

§ 398.4

49 CFR Ch. III (10-1-24 Edition)

(4) *Eyesight.* Visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye either without glasses or by correction with glasses; form field of vision in the horizontal meridian shall not be less than a total of 140 degrees; ability to distinguish colors red, green and yellow; drivers requiring correction by glasses shall wear properly prescribed glasses at all times when driving.

(5) *Hearing.* Hearing shall not be less than 10/20 in the better ear, for conversational tones, without a hearing aid.

(6) *Liquor, narcotics and drugs.* Shall not be addicted to the use of narcotics or habit forming drugs, or the excessive use of alcoholic beverages or liquors.

(7) *Initial and periodic physical examination of drivers.* No person shall drive nor shall any motor carrier require or permit any person to drive any motor vehicle unless within the immediately preceding 36 month period such person shall have been physically examined and shall have been certified in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (b)(8) of this section by a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy as meeting the requirements of this subsection.

(8) *Certificate of physical examination.* Every motor carrier shall have in its files at its principal place of business for every driver employed or used by it a legible certificate of a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy based on a physical examination as required by paragraph (b)(7) of this section or a legible copy thereof, and every driver shall have in his/her possession while driving, such a certificate or a copy thereof covering himself/herself.

(9) *Doctor's certificate.* The doctor's certificate shall certify as follows:

DOCTOR'S CERTIFICATE

(Driver of Migrant Workers)

This is to certify that I have this day examined _____ in accordance with § 398.3(b) of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and that I find him/her

Qualified under said rules

Qualified only when wearing glasses

I have kept on file in my office a completed examination.

(Date)

(Place)

(Signature of examining doctor)

(Address of doctor)
Signature of driver _____
Address of driver _____

(c) *Minimum age and experience requirements.* No person shall drive, nor shall any motor carrier require or permit any person to drive, any motor vehicle unless such person possesses the following minimum qualifications:

(1) *Age.* Minimum age shall be 21 years.

(2) *Driving skill.* Experience in driving some type of motor vehicle (including private automobiles) for not less than one year, including experience throughout the four seasons.

(3) *Knowledge of regulations.* Familiarity with the rules and regulations prescribed in this part pertaining to the driving of motor vehicles.

(4) *Knowledge of English.* Every driver shall be able to read and speak the English language sufficiently to understand highway traffic signs and signals and directions given in English and to respond to official inquiries.

(5) *Driver's permit.* Possession of a valid permit qualifying the driver to operate the type of vehicle driven by him/her in the jurisdiction by which the permit is issued.

[33 FR 19765, Dec. 25, 1968, as amended at 40 FR 44557, Sept. 29, 1975; 83 FR 16227, Apr. 16, 2018]

§ 398.4 Driving of motor vehicles.

(a) *Compliance required.* Every motor carrier shall comply with the requirements of this part, shall instruct its officers, agents, representatives and drivers with respect thereto, and shall take such measures as are necessary to ensure compliance therewith by such persons. All officers, agents, representatives, drivers, and employees of motor carriers directly concerned with the management, maintenance, operation, or driving of motor vehicles, shall comply with and be conversant with the requirements of this part.

(b) *Driving rules to be obeyed.* Every motor vehicle shall be driven in accordance with the laws, ordinances, and regulations of the jurisdiction in

which it is being operated, unless such laws, ordinances and regulations are at variance with specific regulations of this Administration which impose a greater affirmative obligation or restraint.

(c) *Driving while ill or fatigued.* No driver shall drive or be required or permitted to drive a motor vehicle while his/her ability or alertness is so impaired through fatigue, illness, or any other cause as to make it unsafe for him/her to begin or continue to drive, except in case of grave emergency where the hazard to passengers would be increased by observance of this section and then only to the nearest point at which the safety of passengers is assured.

(d) *Alcoholic beverages.* No driver shall drive or be required or permitted to drive a motor vehicle, be in active control of any such vehicle, or go on duty or remain on duty, when under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or liquor, regardless of its alcoholic content, nor shall any driver drink any such beverage or liquor while on duty.

(e) *Schedules to conform with speed limits.* No motor carrier shall permit nor require the operation of any motor vehicle between points in such period of time as would necessitate the vehicle being operated at speeds greater than those prescribed by the jurisdictions in or through which the vehicle is being operated.

(f) *Equipment and emergency devices.* No motor vehicle shall be driven unless the driver thereof shall have satisfied himself/herself that the following parts, accessories, and emergency devices are in good working order; nor shall any driver fail to use or make use of such parts, accessories, and devices when and as needed:

- Service brakes, including trailer brake connections.
- Parking (hand) brake.
- Steering mechanism.
- Lighting devices and reflectors.
- Tires.
- Horn.
- Windshield wiper or wipers.
- Rear-vision mirror or mirrors.
- Coupling devices.
- Fire extinguisher, at least one properly mounted.
- Road warning devices, at least one red burning fusee and at least three flares (oil burn-

ing pot torches), red electric lanterns, or red emergency reflectors.

