

copy of the application is included in the docket referenced at the beginning of this notice.

Groendyke is a carrier of flammable fuel and liquid hazardous materials. Groendyke has a fleet of approximately 900 trucks and 1,440 trailers, and employs over 1,200 individuals, including approximately 900 drivers. In its application, Groendyke states "Groendyke assessed what it could do to prevent other drivers from rear ending Groendyke trailers, and determined that increasing visibility of Groendyke trailers would be an efficient means to prevent rear ending accidents. To do this, Groendyke searched for ways to cause its braking system to capture the attention of other drivers faster and more completely."

In its application, Groendyke seeks an exemption to include an amber brake-activated pulsating lamp to the rear of its trailers. The pulsating brake lamp would be positioned in the upper center portion of the trailer. In support of its application, Groendyke contends that the addition of the pulsating brake lamp will improve safety, and states that (1) research shows that pulsating brake lamps in addition to steady burning red brake lamps improves visibility and prevents accidents, (2) its own experience has demonstrated that pulsating brake lamps in addition to steady burning red brake lamps has decreased the frequency of rear-end accidents involving its fleet, and (3) similar exemptions exist for other classes of vehicles.

**Research.** Groendyke cites several studies conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, another agency in the U.S. Department of Transportation, on the issues of rear-end crashes, distracted driving, and braking signals. Groendyke states:

Research indicates that there are ways to improve the attention-getting qualities of braking systems. Including a pulsating brake lamp on a lead vehicle has quantifiable effect on the drivers of following vehicles and measurably reduces rear-end collisions. Drivers are redirected and altered faster and more efficiently when a pulsating brake lamp draws their attention to the lead vehicle. As a result, rear-end collisions, can be prevented or at least reduced.

**Groendyke Experience.** Beginning in the second quarter of 2015, Groendyke began installing pulsating brake lamps on some of its fleet without authorization from FMCSA to compare the frequency of rear-end collisions between (1) trailers equipped with pulsating brake lamps and the required steady-burning lamps and (2) trailers equipped with only the steady-burning lamps required by the FMCSRs. As of

July 31, 2017, Groendyke had outfitted 632 of its 1,440 trailers with pulsating brake lamps.

Data gathered by Groendyke between January 2015 and July 2017 show that the pulsating brake lamps decreased the frequency of rear-end collisions by 33.7 percent. Groendyke also analyzed its data to determine whether the pulsating brake lamps improved outcomes when drivers were slowing or stopping at railroad crossings.<sup>1</sup> Groendyke found that trailers equipped with the pulsating brake lamps were not involved in a rear-end crash at a railroad crossing during the same time period. Groendyke states:

The results of the Groendyke Brake Warning Device Campaign are clear: The frequency of rear-end collisions is markedly lower when trailers are outfitted with pulsating brake lamps in addition to the steady-burning lamps required by the FMCSRs. The pulsating brake lamps draw other drivers' attention to what is happening with the vehicle in front more effectively and more quickly than steady burning lamps. In the interest of safety and productivity, Groendyke desires to implement the Groendyke Brake Warning Device Campaign on the rest of its fleet without risking violation of the FMCSRs.

**Exemptions for Other Classes of Vehicles.** In its application, Groendyke notes that the current requirements of 49 CFR 393.25(e) specifically exclude tow trucks and CMVs from the requirements that all exterior lamps be steady-burning. Groendyke contends that "Allowing an exemption for drivers of hazardous loads would be consistent with the intent of the regulation."

#### Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on Groendyke's application for an exemption from the requirements of 49 CFR 393.25(e). All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated at the beginning of this notice will be considered and will be available for examination in the docket at the location listed under the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. Comments received after the comment closing date will be filed in the public docket and will be considered to the extent practicable. In addition to late comments, FMCSA will also continue to file, in the public docket, relevant

<sup>1</sup> As cargo tank operators hauling hazardous materials, Groendyke drivers are required to stop or slow significantly at railroad crossings (49 CFR 392.10–392.12). Groendyke notes that railroad crossings are a significant source of rear-end collisions at Groendyke and elsewhere because non-commercial drivers may not anticipate stops at railroad crossings.

information that becomes available after the comment closing date. Interested persons should continue to examine the public docket for new material.

Issued on: July 17, 2018.

**Larry W. Minor,**

*Associate Administrator for Policy.*

[FR Doc. 2018–16223 Filed 7–27–18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2018–0119]

#### Agency Information Collection Activities; Request for Comments; Revision and Renewal of an Approved Information Collection: Medical Qualification Requirements

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

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, FMCSA announces its plan to submit the Information Collection Request (ICR) described below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. The FMCSA requests to revise and renew an ICR titled, "*Medical Qualification Requirements*," due to updated information for several of the Information Collections (ICs) discussed. This ICR is needed to ensure that drivers, motor carriers and the States are complying with the physical qualification requirements of commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers. The information collected is used to determine and certify driver medical fitness and must be collected in order for our highways to be safe. On April 27, 2018, FMCSA published a 60-day notice (83 FR 18640) requesting comment on the renewal of this ICR. In response to this notice, eight comments were received. However, none of the comments were related to information collection activities or the renewal of this ICR.

