

DRIVERS...

Conversations You Should Have with Your Doctor

As a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) driver, you know you are driving a vehicle that is capable of causing serious harm. You understand that you are equally responsible for the safety of others, and driving a CMV is very different from driving a personal vehicle. It takes skill, knowledge, and a certain level of physical fitness beyond what is required for a passenger car.

As a CMV driver, you need to talk to your doctor about the type of work you do and the physical qualification requirements you must meet to safely operate a CMV.

Here are some questions and issues to help in this discussion with your doctor.

1) Tell your doctor what you do, job responsibilities, and the tasks you perform

Be sure to include the driving and non-driving tasks, such as the inspections, load redistribution, the need to apply chains, etc. By doing this, your doctor will be able to make a better assessment of your health and performance of your job.

2) Ask what affects your injury or illness will have on your job

What are the direct and indirect impacts on your ability to perform all driving and non-driving tasks safely?

3) Ask about your treatment

Specifically, ask what you must undergo to relieve the symptoms or treat the disease and how the treatment may impact your ability to drive a CMV safely.

4) Talk to your doctor about alternative treatments

Ask about equally effective alternate treatments that will not have an adverse impact on safe driving. Would any of these fit your driving requirements better?

5) Ask about the medications your doctor prescribes

Will the side effects cause sleepiness, fatigue, drowsiness, lack of focus or concentration, or a decreased reaction time? Will the side effects interfere with safe driving?

6) Inform your doctor of the medications you are taking

Identify prescription, non-prescription, dietary supplements, or herbal remedies, and discuss whether the medications will interact and cause any unsafe side effects. Some medications can interact with one another to cause serious adverse reactions and interfere with the effectiveness of another medication. Don't let your treatment be undone because your medication doesn't work properly!

7) Discuss the extent of treatment and how long you must take your medication

8) Ask what you can do to improve your chances for recovery

Simple changes like, losing weight, exercising, stop smoking, drinking more water, improving your eating habits, or getting more sleep can make great improvements in your overall health.

Remember: You are an expert in your work, and your doctor is an expert in his field. When you put your knowledge together, you can come up with a plan designed to meet your individual needs, and keep you and those who share the road with you, safe.

**Driver's Request To Primary Care Physician
Release of My Medical Information**

Driver / Patient's First and Last Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Let my signature act as my request for the release of my medical information to:

DOT Certified Medical Examiner Name N. G. Trachtman, MD

Phone (518) 288-3240 Fax (518) 288-3240

The abovementioned Driver / Patient is preparing to take the Federal Motor Carrier required DOT Physical Examination in order to obtain Medical Certification to operate a commercial motor vehicle.

In order for the Certified Medical Examiner to complete the DOT Physical Examination, certain information is needed from you, the Primary Care Physician, about any medical condition for which you have been treating this patient.

Please complete the Medical Release Opinion form letter below, and fax to the requesting DOT Certified Medical Examiner, or give a copy to the requesting Driver / Patient.

Medical Release Opinion

Name of Primary Care Physician _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Physician Address _____

Patient's First and Last Name _____

Patient's Date of Birth _____ Patient's Date of Last Office Visit _____

1. Medical Condition: _____

2. Date of Onset, with Diagnosis: _____

3. Course of Treatment. Medications (rx, otc, supplements): _____

4. Has treatment been shown to be adequate, effective and safe? _____

5. Is the drivers condition stable enough for him to work as a CMV Driver?

Yes ___ No___ If no, then when _____

6. Is the driver released to operate a commercial motor vehicle? Yes___ No ___

I have read and understand the job description of a commercial motor vehicle driver.

Signed by Primary Care Physician _____ Date _____

Please fax back to Certified Medical Examiner _____

(518) 288-3240

fax number

Drivers' Job Description for Medical Release

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The primary care physician must be familiar with the driver's medical history and assigned duties; and aware of the rigorous physical, mental, and emotional demands placed on the driver of a commercial motor vehicle.

In the interest of public safety, the primary care physician is required to verify that the driver does not have any physical, mental, or organic condition that might affect the driver's ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.

Final determination of fitness to drive a commercial motor vehicle and DOT Medical Certification still rests with the DOT Certified Medical Examiner.

Responsibilities, work schedules, physical and emotional demands, and lifestyles among commercial drivers vary by the type of driving that they do.

Some of the main types of drivers include the following:

- turn around or short relay (drivers return to their home base each evening);
- long relay (drivers drive 9-11 hours and then have at least a 10-hour off duty period),
- straight through haul (cross country drivers);
- team drivers (drivers share the driving by alternating their 11- hour driving periods and 10-hour rest periods).

The following factors may be involved in a driver's performance of duties:

- abrupt schedule changes and rotating work schedules, which may result in irregular sleep patterns and a driver beginning a trip in a fatigued condition;
- long hours;
- extended time away from family and friends, which may result in lack of social support;
- tight pickup and delivery schedules, with irregularity in work, rest, and eating patterns;
- adverse road, weather and traffic conditions, which may cause delays and lead to hurriedly loading or unloading cargo in order to compensate for the lost time;
- environmental conditions such as excessive vibration, noise, and extremes in temperature;
- transporting passengers or hazardous materials may add to the demands on the commercial driver.

Drivers' Job Description for Medical Release

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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:

- coupling and uncoupling trailer(s) from the tractor, loading and unloading trailer(s) (sometimes a driver may lift a heavy load or unload as much as 50,000 lbs. of freight after sitting for a long period of time without any stretching period);
- inspecting the operating condition of tractor and/or trailer(s) before, during and after delivery of cargo;
- lifting, installing, and removing heavy tire chains; and, lifting heavy tarpaulins to cover open top trailers.

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 cab, and the ability to climb ladders on the tractor and/or trailer(s).

In addition, a driver must have the perceptual skills to monitor a sometime's complex driving situation, the judgment skills to make quick decisions when necessary, and the manipulative skills to control an oversize steering wheel, shift gears using a manual transmission, and maneuver a vehicle in crowded areas.

Quick Reference: Physical Qualifications For Drivers - FMCSA

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial 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 certificate 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 skill performance evaluation certificate pursuant to § 391.49.

(3) Has no established medical 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, thrombosis, 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/her 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/her 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/her 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/her 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 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° 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 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 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 any drug or substance identified in 21 CFR 1308.11 Schedule I, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or other habit-forming drug.

(ii) Does not use any non-Schedule I drug or substance that is identified in the other Schedules in 21 part 1308 except when the use is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner, as defined in §382.107, who is familiar with the driver's medical history and has advised the driver that the substance will not adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.