

as opposed to restricting the driver to driving in intrastate commerce.

Conclusion

The Agency is granting exemptions from the epilepsy standard, 49 CFR 391.41(b)(8), to 6 individuals based on a thorough evaluation of each driver's safety experience and medical condition. Safety analysis of information relating to these 6 applicants meets the burden of showing that granting the exemptions would achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved without the exemption. By granting the exemptions, the interstate CMV industry will gain 6 highly trained and experienced drivers. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(1), each exemption will be valid for 2 years, with annual recertification required unless revoked earlier by FMCSA. The exemption will be revoked if the following occurs: (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 prior to being granted; or (3) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31136 and 31315.

FMCSA exempts the following 6 drivers for a period of 2 years with annual medical certification required: Dennis Brown (AZ); Grover Curtis (OR); Harold Durkee (WI); Timothy Eyerly (PA); Denton Hinehline (WA); and Benjamin Reineke (OH) from the prohibition of CMV operations by persons with a clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or seizures. If the exemption is still in effect at the end of the 2-year period, the person may apply to FMCSA for a renewal under procedures in effect at that time.

Issued on: September 8, 2015.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

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BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2014-0383]

Qualification of Drivers; Application for Exemptions; Hearing

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

ACTION: Notice of final disposition.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to grant requests from 30

individuals for exemptions from the Agency's physical qualifications standard concerning hearing for interstate drivers. The current regulation prohibits hearing impaired individuals from operating CMVs in interstate commerce. After notice and opportunity for public comment, the Agency concluded that granting exemptions for these drivers to operate property-carrying CMVs will provide a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level of safety maintained without the exemptions. The exemptions are valid for a 2-year period and may be renewed, and the exemptions preempt State laws and regulations.

DATES: The exemptions are effective September 21, 2015. The exemptions expire on September 21, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles A. Horan, III, Director, Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety, (202) 366-4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W64-224, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Electronic Access

You may see all the comments online through the Federal Document Management System (FDMS) at: www.regulations.gov.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments, go to www.regulations.gov and/or Room W12-140 on the ground level of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Privacy Act: In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its rulemaking process. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at www.dot.gov/privacy.

B. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption from the safety regulations 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 statute also allows the Agency to renew exemptions at the end of the 2-year period. The current

provisions of the FMCSRs concerning hearing state that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV 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 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.

49 CFR 391.41(b)(11). This standard was adopted in 1970, with a revision in 1971 to allow drivers to be qualified under this standard while wearing a hearing aid, 35 FR 6458, 6463 (April 22, 1970) and 36 FR 12857 (July 3, 1971).

FMCSA grants 30 individuals an exemption from § 391.41(b)(11) concerning hearing to enable them to operate property-carrying CMVs in interstate commerce for a 2-year period. The Agency's decision on these exemption applications is based on the current medical literature and information and the "Executive Summary on Hearing, Vestibular Function and Commercial Motor Driving Safety" (the 2008 Evidence Report) presented to FMCSA on August 26, 2008. The evidence report reached two conclusions regarding the matter of hearing loss and CMV driver safety: (1) No studies that examined the relationship between hearing loss and crash risk exclusively among CMV drivers were identified; and (2) evidence from studies of the private driver license holder population does not support the contention that individuals with hearing impairment are at an increased risk for a crash. In addition, the Agency reviewed each applicant's driving record found in the CDLIS,¹ for CDL holders, and inspections recorded in MCMIS.² For non-CDL holders, the Agency reviewed the driving records from the State licensing agency. Each applicant's record demonstrated a safe driving history. The Agency believes the drivers covered by the exemptions do not pose a risk to public safety.

C. Comments

On April 7, 2015, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of exemption

¹ *Commercial Driver License Information System* (CDLIS) is an information system that allows the exchange of commercial driver licensing information among all the States. CDLIS includes the databases of 51 licensing jurisdictions and the CDLIS Central Site, all connected by a telecommunications network.

