

AMENDMENTS

2012—Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 112-141 added subsec. (c) and redesignated former subsec. (c) as (d).

2005—Subsecs. (a), (b). Pub. L. 109-59 inserted “up to” after “withhold”.

1998—Subsecs. (a), (b). Pub. L. 105-178, §4011(h)(1), as added by Pub. L. 105-206, substituted “section 104(b)(1), (3), and (4) of title 23” for “section 104(b)(1), (3), and (5) of title 23”.

Pub. L. 105-178, §4011(g)(1), substituted “section 104(b)(1), (3), and (5) of title 23” for “section 104(b)(1), (2), (5), and (6) of title 23”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105-178, §4011(g)(2), struck out par. (2) designation and struck out par. (1) which read as follows: “Amounts withheld under this section from apportionment to a State before October 1, 1995, remain available for apportionment to the State as follows:

“(A) If the amounts would have been apportioned under section 104(b)(5)(B) of title 23 but for this section, the amounts remain available until the end of the 2d fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the amounts are authorized to be appropriated.

“(B) If the amounts would have been apportioned under section 104(b)(1), (2), or (6) of title 23 but for this section, the amounts remain available until the end of the 3d fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the amounts are authorized to be appropriated.”

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 105-178, §4011(h)(2), as added by Pub. L. 105-206, struck out heading and text of subsec. (d). Text read as follows: “If, at the end of the period for which amounts withheld under this section from apportionment are available for apportionment to a State under subsection (c)(1) of this section, the State has not substantially complied with all of the requirements of section 31311(a) of this title for a 365-day period, the amounts lapse or, for amounts withheld from apportionment under section 104(b)(5) of title 23, the amounts lapse and are available for projects under section 118(b) of title 23.”

Pub. L. 105-178, §4011(g)(3), (4), redesignated subsec. (e) as (d) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (d). Text read as follows:

“(1) If, before the last day of the period for which amounts withheld under this section from apportionment are to remain available for apportionment to a State under subsection (c)(1) of this section, the State substantially complies with all of the requirements of section 31311(a) of this title for a period of 365 days, the Secretary, on the day following the last day of that period, shall apportion to the State the withheld amounts remaining available for apportionment to that State.

“(2) Amounts apportioned under paragraph (1) of this subsection remain available for expenditure until the end of the 3d fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the amounts are apportioned. Amounts not obligated at the end of that period lapse or, for amounts apportioned under section 104(b)(5) of title 23, lapse and are available for projects under section 118(b) of title 23.”

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 105-178, §4011(g)(4), redesignated subsec. (e) as (d).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2012 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 112-141 effective Oct. 1, 2012, see section 3(a) of Pub. L. 112-141, set out as an Effective and Termination Dates of 2012 Amendment note under section 101 of Title 23, Highways.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1998 AMENDMENT

Title IX of Pub. L. 105-206 effective simultaneously with enactment of Pub. L. 105-178 and to be treated as included in Pub. L. 105-178 at time of enactment, and provisions of Pub. L. 105-178, as in effect on day before July 22, 1998, that are amended by title IX of Pub. L. 105-206 to be treated as not enacted, see section 9016 of Pub. L. 105-206, set out as a note under section 101 of Title 23, Highways.

§ 31315. Waivers, exemptions, and pilot programs

(a) **WAIVERS.**—The Secretary may grant a waiver that relieves a person from compliance in whole or in part with a regulation issued under this chapter or section 31136 if the Secretary determines that it is in the public interest to grant the waiver and that the waiver is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety that would be obtained in the absence of the waiver—

- (1) for a period not in excess of 3 months;
- (2) limited in scope and circumstances;
- (3) for nonemergency and unique events; and
- (4) subject to such conditions as the Secretary may impose.

(b) **EXEMPTIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Upon receipt of a request pursuant to this subsection, the Secretary of Transportation may grant to a person or class of persons an exemption from a regulation prescribed under this chapter or section 31136 if the Secretary 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.

(2) **LENGTH OF EXEMPTION AND RENEWAL.**—An exemption may be granted under paragraph (1) for no longer than 5 years and may be renewed, upon request, for subsequent 5-year periods if the Secretary continues to make the finding under paragraph (1).

(3) **OPPORTUNITY FOR RESUBMISSION.**—If the Secretary denies an application under paragraph (1) and the applicant can reasonably address the reason for the denial, the Secretary may allow the applicant to resubmit the application.

(4) **AUTHORITY TO REVOKE EXEMPTION.**—The Secretary shall immediately revoke an exemption if—

(A) the person fails to comply with the terms and conditions of such exemption;

(B) the exemption has resulted in a lower level of safety than was maintained before the exemption was granted; or

(C) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of this chapter or section 31136, as the case may be.

