



"Safety & Compliance are Never a Compromise"

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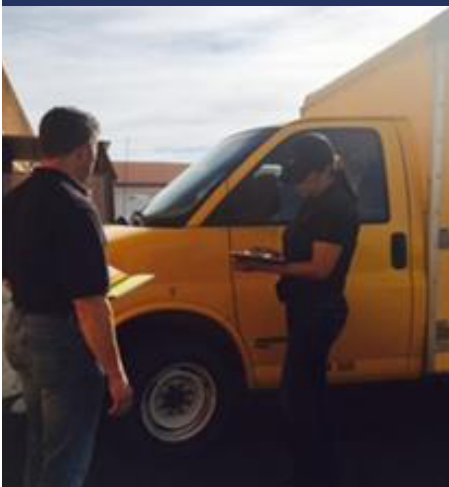
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Driver qualification

With so much riding on Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) scores, companies can't afford **not** to hire the safest drivers possible. Yet finding and hiring the best drivers as the economy slowly improves — and baby boomers retire — can be a tough challenge. You and the motor carrier for whom you work, have many hurdles to overcome to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive.

Qualification basics

The purpose of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) is to promote safety of operations on the highways. The use of qualified drivers to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) is one of the most important steps toward this goal.

The regulations apply to CMVs involved in interstate commerce. A CMV is any vehicle that:

- Has a gross vehicle weight or gross vehicle weight rating, or gross combination weight or gross combination weight rating, of 10,001 pounds or more; or

- Is designed or used to transport more than 8 people for compensation; or
- Is designed or used to transport more than 15 people; or
- Transports hazardous materials of a type and quantity that require placarding.

States also have driver qualification requirements for intrastate operations, either by adopting the federal rules or by establishing their own.

At a basic level, to be considered a qualified driver you must:

- Be at least 21 years old;
- Have English language ability;
- Be physically qualified and able to drive a CMV safely;
- Have a currently valid CMV operator's license issued by only one state or jurisdiction;
- Provide your employer with a list of past violations and accidents; and
- Successfully complete a road test, when required.

To help a carrier determine your qualification status, the regulations require the carrier to use a specific type of job application, request a driving record from the state, and obtain information from your previous employers.



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Driver qualification *(continued from page 1)*

The DOT medical exam

One aspect to driver qualification — and a significant one — is the Department of Transportation (DOT) medical examination. It is required under the FMCSRs and can be a career-maker or a career-breaker for professional drivers.

Many drivers have an underlying fear of being medically unqualified. Many times drivers worry that the sedentary lifestyle of being on the road increases their risk of certain health conditions. Drivers are also concerned about their family health histories, injuries, and illnesses.

Prior to the first time you drive a motor vehicle that is subject to the regulations, you must pass the physical exam and be given a medical examiner's certificate. You are also required to have a physical exam and obtain a new medical examiner's certificate at least every 24 months.

In addition, if you endure a physical or mental injury or disease which has impaired your ability to perform your normal duties, you must have another physical examination and obtain a new medical examiner's certificate.

A successful medical exam results in the issuance of a Medical Examiner's Certificate — also known as the wallet card or med card — which serves as proof that you are physically qualified. At all times, you and your motor carrier must be able to show proof that you are physically qualified to drive, either through the medical card or (for CDL drivers) by means of a current driving record from the state.

Who is responsible for the physical?

According to the regulations, responsibility for the DOT Medical Examination lies on both you and your motor carrier.

You are not absolved of responsibilities if your motor carrier neglects to remind you of the expiration date of the card. Since you have a copy of your card, you

should take note of the expiration date and schedule your next exam well in advance of that date. In the same respect, your motor carrier is expected to maintain your driver qualification (DQ) file, including demonstrating management controls such as monitoring when each item is due to expire.

You cannot operate, and the motor carrier must not allow you to operate, a CMV if you are not qualified. The regulations place a certain degree of responsibility on your shoulders by stating that a person "must not operate" a CMV if he or she is not physically qualified to do so.

Additionally, you are required to complete the Health History section of the examination report and certify that the responses are complete and true. You must also certify that you understand that inaccurate, false, or misleading information may invalidate the examination and medical examiner's certificate.

If a driver knowingly misrepresents his or her health history on the exam form, it is considered a violation of the regulations. If a driver makes a false statement or conceals a disqualifying condition, a civil penalty may be levied. At a minimum, deliberate omission or falsification of information may invalidate the examination and any certificate that was issued.

Becoming and remaining a qualified driver takes work and responsibility on your part and that of your motor carrier. Familiarizing yourself with the regulations will help ensure you avoid violations and help keep yourself and others safe on the road.



Safety focus: Safety belts — myth or fact?

The majority of truck and bus drivers are wearing safety belts. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) data shows that 84 percent of truck and bus drivers wore safety belts in 2013. This compares to 78 percent in 2010. FMCSA found that safety belt use was higher in states with primary enforcement, meaning enforcement officers may stop drivers for not wearing a safety belt. In states with primary enforcement, 85 percent used safety belts compared to 78 percent in states without primary enforcement.

