

person is physically qualified to driver 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) 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).

The five individuals listed in this notice have requested renewal of their exemptions from the hearing standard in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11), in accordance with FMCSA procedures. Accordingly, FMCSA has evaluated these applications for renewal on their merits and decided to extend each exemption for a renewable two-year period.

II. Request for Comments

Interested parties or organizations possessing information that would otherwise show that any, or all, of these drivers are not currently achieving the statutory level of safety should immediately notify FMCSA. The Agency will evaluate any adverse evidence submitted and, if safety is being compromised or if continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA will take immediate steps to revoke the exemption of a driver.

III. Basis for Renewing Exemptions

Under 49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(1), an exemption may be granted for no longer than two years from its approval date and may be renewed upon application. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, each of the five applicants has satisfied the renewal conditions for obtaining an exemption from the hearing requirement (80 FR 57032; 80 FR 60747). In addition, for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) holders, the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) and the Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS) are searched for crash and violation data. For non-CDL holders, the Agency reviews the driving records from the State Driver's Licensing Agency (SDLA). These factors provide an adequate basis for predicting each driver's ability to continue to safely operate a CMV in interstate commerce.

The five drivers in this notice remain in good standing with the Agency and have not exhibited any medical issues that would compromise their ability to safely operate a CMV during the previous two-year exemption period. FMCSA has concluded that renewing the exemptions for each of these applicants is likely to achieve a level of safety equal to that existing without the exemption. Therefore, FMCSA has decided to renew each exemption for a two-year period. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, each driver has received a renewed exemption.

As of November 1, 2016, Kevin Beachum (MD) has satisfied the renewal conditions for obtaining an exemption from the hearing requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11), from driving CMVs in interstate commerce (80 FR 57032). This driver was included in FMCSA–2014–0103. The exemption was effective on November 1, 2016, and will expire on November 1, 2018.

As of November 30, 2016, Bruce H. Dunn (LA); Scott A. Perdue (GA); Melvin Ross (OH); and Thomas Sneider (MN) have satisfied the renewal conditions for obtaining an exemption from the hearing requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11), from driving CMVs in interstate commerce (80 FR 60747). The drivers were included in FMCSA–2014–0104. The exemptions were effective on November 30, 2016, and will expire on November 30, 2018.

IV. Conditions and Requirements

The exemptions are extended subject to the following conditions: (1) Each driver must report any crashes or accidents as defined in 49 CFR 390.5; and (2) report all citations and convictions for disqualifying offenses under 49 CFR part 383 and 49 CFR 391 to FMCSA. In addition, the driver must also have a copy of the exemption when driving, for presentation to a duly authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement official. The driver is prohibited from operating a motorcoach or bus with passengers in interstate commerce. The exemption does not exempt the individual from meeting the applicable CDL testing requirements. Each exemption will be valid for two years unless rescinded earlier by 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. 31136(e) and 31315.

V. Conclusion

Based upon its evaluation of the five exemption applications, FMCSA renews the exemptions of the aforementioned drivers from the hearing requirement in 49 CFR 391.41 (b)(11). In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, each exemption will be valid for two years unless revoked earlier by FMCSA.

Issued on: February 27, 2017.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2016–0212]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

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

ACTION: Notice of final disposition.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to exempt 31 individuals from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). They are unable to meet the vision requirement in one eye for various reasons. The exemptions will enable these individuals to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) in interstate commerce without meeting the prescribed vision requirement in one eye. The Agency has concluded that granting these exemptions will provide a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level of safety maintained without the exemptions for these CMV drivers.

DATES: The exemptions were granted December 30, 2016. The exemptions expire on December 30, 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Christine A. Hydock, Chief, Medical Programs Division, (202) 366–4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W64–113, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions regarding viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Docket Services, telephone (202) 366–9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Electronic Access

You may see all the comments online through the Federal Document

Management System (FDMS) at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments, go to <http://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.

II. Background

On November 29, 2016, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of exemption applications from certain individuals, and requested comments from the public (81 FR 86063). That notice listed 31 applicants' case histories. The 31 individuals applied for exemptions from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), for drivers who operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption 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. Accordingly, FMCSA has evaluated the 31 applications on their merits and made a determination to grant exemptions to each of them.

III. Vision and Driving Experience of the Applicants

The vision requirement in the FMCSRs provides:

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person 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 a 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 red, green, and amber (49 CFR 391.41(b)(10)).