(5) **REQUESTS FOR EXEMPTION.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section and after notice and an opportunity for public comment, the Secretary shall specify by regulation the procedures by which a person may request an exemption. Such regulations shall, at a minimum, require the person to provide the following information for each exemption request:

(A) The provisions from which the person requests exemption.

(B) The time period during which the requested exemption would apply.

(C) An analysis of the safety impacts the requested exemption may cause.

(D) The specific countermeasures the person would undertake to ensure an equivalent or greater level of safety than would be achieved absent the requested exemption.

(6) **NOTICE AND COMMENT.**—

(A) UPON RECEIPT OF A REQUEST.—Upon receipt of an exemption request, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register (or, in the case of a request for an exemption from the physical qualification standards for commercial motor vehicle drivers, post on a web site established by the Secretary to implement the requirements of section 31149) a notice explaining the request that has been filed and shall give the public an opportunity to inspect the safety analysis and any other relevant information known to the Secretary and to comment on the request. This subparagraph does not require the release of information protected by law from public disclosure.

(B) UPON GRANTING A REQUEST.—Upon granting a request and before the effective date of the exemption, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register (or, in the case of an exemption from the physical qualification standards for commercial motor vehicle drivers, post on a web site established by the Secretary to implement the requirements of section 31149) the name of the person granted the exemption, the provisions from which the person is exempt, the effective period, and the terms and conditions of the exemption.

(C) AFTER DENYING A REQUEST.—After denying a request for exemption, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register (or, in the case of a request for an exemption from the physical qualification standards for commercial motor vehicle drivers, post on a web site established by the Secretary to implement the requirements of section 31149) the name of the person denied the exemption and the reasons for such denial. The Secretary may meet the requirement of this subparagraph by periodically publishing in the Federal Register the names of persons denied exemptions and the reasons for such denials.

(7) APPLICATIONS TO BE DEALT WITH PROMPTLY.—The Secretary shall grant or deny an exemption request after a thorough review of its safety implications, but in no case later than 180 days after the filing date of such request.

(8) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary shall establish terms and conditions for each exemption to ensure that it will likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption. The Secretary shall monitor the implementation of the exemption to ensure compliance with its terms and conditions.

(9) NOTIFICATION OF STATE COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.—Before the effective date of an exemption, the Secretary shall notify a State safety compliance and enforcement agency, and require the agency to notify the State's roadside inspectors, that a person will be operating pursuant to an exemption and the terms and conditions that apply to the exemption.

(c) PILOT PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may conduct pilot programs to evaluate alternatives to reg-

ulations relating to, or innovative approaches to, motor carrier, commercial motor vehicle, and driver safety. Such pilot programs may include exemptions from a regulation prescribed under this chapter or section 31136 if the pilot program contains, at a minimum, the elements described in paragraph (2). The Secretary shall publish a detailed description of each pilot program, including the exemptions to be considered, and provide notice and an opportunity for public comment before the effective date of the program.

(2) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—In proposing a pilot program and before granting exemptions for purposes of a pilot program, the Secretary shall require, as a condition of approval of the project, that the safety measures in the project are designed to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety that would otherwise be achieved through compliance with the regulations prescribed under this chapter or section 31136. The Secretary shall include, at a minimum, the following elements in each pilot program plan:

(A) A scheduled life of each pilot program of not more than 3 years.

(B) A specific data collection and safety analysis plan that identifies a method for comparison.

(C) A reasonable number of participants necessary to yield statistically valid findings.

(D) An oversight plan to ensure that participants comply with the terms and conditions of participation.

(E) Adequate countermeasures to protect the health and safety of study participants and the general public.

(F) A plan to inform State partners and the public about the pilot program and to identify approved participants to safety compliance and enforcement personnel and to the public.

(3) AUTHORITY TO REVOKE PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary shall immediately revoke participation in a pilot program of a motor carrier, commercial motor vehicle, or driver for failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the pilot program or if continued participation would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of this chapter or section 31136, as the case may be.

(4) AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall immediately terminate a pilot program if its continuation would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of this chapter or section 31136, as the case may be.

(5) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—At the conclusion of each pilot program, the Secretary shall report to Congress the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the program, including suggested amendments to laws and regulations that would enhance motor carrier, commercial motor vehicle, and driver safety and improve compliance with national safety standards.

(d) PREEMPTION OF STATE RULES.—During the time period that a waiver, exemption, or pilot program is in effect under this chapter or sec-

tion 31136, no State shall enforce any law or regulation that conflicts with or is inconsistent with the waiver, exemption, or pilot program with respect to a person operating under the waiver or exemption or participating in the pilot program.

(e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall submit an annual report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives listing the waivers, exemptions, and pilot programs granted under this section, and any impacts on safety.