(g) *Safe loading—(1) Distribution and securing of load.* No motor vehicle shall be driven nor shall any motor carrier permit or require any motor vehicle to be driven if it is so loaded, or if the load thereon is so improperly distributed or so inadequately secured, as to prevent its safe operation.

(2) *Doors, tarpaulins, tailgates and other equipment.* No motor vehicle shall be driven unless the tailgate, tailboard, tarpaulins, doors, all equipment and rigging used in the operation of said vehicle, and all means of fastening the load, are securely in place.

(3) *Interference with driver.* No motor vehicle shall be driven when any object obscures his/her view ahead, or to the right or left sides, or to the rear, or interferes with the free movement of his/her arms or legs, or prevents his/her free and ready access to the accessories required for emergencies, or prevents the free and ready exit of any person from the cab or driver's compartment.

(4) *Property on motor vehicles.* No vehicle transporting persons and property shall be driven unless such property is stowed in a manner which will assure:

(i) Unrestricted freedom of motion to the driver for proper operation of the vehicle;

(ii) Unobstructed passage to all exits by any person; and

(iii) Adequate protection to passengers and others from injury as a result of the displacement or falling of such articles.

(5) *Maximum passengers on motor vehicles.* No motor vehicle shall be driven if the total number of passengers exceeds the seating capacity which will be permitted on seats prescribed in §398.5(f) when that section is effective. All passengers carried on such vehicle shall remain seated while the motor vehicle is in motion.

(h) *Rest and meal stops.* Every carrier shall provide for reasonable rest stops at least once between meal stops. Meal stops shall be made at intervals not to exceed six hours and shall be for a period of not less than 30 minutes duration.

(i) *Kinds of motor vehicles in which workers may be transported.* Workers may be transported in or on only the

§ 398.5

following types of motor vehicles: A bus, a truck with no trailer attached, or a semitrailer attached to a truck-tractor provided that no other trailer is attached to the semitrailer. Closed vans without windows or means to assure ventilation shall not be used.

(j) *Limitation on distance of travel in trucks.* Any truck when used for the transportation of migrant workers, if such workers are being transported in excess of 600 miles, shall be stopped for a period of not less than eight consecutive hours either before or upon completion of 600 miles travel, and either before or upon completion of any subsequent 600 miles travel to provide rest for drivers and passengers.

(k) *Lighting devices and reflectors.* No motor vehicle shall be driven when any of the required lamps or reflectors are obscured by the tailboard, by any and all lighting devices required by subpart B of part 393 of this subchapter shall be lighted during darkness or at any other time when there is not sufficient light to render vehicles and persons visible upon the highway at a distance of 500 feet.

(1) *Ignition of fuel; prevention.* No driver or any employee of a motor carrier shall:

(1) Fuel a motor vehicle with the engine running, except when it is necessary to run the engine to fuel the vehicle;

(2) Smoke or expose any open flame in the vicinity of a vehicle being fueled;

(3) Fuel a motor vehicle unless the nozzle of the fuel hose is continuously in contact with the intake pipe of the fuel tank;

(4) Permit any other person to engage in such activities as would be likely to result in fire or explosion.

(m) *Reserve fuel.* No supply of fuel for the propulsion of any motor vehicle or for the operation of any accessory thereof shall be carried on the motor vehicle except in a properly mounted fuel tank or tanks.

(n) *Driving by unauthorized person.* Except in case of emergency, no driver shall permit a motor vehicle to which he/she is assigned to be driven by any person not authorized to drive such vehicle by the motor carrier in control thereof.

49 CFR Ch. III (10-1-24 Edition)

(o) *Protection of passengers from weather.* No motor vehicle shall be driven while transporting passengers unless the passengers therein are protected from inclement weather conditions such as rain, snow, or sleet, by use of the top or protective devices required by § 398.5(f).

(p) *Unattended vehicles; precautions.* No motor vehicle shall be left unattended by the driver until the parking brake has been securely set, the wheels chocked, and all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent the movement of such vehicle.

(q) *Railroad grade crossings; stopping required; sign on rear of vehicle.* Every motor vehicle shall, upon approaching any railroad grade crossing, make a full stop not more than 50 feet, nor less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of such railroad grade crossing, and shall not proceed until due caution has been taken to ascertain that the course is clear; except that a full stop need not be made at:

(1) A street car crossing within a business or residence district of a municipality;

(2) A railroad grade crossing where a police officer or a traffic-control signal (not a railroad flashing signal) directs traffic to proceed;

(3) An abandoned or exempted grade crossing which is clearly marked as such by or with the consent of the proper state authority, when such marking can be read from the driver's position.

All such motor vehicles shall display a sign on the rear reading, "This Vehicle Stops at Railroad Crossings."

[33 FR 19765, Dec. 25, 1968, as amended at 40 FR 44557, Sept. 29, 1975; 86 FR 57077, Oct. 14, 2021]

§ 398.5 Parts and accessories necessary for safe operation.

(a) *Compliance.* Every motor carrier and its officers, agents, drivers, representatives and employees directly concerned with the installation and maintenance of equipment and accessories shall comply and be conversant with the requirements and specifications of this part, and no motor carrier shall operate any motor vehicle, or