**DATES:** Please send your comments by August 29, 2018. OMB must receive your comments by this date in order to act quickly on the ICR.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should reference Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket Number FMCSA–2018–0119. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the proposed information collection to the Office of Information and

Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget. Comments should be addressed to the attention of the Desk Officer, Department of Transportation/Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and sent via electronic mail to *oira\_submission@omb.eop.gov*, or faxed to (202) 395-6974, or mailed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Christine A. Hydock, Chief, Medical Programs Division, Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 6th Floor, West Building, New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Telephone: (202) 366-4001, Email Address: *fmcamedical@dot.gov*. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Medical Qualification Requirements.

*OMB Control Number:* 2126-0006.

*Type of Request:* Revision and renewal of a current approved information collection.

*Respondents:* Commercial motor vehicle drivers, motor carriers, medical examiners, testing centers.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 65,503,280.

*Expiration Date:* August 31, 2018.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden:* 2,395,315 hours.

This information collection is comprised of the following five information collection activities.

*Physical Qualification Standards*

1,892,700 annual burden hours

4,813,510 annual respondents

*Resolution of Medical Conflict*

11 annual burden hours

3 annual respondents

*Medical Exemptions*

4,430 annual burden hours

7,332 annual respondents

*SPE Certificate Program*

2,714 annual burden hours

2,426 annual respondents

*National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners*

495,460 annual burden hours

680,009 annual respondents

*Background:* CMVs (trucks and buses) are longer, heavier, and more difficult to maneuver than automobiles, making them a threat to highway safety if not operated properly by qualified individuals. The public interest in, and right to have, safe highways requires the assurance that drivers of CMVs can safely perform the increased physical and mental demands of their duties.

FMCSA's medical standards provide this assurance by requiring drivers to be examined and medically certified as physically and mentally qualified to drive. Therefore, information used to determine and certify driver medical fitness must be collected. FMCSA is the Federal government agency authorized to require the collection of this information. FMCSA is required by statute to establish standards for the physical qualifications of drivers who operate CMVs in interstate commerce for non-excepted industries [49 U.S.C. 31136(a)(3) and 31502(b)]. The regulations discussing this collection are outlined in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) at 49 CFR 390-399.

Below is a brief description of the included IC activities and how the information is used.

**Physical Qualification Standards**

FMCSRs at 49 CFR 391.41 set forth the physical qualification standards that interstate CMV drivers who are subject to part 391 must meet, with the exception of commercial driver's license/commercial learner's permit (CDL/CLP) drivers transporting migrant workers (who must meet the physical qualification standards set forth in 49 CFR 398.3). The FMCSRs covering driver physical qualification records are found at 49 CFR 391.43, which specify that a medical examination be performed on CMV drivers subject to part 391 who operate in interstate commerce. The results of the examination shall be recorded in accordance with the requirements set forth in that section. The current provisions of 49 CFR 391.51 and 398.3 require that a motor carrier retain the Medical Examiner's Certificate (MEC), Form MCSA-5876, in the driver's qualification (DQ) file for 3 years. The certificate affirms that the driver is physically qualified to drive a CMV in interstate commerce.

Due to potential onset of new conditions or changes in existing conditions that may adversely affect a driver's ability to drive safely and/or cause incapacitation that could be a risk to public safety, periodic re-evaluation and recertification is required to assess driver physical qualification. MECs may be issued for up to 2 years after the date of examination. However, drivers with certain medical conditions must be certified more frequently than every 2 years. Medical Examiners (MEs) have discretion to certify for shorter time periods on a case-by-case basis for medical conditions that require closer monitoring or that are more likely to change over time. In addition, the Safe,

Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users requires MEs to transmit to FMCSA's Chief Medical Officer, electronically and on a monthly basis, driver information and results of any CMV driver medical examinations conducted during the previous month. MEs are required to maintain records of the CMV driver medical examinations they conduct. FMCSA does not require MEs to maintain these records electronically. However, there is nothing to preclude a ME from maintaining electronic records of the medical examinations he/she conducts. FMCSA is continuously evaluating new information technology in an attempt to decrease the burden on motor carriers and MEs. Less frequent collection of driver data, Medical Examination Report Forms, MCSA-5875, and MECs would compromise FMCSA's ability to determine ME compliance with FMCSA's physical qualification standards and guidelines in performing CMV driver medical examinations, which could result in MEs listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners who should be removed and possibly drivers that don't meet the physical qualification standards possessing an MEC. Less frequent data collection would also result in decreased validity of the data (*i.e.*, less frequent data submission may increase the error rate due to unintentional omission of examination information). Therefore, less frequent collection of driver examination results is not an option.