FMCSA recognizes that some drivers do not meet the vision requirement but have adapted their driving to

accommodate their limitation and demonstrated their ability to drive safely. The 31 exemption applicants listed in this notice are in this category. They are unable to meet the vision requirement in one eye for various reasons, including amblyopia, central, corneal opacity, central vein occlusion, choroidal melanoma, chorioretinal scar, complete loss of vision, eccentric fixation, exotropia, glaucoma, macular scar, optic nerve atrophy, prosthetic eye, and retinal detachment. In most cases, their eye conditions were not recently developed. Twenty of the applicants were either born with their vision impairments or have had them since childhood.

The 11 individuals that sustained their vision conditions as adults have had it for a range of 4 to 40 years.

Although each applicant has one eye which does not meet the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), each has at least 20/40 corrected vision in the other eye, and in a doctor's opinion, has sufficient vision to perform all the tasks necessary to operate a CMV. Doctors' opinions are supported by the applicants' possession of valid commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) or non-CDLs to operate CMVs. Before issuing CDLs, States subject drivers to knowledge and skills tests designed to evaluate their qualifications to operate a CMV.

All of these applicants satisfied the testing requirements for their State of residence. By meeting State licensing requirements, the applicants demonstrated their ability to operate a CMV, with their limited vision, to the satisfaction of the State.

While possessing a valid CDL or non-CDL, these 31 drivers have been authorized to drive a CMV in intrastate commerce, even though their vision disqualified them from driving in interstate commerce. They have driven CMVs with their limited vision in careers ranging for 3 to 51 years. In the past three years, 1 driver was involved in a crash and 2 drivers were convicted of moving violations in a CMV.

The qualifications, experience, and medical condition of each applicant were stated and discussed in detail in the November 29, 2016 notice (81 FR 86063).

IV. Basis for Exemption Determination

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) if the exemption is likely to achieve an equivalent or greater level of safety than would be achieved without the exemption. Without the exemption, applicants will continue to

be restricted to intrastate driving. With the exemption, applicants can drive in interstate commerce. Thus, our 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.

To evaluate the effect of these exemptions on safety, FMCSA considered the medical reports about the applicants' vision as well as their driving records and experience with the vision deficiency.

To qualify for an exemption from the vision requirement, FMCSA requires a person to present verifiable evidence that he/she has driven a commercial vehicle safely with the vision deficiency for the past 3 years. Recent driving performance is especially important in evaluating future safety, according to several research studies designed to correlate past and future driving performance. Results of these studies support the principle that the best predictor of future performance by a driver is his/her past record of crashes and traffic violations. Copies of the studies may be found at Docket Number FMCSA-1998-3637.

FMCSA believes it can properly apply the principle to monocular drivers, because data from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) former waiver study program clearly demonstrate the driving performance of experienced monocular drivers in the program is better than that of all CMV drivers collectively (See 61 FR 13338, 13345, March 26, 1996). The fact that experienced monocular drivers demonstrated safe driving records in the waiver program supports a conclusion that other monocular drivers, meeting the same qualifying conditions as those required by the waiver program, are also likely to have adapted to their vision deficiency and will continue to operate safely.

The first major research correlating past and future performance was done in England by Greenwood and Yule in 1920. Subsequent studies, building on that model, concluded that crash rates for the same individual exposed to certain risks for two different time periods vary only slightly (See Bates and Neyman, University of California Publications in Statistics, April 1952). Other studies demonstrated theories of predicting crash proneness from crash history coupled with other factors. These factors—such as age, sex, geographic location, mileage driven and conviction history—are used every day by insurance companies and motor vehicle bureaus to predict the

probability of an individual experiencing future crashes (See Weber, Donald C., "Accident Rate Potential: An Application of Multiple Regression Analysis of a Poisson Process," Journal of American Statistical Association, June 1971). A 1964 California Driver Record Study prepared by the California Department of Motor Vehicles concluded that the best overall crash predictor for both concurrent and nonconcurrent events is the number of single convictions. This study used 3 consecutive years of data, comparing the experiences of drivers in the first 2 years with their experiences in the final year.

Applying principles from these studies to the past 3-year record of the 31 applicants, 1 driver was involved in a crash and 2 drivers were convicted of a moving violation in a CMV. All the applicants achieved a record of safety while driving with their vision impairment, demonstrating the likelihood that they have adapted their driving skills to accommodate their condition. As the applicants' ample driving histories with their vision deficiencies are good predictors of future performance, FMCSA concludes their ability to drive safely can be projected into the future.