(f) WEB SITE.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration web site includes a link to the web site established by the Secretary to implement the requirements under sections 31149 and 31315. The link shall be in a clear and conspicuous location on the home page of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration web site and be easily accessible to the public.

(g) LIMITATIONS ON MUNICIPALITY AND COMMERCIAL ZONE EXEMPTIONS AND WAIVERS.—(1) The Secretary may not—

(A) exempt a person or commercial motor vehicle from a regulation related to commercial motor vehicle safety only because the operations of the person or vehicle are entirely in a municipality or commercial zone of a municipality; or

(B) waive application to a person or commercial motor vehicle of a regulation related to commercial motor vehicle safety only because the operations of the person or vehicle are entirely in a municipality or commercial zone of a municipality.

(2) If a person was authorized to operate a commercial motor vehicle in a municipality or commercial zone of a municipality in the United States for the entire period from November 19, 1987, through November 18, 1988, and if the person is otherwise qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle, the person may operate a commercial motor vehicle entirely in a municipality or commercial zone of a municipality notwithstanding—

(A) paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(B) a minimum age requirement of the United States Government for operation of the vehicle; and

(C) a medical or physical condition that—

(i) would prevent an operator from operating a commercial motor vehicle under the commercial motor vehicle safety regulations in title 49, Code of Federal Regulations;

(ii) existed on July 1, 1988;

(iii) has not substantially worsened; and

(iv) does not involve alcohol or drug abuse.

(3) This subsection does not affect a State commercial motor vehicle safety law applicable to intrastate commerce.

(Pub. L. 103–272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1029; Pub. L. 105–178, title IV, §4007(a), June 9, 1998, 112 Stat. 401; Pub. L. 112–141, div. C, title II, §32913, July 6, 2012, 126 Stat. 818; Pub. L. 114–94, div. A, title V, §§5202(1), 5206(a), Dec. 4, 2015, 129 Stat. 1534, 1537.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
31315	49 App.:2711.	Oct. 27, 1986, Pub. L. 99–570, §12013, 100 Stat. 3207–186.

The words “Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter” are omitted as surplus.

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of enactment of this section, referred to in subsec. (b)(5), probably means the date of enactment of Pub. L. 105–178, which amended this section generally and was approved June 9, 1998.

CODIFICATION

The text of section 31136(f) of this title, which was redesignated subsec. (g) and transferred to this section by Pub. L. 114–94, §5202(1), was based on Pub. L. 103–272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1003.

AMENDMENTS

2015—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 114–94, §5206(a)(1), substituted “this subsection” for “paragraph (3)” and struck out at end “An exemption may be granted for no longer than 2 years from its approval date and may be renewed upon application to the Secretary.”

Subsec. (b)(2) to (9). Pub. L. 114–94, §5206(a)(2), (3), added pars. (2) and (3) and redesignated former pars (2) to (7) as (4) to (9), respectively.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 114–94, §5202(1), redesignated subsec. (f) of section 31136 of this title as (g) and transferred it to this section. See Codification note above.

2012—Subsec. (b)(4)(A). Pub. L. 112–141, §32913(a)(1), inserted “(or, in the case of a request for an exemption from the physical qualification standards for commercial motor vehicle drivers, post on a web site established by the Secretary to implement the requirements of section 31149)” after “Federal Register”.

Subsec. (b)(4)(B). Pub. L. 112–141, §32913(a)(2), amended subpar. (B) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “Upon granting a request for exemption, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register the name of the person granted the exemption, the provisions from which the person will be exempt, the effective period, and all terms and conditions of the exemption.”

Subsec. (b)(4)(C). Pub. L. 112–141, §32913(a)(3), inserted “(or, in the case of a request for an exemption from the physical qualification standards for commercial motor vehicle drivers, post on a web site established by the Secretary to implement the requirements of section 31149)” after “Federal Register”.

Subsec. (b)(7). Pub. L. 112–141, §32913(b), amended par. (7) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “Before granting a request for exemption, the Secretary shall notify State safety compliance and enforcement personnel, including roadside inspectors, and the public that a person will be operating pursuant to an exemption and any terms and conditions that will apply to the exemption.”

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 112–141, §32913(c), struck out “in the Federal Register” after “shall publish”.

Subsecs. (e), (f). Pub. L. 112–141, §32913(d), added subsecs. (e) and (f).