² *Motor Carrier Management Information System* (MCMIS) is an information system that captures data from field offices through SAFETYNET, CAPRI, and other sources. It is a source for FMCSA inspection, crash, compliance review, safety audit, and registration data.

applications and requested public comment on 30 individuals (FR 80 18697; Docket number FMCSA–2015–07909). The comment period ended on May 7, 2015. In response to this notice, nine comments were received expressing safety concerns for the far reaching ramifications to the commercial driving industry of allowing deaf drivers to test, train and/or drive commercially. Some of these comments were addressed in a previous notice. Additionally they expressed concern for the process by which exemptions are granted from parts of 49 CFR 391.41, the increased volume of exemptions, and the need to rely on scientific support as a basis for granting the exemptions. FMCSA acknowledges the stakeholder's concerns and may consider the initial steps to revising the physical qualification standards through a formal rulemaking process.

D. Exemptions Granted

Following individualized assessments of the exemption applications, FMCSA grants exemptions from 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) to 30 individuals. Under current FMCSA regulations, all of the 30 drivers receiving exemptions from 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) would have been considered physically qualified to drive a CMV in interstate commerce except that they do not meet the hearing requirement. FMCSA has determined that the following 30 applicants should be granted an exemption:

Neal Everett Boatman, Jr.

Mr. Boatman, 37, holds an operator's license in Arizona.

Herbert Dean Crowe

Mr. Crowe, 50, holds an operator's license in Missouri.

David Keith Cannon

Mr. Cannon, 47, holds an operator's license in Missouri.

Bryant Cater

Mr. Cater, 54, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in Tennessee.

Frankye D. Crews

Ms. Crews, 44, holds an operator's license in Florida.

Justin Craig Cribb

Mr. Cribb, 36, holds an operator's license in South Carolina.

William Reeder Darnell

Mr. Darnell, 40, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in Arizona.

Mark Dickson

Mr. Dickson, 55, holds an operator's license in Texas.

Kelly Gene Eller

Mr. Eller, 50, holds an operator's license in North Carolina.

Elliot David Fellows

Mr. Fellows, 22, holds an operator's license in New York.

David H. Grady

Mr. Grady, 46, holds a Class B commercial driver's license (CDL) in Colorado.

Alissa Haselhorst

Ms. Haselhorst, 27, holds an operator's license in Nebraska.

Nathan John Hill

Mr. Hill, 31, holds an operator's license in Georgia.

Jason R. Gensler

Mr. Gensler, 36, holds an operator's license in Ohio.

Thomas P. Lipyanic, Jr.

Mr. Lipyanic, 49, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in Pennsylvania.

Brian L. Lloyd

Mr. Lloyd, 41, holds an operator's license in Ohio.

Kelsey Rae Maginity

Ms. Maginity, 23, holds an operator's license in Iowa.

Donald B. Malley

Mr. Malley, 60, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in Missouri.

Courtney Maloney

Ms. Maloney, 26, holds an operator's license in New York.

Amy Elizabeth Marcus

Ms. Marcus, 42, holds an operator's license in Michigan.

Jonython A. Mason

Mr. Mason, 33, holds an operator's license in California.

Scott Matchett

Mr. Matchett, 32, holds an operator's license in New York.

Kathy Ann Meadows

Ms. Meadows, 57, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in Georgia.

Devin Jamal Moffett

Mr. Moffett, 23, holds an operator's license in Georgia.

Anthony Joseph Saive

Mr. Saive, 29, holds a Class B commercial driver's license (CDL) in Ohio.

David W. Shores

Mr. Shores, 47, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in North Carolina.

Jonathan P. Veach

Mr. Veach, 32, holds an operator's license in Illinois.

Michael Whitman

Mr. Whitman, 39, holds an operator's license in New Jersey.

Richard E. Whittaker

Mr. Whittaker, 44, holds a Chauffeur's license in Indiana.

Brian David Whittington

Mr. Whittington, 48, holds a Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) in Michigan.

Basis for Exemption

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption from the hearing standard in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) if the exemption is likely to achieve an equivalent or greater level of safety than would be achieved without the exemption. With the exemption, applicants can drive in interstate commerce. Thus, the Agency's analysis focuses on whether an equal or greater level of safety is likely to be achieved by permitting each of these drivers to drive in interstate commerce as opposed to restricting him or her to driving in intrastate commerce. The driver must comply with the terms and conditions of the exemption. This includes reporting any crashes or accidents as defined in 49 CFR 390.5 and reporting all citations and convictions for disqualifying offenses under 49 CFR part 383 and 49 CFR 391.