**Resolution of Medical Conflict**

The medical conflict provision provides a mechanism for drivers and motor carriers to request that FMCSA make a final decision to resolve conflicting medical evaluations when either party does not accept the decision of a medical specialist. If two MEs disagree about the medical certification of a driver, the requirements set forth in 49 CFR 391.47 mandate that the applicant (driver or motor carrier) submit a copy of a report including results of all medical testing and the opinion of an impartial medical specialist in the field in which the medical conflict arose. The applicant may, if they choose to do so, submit the information above using fax and/or email. FMCSA uses the information collected from the applicant, including medical information, to determine if the driver should or should not be qualified. Without this provision and its incumbent driver medical information collection requirements, an unqualified person may be permitted to drive and

qualified persons may be prevented from driving.

### **Medical Exemptions and Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificates**

FMCSA may, on a case by case basis, grant a medical exemption from a physical qualification standard set forth in 49 CFR 391.41, if the Agency determines the exemption is in the interest of the public and would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved by complying with the regulation. Individuals with limb impairments are permitted to operate a CMV, but only when they are otherwise qualified and are granted a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) certificate by FMCSA. Title 49 CFR 381.310 establishes the procedures that persons must follow to request exemptions from FMCSA safety regulations. Without an exemption, individuals who do not meet the requirements in 49 CFR 391.41 would not be qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. The application process for all exemptions currently provides for electronic collection of the application information by FMCSA for those applicants that choose to do so. They are able to fax or scan and email documents to FMCSA. In addition, the Diabetes and Vision Exemption Programs and the SPE Certificate Program maintain a database of application information. The Medical Programs Division maintains a database of application information for hearing and seizure exemptions. FMCSA must collect medical information about the driver's medical condition in order to determine eligibility to receive an exemption or an SPE certificate. The Agency requires all exemptions be renewed every 2 years to ensure that the granting of the exemption does not diminish safety under 49 CFR 381.310. Exemption holders are required to submit annual medical information for review to ensure the driver continues to meet the physical qualification requirements. In the interest of highway safety, the medical examination, exemption, and SPE renewal should not be performed less frequently.

### **The National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (National Registry)**

The National Registry requires MEs that conduct physical qualification examinations for interstate CMV drivers to complete training concerning FMCSA physical qualification standards, pass a certification test, and maintain competence through periodic training and testing, all of which require

information collection. ME candidates submit demographic and eligibility data in order to register on the National Registry website to begin the certification process. This data is used to provide the public with contact information for those medical professionals who are certified by FMCSA to conduct interstate CMV driver medical examinations. Less frequent collection of ME candidate test results and identity and eligibility information means that there are less healthcare professionals attempting to become certified which would result in fewer certified MEs being available to the CMV driver and motor carrier population. This could place a huge burden on drivers and motor carriers to find certified MEs to perform their medical examinations. Therefore, less frequent collection of ME candidate test results and identity and eligibility information is not an option. MEs must provide specific driver medical examination information for every driver they examine on medical forms required by FMCSA and into the National Registry. Drivers must provide identification and health history information on medical forms required by FMCSA. The purpose for providing this information is to enable the ME to determine if the driver is medically qualified under 49 CFR 391.41 and to ensure that there are no disqualifying medical conditions that could adversely affect their safe driving ability or cause incapacitation constituting a risk to the public. If this information was not required, the threat to public safety would be immense and unacceptable.

The National Registry also requires motor carriers to verify the national registry number of the MEs who certify their drivers and place a note in the DQ file. Less frequent verification of the national registry numbers by motor carriers would mean drivers may not have been examined by a certified ME listed on the National Registry and they may no longer meet the physical qualifications standards of the FMCSRs even though they were previously certified as physically qualified.

As a follow-on rule to the National Registry, the *Medical Examiner's Certification Integration* final rule, (80 FR 22790), modified several of the requirements adopted in the National Registry final rule, some of which have a scheduled compliance date of June 22, 2018. Specifically, it requires (1) FMCSA to electronically transmit from the National Registry to the State Driver's Licensing Agencies (SDLAs) the driver identification information, examination results, and restriction information from examinations

performed for holders of CLPs/CDLs (interstate and intrastate); (2) FMCSA to transmit electronically to the SDLAs the medical variance information for all CMV drivers; and (3) SDLAs to post the driver identification, examination results, and restriction information received electronically from FMCSA.