1998—Pub. L. 105–178 amended section catchline and text generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “After notice and an opportunity for comment, the Secretary of Transportation may waive any part of this chapter or a regulation prescribed under this chapter as it applies to a class of individuals or commercial motor vehicles if the Secretary decides the waiver is not contrary to the public interest and does not diminish the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles. A waiver under this section shall be published in the Federal Register with reasons for the waiver.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2015 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 114–94 effective Oct. 1, 2015, see section 1003 of Pub. L. 114–94, set out as a note

under section 5313 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2012 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 112-141 effective Oct. 1, 2012, see section 3(a) of Pub. L. 112-141, set out as an Effective and Termination Dates of 2012 Amendment note under section 101 of Title 23, Highways.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXEMPTIONS

Pub. L. 114-94, div. A, title V, §5206(b), Dec. 4, 2015, 129 Stat. 1537, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary [of Transportation] shall make permanent the following limited exemptions:

“(A) Perishable construction products, as published in the Federal Register on April 2, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 17819).

“(B) Transport of commercial bee hives, as published in the Federal Register on June 19, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 35425).

“(C) Safe transport of livestock, as published in the Federal Register on June 12, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 33584).

“(2) ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXEMPTIONS.—Any exemption from any provision of the regulations under part 395 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, that is in effect on the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 4, 2015]—

“(A) except as otherwise provided in section 31315(b) of title 49, shall be valid for a period of 5 years from the date such exemption was granted; and

“(B) may be subject to renewal under section 31315(b)(2) of title 49, United States Code.”

COMMERCIAL DRIVER PILOT PROGRAM

Pub. L. 114-94, div. A, title V, §5404, Dec. 4, 2015, 129 Stat. 1549, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary [of Transportation] shall establish a pilot program under section 31315(c) of title 49, United States Code, to study the feasibility, benefits, and safety impacts of allowing a covered driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce.

“(b) DATA COLLECTION.—The Secretary shall collect and analyze data relating to accidents in which—

“(1) a covered driver participating in the pilot program is involved; and

“(2) a driver under the age of 21 operating a commercial motor vehicle in intrastate commerce is involved.

“(c) LIMITATIONS.—A driver participating in the pilot program may not—

“(1) transport—

“(A) passengers; or

“(B) hazardous cargo; or

“(2) operate a vehicle in special configuration.

“(d) WORKING GROUP.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall conduct, monitor, and evaluate the pilot program in consultation with a working group to be established by the Secretary consisting of representatives of the armed forces, industry, drivers, safety advocacy organizations, and State licensing and enforcement officials.

“(2) DUTIES.—The working group shall review the data collected under subsection (b) and provide recommendations to the Secretary on the feasibility, benefits, and safety impacts of allowing a covered driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce.

“(e) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the pilot program is concluded, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the findings of the pilot program and the recommendations of the working group.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) ACCIDENT.—The term ‘accident’ has the meaning given that term in section 390.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

“(2) ARMED FORCES.—The term ‘armed forces’ has the meaning given that term in section 101(a) of title 10, United States Code.

“(3) COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE.—The term ‘commercial motor vehicle’ has the meaning given that term in section 31301 of title 49, United States Code.

“(4) COVERED DRIVER.—The term ‘covered driver’ means an individual who is—

“(A) between the ages of 18 and 21;

“(B) a member or former member of the—

“(i) armed forces; or

“(ii) reserve components (as defined in section 31305(d)(2) of title 49, United States Code, as added by this Act); and

“(C) qualified in a Military Occupational Specialty to operate a commercial motor vehicle or similar vehicle.”

PROTECTION OF EXISTING EXEMPTIONS

For provisions making amendment by section 4007 of Pub. L. 105-178 inapplicable to or otherwise not affecting waiver, exemption, or pilot program in effect the day before June 9, 1998, under this chapter or section 31136(e) of this title, see section 4007(d) of Pub. L. 105-178, set out as a note under section 31136 of this title.

§ 31316. Limitation on statutory construction

This chapter does not affect the authority of the Secretary of Transportation to regulate commercial motor vehicle safety involving motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of less than 26,001 pounds or a lesser gross vehicle weight rating the Secretary decides is appropriate under section 31301(4)(A) of this title.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1029.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
31316	49 App.:2714.	Oct. 27, 1986, Pub. L. 99-570, §12017, 100 Stat. 3207-187.

The words “This chapter does not affect” are substituted for “Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to diminish, limit, or otherwise affect” to eliminate unnecessary words.

§ 31317. Procedure for prescribing regulations

Regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Transportation to carry out this chapter (except section 31307) shall be prescribed under section 553 of title 5 without regard to sections 556 and 557 of title 5.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1029.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
31317	49 App.:2715.	Oct. 27, 1986, Pub. L. 99-570, §12018, 100 Stat. 3207-187.

The text of 49 App.:2715(a) is omitted as surplus because of 49:322(a). The words “(except section 31307)” are added because the source provisions restated in this section do not apply to the source provisions restated in section 31307 of the revised title.

CHAPTER 315—MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY

Sec. 31501. Definitions.