month waiting period elapse from the time of the episode. Following the waiting period, it is suggested that the individual have a complete neurological examination. If the results of the examination are negative and antiseizure medication is not required, then the driver may be qualified.

In those individual cases where a driver has a seizure or an episode of loss of consciousness that resulted from a known medical condition (e.g., drug reaction, high temperature, acute infectious disease, dehydration or acute metabolic disturbance), certification should be deferred until the driver has fully recovered from that condition and has no existing residual complications, and not taking antiseizure medication. (See Conference on Neurological Disorders and Commercial Drivers at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

#### **Mental Disorders: §391.41(b)(9)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has not mental, nervous, organic or functional disease or psychiatric disorder likely to interfere with ability to drive a motor vehicle safely.*

Emotional or adjustment problems contribute directly to an individual's level of memory, reasoning, attention and judgement. These problems often underlie physical disorders. A variety of functional disorders can cause drowsiness, dizziness, confusion, weakness or paralysis that may lead to incoordination, inattention, loss of functional control and susceptibility to accidents while driving. Physical fatigue, headache, impaired coordination, recurring physical ailments and chronic "nagging" pain may be present to such a degree that certification for commercial driving is inadvisable. Somatic and psychosomatic complaints should be thoroughly examined when determining an individual's overall fitness to drive. Disorders of a periodically incapacitating nature, even in the early stages of development, may warrant disqualification.

Many bus and truck drivers has documented that "nervous trouble" related to neurotic, personality, emotional or adjustment problems is responsible for a significant fraction of their preventable accidents. The degree to which an individual is able to appreciate, evaluate and adequately respond to environmental strain and emotional stress is critical when assessing an individual's mental alertness and flexibility to cope with the stresses of commercial motor vehicle driving.

When examining the driver, it should be kept in mind that individuals who live under chronic emotional upsets may have deeply ingrained maladaptive or erratic behavior patterns. Excessively antagonistic, instinctive, impulsive, openly aggressive, paranoid or severely depressed behavior greatly interfere with the driver's ability to drive safely. Those individuals who are highly susceptible to frequent states of emotional instability (schizophrenia, affective psychoses, paranoia, anxiety or depressive neuroses) may warrant disqualification. Careful consideration should be given to the side effects and interactions of medications in the overall qualification determination. See psychiatric Conference Report for specific recommenda-

tions on the use of the medications and potential hazards for driving. (See Conference on Psychiatric Disorders and Commercial Drivers at: <http://fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>.)

**Vision: §391.41(b)(10)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has distance visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye with or without corrective lenses or visual acuity separately corrected to 20/40 (Snellen) or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of vision of at least 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian in each eye, and the ability to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber.*

The term "ability to recognize the colors of" is interpreted to mean if a person can recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber, he/she meets the minimum standard, even though he/she may have some type of color perception deficiency. If certain color perception tests are administered, (such as Ishihara, Pseudoisochromatic, Yarn) and doubtful findings are discovered, a controlled test using signal red, green and amber may be employed to determine the driver's ability to recognize these colors.

Contact lenses are permissible if there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the driver has good tolerance and is well adapted to their use. Use of a contact lens in one eye for distance visual acuity and another lens in the other eye for near vision is not acceptable, nor telescopic lenses acceptable for the driving of commercial motor vehicles.

If an individual meets the criteria by the use of glasses or contact lenses, the following statement shall appear on the Medical Examiner's Certificate: "Qualified only if wearing corrective lenses." (See Visual Disorders and Commercial Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

**Hearing: §391.41(b)(11)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*First perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear at not less than 5 feet with or without the use of a hearing aid, or, if tested by use of an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500Hz, 1,000 Hz, and 2,000 Hz with or without a hearing aid when the audiometric device is calibrated to American National Standard (formerly ASA Standard) Z24.5-1951.*

Since the prescribed standard under the FMCSRs is the American Standards Association (ANSI), it may be necessary to convert the audiometric results from the ISO standard to the ANSI standard. Instructions are included on the Medical Examination report form.

If an individual meets the criteria by using a hearing aid, the driver must wear that hearing aid and have it in operation at all times while driving. Also, the driver must be in possession of a spare power source for the hearing aid.

For the whispered voice test, the individual should be stationed at least 5 feet from the examiner with the ear being tested turned toward the examiner. The other ear is covered. Using the breath which remains after a normal expiration, the examiner whispers words or random numbers such as 66, 18, 23, etc. The examiner should not use only sibilants (s-sounding test materials). The opposite ear should be tested in the same manner. If the individual fails the whispered voice test, the audiometric test should be administered.