Seat belt usage rate by commercial motor vehicle body type?

- Bobtail - 86 percent in 2013, compared to 71 percent in 2010.
- Commercial bus - 74 percent 2013, compared to 47 percent in 2010.
- School bus - 86 percent in 2013, compared to 82 percent in 2010.
- Flat bed - 82 percent in 2013, compared to 74 percent in 2010.
- Tanker - 85 percent in 2013, compared to 82 percent in 2010.

Safety Belts: Myth or Fact?

Myth: Safety belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient.

Fact: Initially people may find safety belts uncomfortable, confining, or inconvenient simply because they're not used to wearing them. Those people who have made wearing safety belts a habit can testify that once their use does become a habit, there is no discomfort or inconvenience. It can't be overemphasized that the serious discomfort of a motor vehicle crash injury in no way compares to the discomfort or the inconvenience you may think you feel wearing a belt initially.

Myth: Safety belts prevent your escape from a burning or submerged car.

Fact: Safety belts can keep you from being knocked unconscious, improving your chances of escape. Fire or submersion occurs in less than 5 percent of fatal large truck crashes.

Myth: It's better to be thrown clear of the wreckage in the event of a crash.

Fact: An occupant of a vehicle is four times as likely to be fatally injured when thrown from the vehicle.

Myth: It takes too much time to fasten your safety belt 20 times a day.

Fact: Buckling up takes about three seconds. Even buckling up 20 times a day requires only one minute.

Myth: Good truck drivers don't need to wear safety belts.

Fact: Good drivers don't cause collisions, but it's possible that during your career you will be involved in a crash caused by a bad driver, bad weather, mechanical failure, or tire blowout. Wearing a safety belt prevents injuries and fatalities by preventing ejection, and by protecting your head and spinal cord.

Myth: Safety belts aren't necessary for low-speed driving.

Fact: In a frontal collision occurring at 30 mph, an unbelted person continues to move forward and hit the windshield at 30 mph. This is the same velocity that a person would impact the ground with when falling from the top of a three story building.

Myth: Drivers in vehicles that are equipped with air bags don't need to wear safety belts because the airbag will protect them in the event of a crash.

Fact: Air bags provide supplemental protection in frontal crashes, but motorists can slide under them if they are not wearing a safety belt. In addition, air bags will not help in a side or rear impact or rollover crash.

Myth: Safety belts can hurt you in a crash.

Fact: Properly worn safety belts seldom cause injuries. If they do, the injuries are usually surface bruises and are generally less severe than would have been the case without any belt. Without the belts, you could probably have been thrown out of the vehicle and been injured severely. It is true that sometimes the force of a crash is so great that nothing could have prevented injuries.

Studies have consistently shown that injuries in most serious crashes would have been much more severe had safety belts not been worn.

Myth: Wearing a safety belt is a personal decision that doesn't affect anyone else.

Fact: Not wearing a safety belt can certainly affect your family and loved ones. It can also affect other motorists since wearing a safety belt can help you avoid losing control of your truck in a crash. It's the law! Federal regulations require commercial vehicle drivers to buckle up.





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7 tips to protect your vision

*"Keep your eyes
on the stars,
and your feet on
the ground."*

Theodore Roosevelt



*Ninety percent
of workplace eye
injuries can be
avoided with proper
eye protection*

Each day, more than 2,000 workers in the United States suffer an eye injury that's severe enough to require medical care. Usually the injury is caused by a small particle or object hitting the eye, such as a wood chip, a metal sliver, or even dust that's blown by the wind or ejected by a tool.

While this type of injury is most common in a manufacturing setting, that's not the only place to be concerned about vision protection. Being careful at home, in the office, and outdoors can also help save your sight. To protect your vision:

1. **Wear sunglasses.** Look for wraparound sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B rays.
2. **Rest your eyes.** When sitting at the computer, avoid eye fatigue with the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds.
3. **Have regular eye exams.** Some eye diseases have no early warning signs. An exam is the best way to detect them.
4. **Eat vegetables.** Nutrients found in spinach, kale, collard greens, romaine lettuce, and broccoli can lower your risk for macular degeneration and

cataracts. Your eyesight also benefits when you eat carrots, salmon, and tuna.

5. **Monitor the scale.** Being overweight puts you at risk for diabetes and other conditions that can put your vision in jeopardy.
6. **Don't smoke.** Smoking can bring on cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, optic nerve damage, and, ultimately, blindness.
7. **Be safe at work.** Be aware of any eye safety dangers that might exist at work. Ninety percent of workplace eye injuries can be avoided with proper eye protection, so use eyewear that's right for the work task and compliant with standards (such as those from the American National Standards Institute), and make sure it's adjusted to fit properly.