Conclusion

The Agency is granting exemptions from the hearing standard, 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11), to 30 individuals based on an evaluation of each driver's safety experience. Safety analysis of information relating to these 30 applicants meets the burden of showing that granting the exemptions would achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved without the exemption. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315, each exemption will be valid for 2 years from the effective date with annual recertification required unless revoked earlier by FMCSA. The exemption will be revoked if the

following occurs: (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 prior to being granted; or (3) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31136 and 31315.

FMCSA exempts the following 30 drivers for a period of 2 years from the physical qualification standard concerning hearing: Neal Everett Boatman, Jr. (AZ); Herbert Dean Crowe (MO); David Keith Cannon (MO); Bryant Cater (TN); Frankye D. Crews (FL); Justin Craig Cribb (SC); William Reeder Darnell (AZ); Mark Dickson (TX); Kelly Gene Eller (NC); Elliot David Fellows (NY); David H. Grady (CO); Alissa Haselhorst (NE); Nathan John Hill (GA); Jason R. Gensler (OH); Thomas P. Lipyanic, Jr. (PA); Brian L. Lloyd (OH); Kelsey Rae Maginity (IA); Donald B. Malley (MO); Courtney Maloney (NY); Amy Elizabeth Marcus (MI); Jonython A. Mason (CA); Scott Matchett (NY); Kathy Ann Meadows (GA); Devin Jamal Moffett (GA); Anthony Joseph Saive (OH); David W. Shores (NC); Jonathan P. Veach (IL); Michael Whitman (NJ); Richard E. Whittaker (IN); and Brian David Whittington (MI).

Issued on: September 8, 2015.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2014-0387]

Qualification of Drivers; Application for Exemptions; Hearing

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

ACTION: Notice of applications for exemptions; request for comments.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces that 14 individuals have applied for a medical exemption from the hearing requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). In accordance with the statutory requirements concerning applications for exemptions, FMCSA requests public comments on these requests. The statute and implementing regulations concerning exemptions require that exemptions must provide an equivalent or greater level of safety than if they were not granted. If the Agency determines the

exemptions would satisfy the statutory requirements and decides to grant these requests after reviewing the public comments submitted in response to this notice, the exemptions would enable these 14 individuals to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before October 21, 2015.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments bearing the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA-2014-0387 using any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to www.regulations.gov. Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- *Hand Delivery or Courier:* West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.
- *Fax:* 1-202-493-2251.

Each submission must include the Agency name and the docket numbers for this notice. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided. Please see the Privacy Act heading below for further information.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments, go to www.regulations.gov at any time or Room W12-140 on the ground level of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The FDMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. If you want acknowledgment 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: In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its rulemaking process. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at www.dot.gov/privacy.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles A. Horan, III, Director, Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety, (202) 366-4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation,

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W64-224, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has authority to grant exemptions from many of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) under 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), as amended by Section 4007 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (Pub. L. 105-178, June 9, 1998, 112 Stat. 107, 401). FMCSA has published in 49 CFR part 381, subpart C final rules implementing the statutory changes in its exemption procedures made by section 4007, 69 FR 51589 (August 20, 2004).¹ Under the rules in part 381, subpart C, FMCSA must publish a notice of each exemption request in the **Federal Register**. The Agency must provide the public with an opportunity to inspect the information relevant to the application, including any safety analyses that have been conducted and any research reports, technical papers and other publications referenced in the application. The Agency must also provide an opportunity to submit public comment on the applications for exemption.

The Agency reviews the safety analyses and the public comments and determines whether granting the exemption would likely achieve a level of safety equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved without the exemption. The decision of the Agency must be published in the **Federal Register**. If the Agency denies the request, it must state the reason for doing so. If the decision is to grant the exemption, the notice must specify the person or class of persons receiving the exemption and the regulatory provision or provisions from which an exemption is granted. The notice must also specify the effective period of the exemption (up to 2 years) and explain the terms and conditions of the exemption. The exemption may be renewed.

The current provisions of the FMCSRs concerning hearing state that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV 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

¹ This action adopted as final rules the interim final rules issued by FMCSA's predecessor in 1998 (63 FR 67600 (Dec. 8, 2008)), and adopted by FMCSA in 2001 [66 FR 49867 (Oct. 1, 2001)].