

Respondents: The reporting burden is shared by the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas, and the Virgin Islands.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: The annual reporting burden is estimated to be 13 hours, calculated as follows: (53 respondents × 1 response × 15 minutes / 60 minutes = 13.25 hours, rounded to 13 hours).

Frequency: There is one response annually from approximately 53 respondents.

Public Comments Invited: Your comments are particularly invited on whether the collection of information is necessary for the FMCSA to meet its goal of reducing truck crashes, including whether the information is useful to this goal; the accuracy of the estimate of the burden of the information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Electronic Access and Filing: You may submit or retrieve comments online through the Docket Management System (DMS) at <http://dms.dot.gov/submit>. Acceptable formats include: MS Word (versions 95 to 97), MS Word for Mac (versions 6 to 8), Rich Text File (RTF), American Standard Code Information Interchange (ASCII)(TXT), Portable Document Format (PDF), and WordPerfect (versions 7 to 8). The DMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. Electronic submission and retrieval help and guidelines are available under the help section of the Web site. You may also download an electronic copy of this document from the DOT Docket Management System on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov/search.htm>. Please include the docket number appearing in the heading of this document.

Authority: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. chapter 35, as amended; and 49 CFR 1.73.

Issued: April 6, 2004.

Annette M. Sandberg,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 04-8320 Filed 4-12-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket Nos. FMCSA-99-6480, FMCSA-2001-11426]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of renewal of exemption; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice publishes the FMCSA decision to renew the exemptions from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for 24 individuals. The FMCSA has statutory authority to exempt individuals from vision standards if the exemptions granted will not compromise safety. The agency has concluded that granting these exemptions will provide a level of safety that will be equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety maintained without the exemptions for these commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers.

DATES: This decision is effective April 23, 2004. Comments from interested persons should be submitted by May 13, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT DMS Docket Numbers FMCSA-99-6480 and FMCSA-2001-11426 by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site.

- *Fax:* 1-202-493-2251.

- *Mail:* Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- *Hand Delivery:* Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and docket numbers for this notice. For detailed instructions on submitting comments and additional information on the rulemaking process, see the Public Participation heading of the Supplementary Information section of

this document. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://dms.dot.gov>, including any personal information provided. Please see the Privacy Act heading under Regulatory Notices.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time or to Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Sandra Zywockarte, Office of Bus and Truck Standards and Operations, (202) 366-2987, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Participation: The DMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. You can get electronic submission and retrieval help guidelines under the "help" section of the DMS web site. If you want us to notify you that we received your comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard or print the acknowledgement page that appears after submitting comments on-line.

Privacy Act: Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review the Department of Transportation's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Exemption Decision

Under 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), the FMCSA may renew an exemption from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), which applies to drivers of CMVs in interstate commerce, for a 2-year period if it finds "such exemption would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption." The procedures for requesting an exemption (including renewals) are set out in 49 CFR Part 381. This notice addresses 24 individuals who have requested renewal of their exemptions in a timely manner. The FMCSA has evaluated these 24

applications for renewal on their merits and decided to extend each exemption for a renewable 2-year period. They are:

Louis N. Adams Guy M. Alloway Lyle H. Banser Lloyd J. Botsford Joseph E. Buck, Sr. Paul D. Gaither David L. Grajiola Walter D. Hague, Jr.	Marshall L. Hood Edward W. Hosier Charles F. Koble Robert W. Lantis Lucio Leal Terry W. Lytle Earl R. Mark Richard W. Neyens	Anthony G. Parrish Bill L. Percy Robert H. Rogers Bobby C. Spencer Sammy D. Steinsultz Mark J. Stevwing Frankie A. Wilborn Jeffrey L. Wuollett
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These exemptions are extended subject to the following conditions: (1) That each individual have a physical exam every year (a) by an ophthalmologist or optometrist who attests that the vision in the better eye continues to meet the standard in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), and (b) by a medical examiner who attests that the individual is otherwise physically qualified under 49 CFR 391.41; (2) that each individual provide a copy of the ophthalmologist's or optometrist's report to the medical examiner at the time of the annual medical examination; and (3) that each individual provide a copy of the annual medical certification to the employer for retention in the driver's qualification file and retain a copy of the certification on his/her person while driving for presentation to a duly authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement official. Each exemption will be valid for 2 years unless rescinded earlier by the FMCSA. The exemption will be rescinded if: (1) The person fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the exemption; (2) the exemption has resulted in a lower level of safety than was maintained before it was granted; or (3) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e).

Basis for Renewing Exemptions

Under 49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(1), an exemption may be granted for no longer than 2 years from its approval date and may be renewed upon application for additional 2-year periods. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), each of the 24 applicants has satisfied the entry conditions for obtaining an exemption from the vision requirements (64 FR 68195, 65 FR 20251, 67 FR 17102, 67 FR 10471, 67 FR 19798). Each of these 24 applicants has requested timely renewal of the exemption and has submitted evidence showing that the vision in the better eye continues to meet the standard specified at 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) and that the vision impairment is stable. In addition, a review of each record of safety while driving with the respective vision

deficiencies over the past 2 years indicates each applicant continues to meet the vision exemption standards. These factors provide an adequate basis for predicting each driver's ability to continue to drive safely in interstate commerce. Therefore, the FMCSA concludes that extending the exemption for each renewal applicant for a period of 2 years is likely to achieve a level of safety equal to that existing without the exemption.

Comments

The FMCSA will review comments received at any time concerning a particular driver's safety record and determine if the continuation of the exemption is consistent with the requirements at 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e). However, the FMCSA requests that interested parties with specific data concerning the safety records of these drivers submit comments by May 13, 2004.

In the past the FMCSA has received comments from Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) expressing continued opposition to the FMCSA's procedures for renewing exemptions from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10). Specifically, Advocates objects to the agency's extension of the exemptions without any opportunity for public comment prior to the decision to renew, and reliance on a summary statement of evidence to make its decision to extend the exemption of each driver.

The issues raised by Advocates were addressed at length in 66 FR 17994 (April 4, 2001). The FMCSA continues to find its exemption process appropriate to the statutory and regulatory requirements.

Issued on: April 8, 2004.

Pamela M. Pelcovits,

Office Director, Policy, Plans, and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 04-8319 Filed 4-12-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Funds Availability and Request for Comment To Assist in the Development and Implementation of a Procedure for Fair Competitive Bidding by Amtrak and Non-Amtrak Operators of State-Supported Intercity Passenger Rail Routes

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Under this Notice, the FRA solicits comments from interested parties on how the Secretary of Transportation, working with affected States, could develop and implement a procedure for fair competitive bidding by Amtrak and non-Amtrak operators for State-supported intercity passenger rail routes. FRA also encourages interested States to submit a Statement of Interest in receiving a grant to support an initiative leading to a fair and open competitive selection of an operator to provide passenger rail service over a specific intercity route that receives or will receive State financial support. Services eligible for funding under programs administered by the Federal Transit Administration are not eligible for a grant under this notice. Responses to this notice are sought on or before May 28, 2004.

DATES: All submissions of Statements of Interest and comments must be received in FRA's offices by close of business Friday, May 28, 2004. The deadline for the submission of applications will be noted in the solicitation from FRA to prospective grantees as a result of the evaluation of the Statements of Interest.

ADDRESSES: Applicants must submit an original and six (6) copies to the Federal Railroad Administration at one of the following addresses:

Postal address (note correct zip code):
Federal Railroad Administration,
Attention: Alex Chavrid, Chief,
Passenger Programs Division (RDV-11),