If an individual meets the criteria by the use of a hearing aid, the following statement must appear on the Medical Examiner's Certificate: "Qualified only when wearing a hearing aid." (See Hearing Disorders and Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

**Drug Use: §391.41(b)(12)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Does not use a controlled substance identified in 21 CFR 1308.11, Schedule 1, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or any other habit-forming drug. Exception: A driver may use such a substance or drug, if the substance or drug is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner who is familiar with the driver's medical history and assigned duties; and has advised the driver that the prescribed substance or drug will not adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.*

This exception does not apply to methadone. The intent of the medical certification process is to medically evaluate a driver to ensure that the driver has no medical condition which interferes with the safe performance of driving tasks on a public road. If a driver uses a Schedule 1 drug or other substance, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or any other habit-forming drugs, it may be cause for the driver to be found medically unqualified. Motor carriers are encouraged to obtain a practitioner's written statement about the effects on transportation safety of the use of a particular drug.

A test for controlled substances is not required as part of this biennial certification process. The FMCSA or the driver's employer should be contacted directly for information on controlled substances and alcohol testing under Part 382 of the FMCSRs.

The term "uses" is designed to encompass instances of prohibited drug use determined by a physician through established medical means. This may or may not involve body fluid testing. If body fluid testing takes place, positive test results should be confirmed by a second test of greater specificity. The term "habit-forming" is intended to include any drug or medication generally recognized as capable of becoming habitual, and which may impair the user's ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.

The driver is medically unqualified for the duration of the prohibited drug(s) use and until a second examination shows the driver is free from the prohibited drug(s) use. Recertification may involve a substance abuse evaluation, the successful completion of a drug rehabilitation program and a negative drug test result. Additionally, given that the certification period is normally two years, the examiner has the option to certify for a period of less than 2 years if this examiner determines more frequent monitoring is required. (See Conference on Neurological Disorders and Commercial Drivers and Conference on Psychiatric Disorders and Commercial Drivers at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>)

**Alcoholism: §391.41(b)(13)**

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

*Has not current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism.*

The term "current clinical diagnosis of" is specifically designed to encompass a current alcoholic illness or those instances where the individual's physical condition has not fully stabilized, regardless of the time element. If an individual shows signs of having an alcohol-use problem, he/she should be referred to a specialist. After counseling and/or treatment, he/she may be considered for certification.

PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE		
I certify that I have examined _____		
in accordance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (49 CFR 391.41-390.49) and with knowledge of the driving duties. I find this person is qualified, and, if applicable, only when:		
<input type="checkbox"/> wearing corrective lenses	<input type="checkbox"/> driving within an exempt zone (49 CFR 391.52)	
<input type="checkbox"/> wearing hearing aid	<input type="checkbox"/> accompanied by a Skill Performance Evaluation Certificate (SPE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> accompanied by a _____ waiver/exemption	<input type="checkbox"/> qualified by operation of 49 CFR 391.52	
The information I have provided regarding the physical examination is true and complete. A complete examination form with any attachment embodies my findings, conclusions, and is on file in my office.		
SIGNATURE OF PHYSICIAN	TELEPHONE	DATE
PHYSICIAN'S NAME (print) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> MD	<input type="checkbox"/> DO
PHYSICIAN'S LICENSE NUMBER _____		
SIGNATURE OF DRIVER _____	DRIVER'S LICENSE NO.	STATE
ADDRESS OF DRIVER _____		
PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE EXPIRATION DATE _____		

**Both sides of the State Department of Education Medical Card are presented below.  
 Note that a physician must sign and certify to the completion of side titled “Physician’s  
 Certificate” and the school bus driver’s employer must sign and certify to the completion of  
 the side titled “Employer Certificate of Qualification.”**

<b>PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE</b>		
I certify that I have examined _____ in accordance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (49 CFR 391.41-390.49) and with knowledge of the driving duties. I find this person is qualified, and, if applicable, only when:		
<input type="checkbox"/> wearing corrective lenses	<input type="checkbox"/> driving within an exempt zone (4-9 CFR 391.62)	
<input type="checkbox"/> wearing hearing aid	<input type="checkbox"/> accompanied by a Skill Performance Evaluation Certificate (SPE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> accompanied by a _____waiver/exemption	<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified by operation of 49 CFR 391.64	
The information I have provided regarding the physical examination is true and complete. A complete <u>examination form with any attachment embodies my findings completely and correctly, and is on file in my office.</u>		
SIGNATURE OF PHYSICIAN	TELEPHONE	DATE
PHYSICIAN'S NAME (print)	<input type="checkbox"/> MD	<input type="checkbox"/> DO
PHYSICIAN'S LICENSE #	ISSUING STATE	
SIGNATURE OF DRIVER	DRIVER'S LICENSE NO.	STATE
ADDRESS OF DRIVER		
PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE EXPIRATION DATE _____		

<b>EMPLOYER CERTIFICATE OF QUALIFICATION</b>	
_____ (Name of Driver)	_____ (Social Security Number)
_____ (Signature of Driver)	
I certify that the above driver (school bus driver), as defined in Section 390.5 is regularly driving a vehicle operated by the below employer and is fully qualified under Part 391, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. The current physician's certificate expires on _____.	
This certificate expires: (Date not later than expiration date of current physician's certificate) _____	
Issued on _____ (Date)	
Issued by _____ (Employer School District/Contractor)	
_____ (Employer Address)	
_____ (Employer Signature)	_____ (Title)