

Medical Certification Requirements for CDL Drivers

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued a rule change in the hopes of removing unfit commercial truck and bus drivers from the roadways. According to businessinsurance.com, this change came after the release of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, which found that, in just over a year's time, 563,000 commercial drivers' licenses had been issued to drivers who were eligible for full disability benefits. This means that these drivers were not physically able to get behind the wheel safely.

Medical Certification Requirements as Part of Commercial Drivers' License

The FMCSA amended the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) to require interstate commercial drivers' license (CDL) holders, who are subject to the physical qualification requirements of the FMCSRs, to provide a current original (or copy) of their medical examiner's certificates to their State Driver Licensing Agency (SDLA). The SDLA is then required to record the certification information made by the driver regarding his/her applicability to the federal driver qualification rules onto the Commercial Driver License Information System (CDLIS).

This rule places the medical certification requirements on drivers who are required to obtain a CDL from states who also require a certification from a medical examiner. The certificate outlines that the driver is physically able to operate a commercial motor vehicle for interstate commerce purposes. As a result, accurate information about the CDL holder's medical examiner's certificate should be stored and readily available in the electronic CDLIS driver record maintained by each state. Finally, this rule requires states to place punishments on CDL holders if they fail to provide required and up-to-date medical certification status information.

Drivers Affected

If a CDL holder is driving one of the following vehicles, he or she is subject to this rule:

- Vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), gross combination weight rating (GCWR) or gross combination weight (GCW) of 10,001 pounds, depending on which is greater.
- Vehicles designed or used to transport more than eight passengers, including the driver, for compensation.
- Vehicles designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver, not for compensation.
- Vehicles used to transport hazardous materials requiring a placard on the vehicle.

Vehicles falling under one of these descriptions must be used for interstate commerce to transport passengers or property. Interstate commercial is defined as trade, traffic or transportation in the following manner:

- Between a place in one state to a destination outside of that state (including places outside of the U.S.).
- Between two places in a state, through another state or to a destination outside of the U.S.
- Between two locations in a state in conjunction with trade, traffic or transporting materials/passengers originating or ending outside of that state or the U.S.