However, as the *Medical Examiner's Certification Integration* final rule compliance date of June 22, 2018, approached, FMCSA reluctantly concluded that it would not be able to electronically transmit MEC information from the National Registry to the SDLAs nor would the SDLAs be able to electronically receive the MEC information from the National Registry for posting to the CDLIS driver record as intended by the *Medical Examiner's Certification Integration* final rule. Due to a number of delays including an incident that occurred in early December 2017 causing the Agency to take the National Registry offline leading to interruptions in the development of the process for the electronic transmission of MEC information and medical variances, the final specifications for the electronic transmission of MEC information have not been completed. Under these circumstances, neither the Agency nor the stakeholders would be able to rely on the CDLIS driver record as official proof of medical certification unless MEs continue to issue the original paper MEC to qualified drivers and drivers continue to provide the MEC to the SDLAs, as is being done presently. All of the functions regarding electronic transmission of data that were to be implemented on June 22, 2018, are dependent upon the implementation of information technology infrastructure that was not available on June 22, 2018. For this reason, on June 21, 2018, FMCSA published a notice (83 FR 28774) extending the compliance date for several of the provisions in the *Medical Examiner's Certification Integration* final rule (80 FR 22790) to June 22, 2021, to ensure that the SDLAs have sufficient time once the final specifications are released to make the necessary information technology programming changes. However, beginning on June 22, 2018, certified MEs are still required to report results of all completed CMV drivers' medical examinations (including the results of examinations where the driver was found not to be qualified) to FMCSA by midnight (local time) of the next calendar day following the examination but must continue issuing the original paper MEC to qualified drivers. All CMV drivers should continue to provide

the SDLA with their MEC as proof of medical certification. As a result of this extension, there are no additional annual burden hours or costs to respondents imposed by the *Medical Examiner's Certification Integration* final rule during the first 6 years of implementation of the final rule. Therefore, all the IC activities imposed on the MEs, drivers, and motor carriers over the first 6 years of implementing the *Medical Examiner's Certification Integration* final rule will remain unchanged.

On April 27, 2018, FMCSA published a 60-day notice (83 FR 18640) requesting comment on the renewal of this ICR. In response to the notice, eight comments were received. However, none of the comments were related to information collection activities or the renewal of this ICR.

**Public Comments Invited:** You are asked to comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) Whether the proposed collection is necessary for the FMCSA to perform its functions; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (3) ways for the FMCSA to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways that the burden could be minimized without reducing the quality of the collected information.

Issued under the authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.87 on: July 20, 2018.

**G. Kelly Regal,**

*Associate Administrator for Office of Research and Information Technology.*

[FR Doc. 2018-16224 Filed 7-27-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2013-0147]

#### Qualification of Drivers; Skill Performance Evaluation; Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles Application for Renewal Exemption

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

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

**SUMMARY:** FMCSA announces its decision to renew a Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) exemption on behalf of truck and bus drivers who are licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia and need a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate from FMCSA to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMV) in interstate commerce.

The exemption enables interstate CMV drivers who are licensed in Virginia and are subject to the Federal SPE requirements under 49 CFR 391.49 to continue to fulfill the Federal requirements with a State-issued SPE and to operate CMVs in interstate commerce anywhere in the United States.

**DATES:** This decision is effective July 8, 2018, and will expire July 8, 2023, and may be renewed. Comments must be received on or before August 29, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments bearing the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA-2013-0147 using any of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online 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:** West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

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

**Instructions:** Each submission must include the Agency name and the docket number(s) for this notice. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://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 <http://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., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The FDMS is available 24 hours each day e.t., 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 online.

**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 <http://www.regulations.gov>, as described in the system of records

notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at <http://www.dot.gov/privacy>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Eileen Nolan, Office of Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety, Medical Programs Division, 202-366-4001, [fmcamedical@dot.gov](mailto:fmcamedical@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 5:30 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. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption from certain parts of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) for no longer than 5 years 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 allows the Agency to renew exemptions at the end of the 5-year period.

On July 8, 2014, FMCSA granted Virginia a 2-year exemption that enables interstate CMV drivers licensed in Virginia who are subject to the Federal SPE requirements under 49 CFR 391.49 to fulfill the Federal requirements with a State-issued SPE (79 FR 38659). Subsequently, a request for exemption renewal was received, and granted for a 2-year period, beginning July 8, 2016 and ending on July 8, 2018 (81 FR 44674).

At the time the first exemption was granted, the term of temporary exemptions was limited by statute to a maximum of 2 years. However, on December 4, 2015, Congress enacted the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which now allows an exemption to be granted for a period of 5 years (49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(2)) if FMCSA 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." Virginia has consistently maintained the statutory requirements associated with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315 for their SPE program. Therefore, the Agency believes that extending the exemption period to a 5-year period will likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety achieved without the exemption.

The requirements of the exemption were outlined in the prior notices and