We believe that the applicants' intrastate driving experience and history provide an adequate basis for predicting their ability to drive safely in interstate commerce. Intrastate driving, like interstate operations, involves substantial driving on highways on the interstate system and on other roads built to interstate standards. Moreover, driving in congested urban areas exposes the driver to more pedestrian and vehicular traffic than exists on interstate highways. Faster reaction to traffic and traffic signals is generally required because distances between them are more compact. These conditions tax visual capacity and driver response just as intensely as interstate driving conditions. The veteran drivers in this proceeding have operated CMVs safely under those conditions for at least 3 years, most for much longer. Their experience and driving records lead us to believe that each applicant is capable of operating in interstate commerce as safely as he/she has been performing in intrastate commerce. Consequently, FMCSA finds that exempting these applicants from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) is likely to achieve a level of safety equal to that existing without the exemption. For this reason, the Agency is granting the exemptions for the 2-year period allowed by 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315 to the 31 applicants

listed in the notice of November 29, 2016 (81 FR 86063).

We recognize that the vision of an applicant may change and affect his/her ability to operate a CMV as safely as in the past. As a condition of the exemption, therefore, FMCSA will impose requirements on the 31 individuals consistent with the grandfathering provisions applied to drivers who participated in the Agency's vision waiver program.

Those requirements are found at 49 CFR 391.64(b) and include the following: (1) That each individual be physically examined every year (a) by an ophthalmologist or optometrist who attests that the vision in the better eye continues to meet the requirement 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, or keep a copy in his/her driver's qualification file if he/she is self-employed. The driver must have a copy of the certification when driving, for presentation to a duly authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement official.

V. Discussion of Comments

FMCSA received one comment in this proceeding. Daniel E. Kinney stated that he has been put in a financial hardship while waiting for his vision exemption. He was issued an exemption effective as of December 30, 2016.

IV. Conclusion

Based upon its evaluation of the 31 exemption applications, FMCSA exempts the following drivers from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), subject to the requirements cited above 49 CFR 391.64(b):

James A. Bartolo, Jr. (CA)
 Harry S. Bumps (VT)
 Brian T. Castoldi (CT)
 William B. Friend (MD)
 Willie George (NY)
 David E. Goff (MA)
 Michael Golebiowski (IL)
 Dana L. Gould (ME)
 Johnny J. Gowdy (MS)
 Richard E. Hadler (MN)
 Donald J. Harrison (IA)
 Channing L. Herrell (MD)
 Loyd F. Hovey (NY)
 George T. Huffman Jr. (IL)
 Daniel E. Kinney (IL)

Shane M. Lovell (NE)
 Jason W. Mack (PA)
 Terry G. Montgomery (IN)
 John P. O'Doherty (MN)
 Antonio Rivera (PA)
 Julio Rivera (FL)
 Steve C. Sinclair (IA)
 Jerrell L. Smith (TX)
 Ricky E. Smith (GA)
 Venton E. Smith (CA)
 Willie J. Smith (TX)
 Glen W. Stake Jr. (OH)
 John D. Stork (IL)
 David T. Tann (NC)
 Jeremy M. Trager (OH)
 James R. Wagner (IL)

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, each exemption will be valid for 2 years unless revoked earlier by FMCSA. The exemption will be revoked 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. 31136 and 31315.

If the exemption is still effective 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: February 27, 2017.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-1998-4334; FMCSA-1999-5578; FMCSA-1999-6156; FMCSA-2001-9561; FMCSA-2001-11426; FMCSA-2006-24015; FMCSA-2006-24783; FMCSA-2008-0021; FMCSA-2008-0106; FMCSA-2008-0174; FMCSA-2009-0154; FMCSA-2009-0206; FMCSA-2009-0291; FMCSA-2010-0050; FMCSA-2010-0082; FMCSA-2010-0114; FMCSA-2011-0324; FMCSA-2011-0379; FMCSA-2012-0104; FMCSA-2012-0106; FMCSA-2012-0159; FMCSA-2012-0160; FMCSA-2012-0161; FMCSA-2014-0002; FMCSA-2014-0003; FMCSA-2014-0006; FMCSA-2014-0007; FMCSA-2014-0008]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

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

ACTION: Notice of final disposition.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to renew exemptions for 100 individuals from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety