

Administration's (OSHA) permissible exposure limit of 50 ppm for an 8 hour TWA and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) permissible exposure limit of 35 ppm for a 10 hour TWA. Under "worst-case conditions," Ford measured the CO level to be 17 ppm for the Model year 2015 Transit, well below the EPA, OSHA, and NIOSH limits.

Additionally Ford stated that it has internal requirements to establish the appropriate clearance required between a vehicle and the ground to meet a minimum level of on-road functionality. Ford has specific departure angle requirements for their vehicle to reduce tailpipe contact with the ground, curbs, ramps, etc., during various driving modes which may result in damage to the exhaust system that may adversely affect the exhaust function.

FMCSA published a notice of the application in the **Federal Register** on April 17, 2015, and asked for public comment (80 FR 21294).

Comments

The Agency received one comment, from an anonymous commenter. The commenter expressed concern "that over time after the vehicle is initially manufactured, the exhaust system will be subject to wear and tear and as such may not perform to the same standard that it did upon original manufacture. Although Ford was able to demonstrate that the system was able to detect potentially dangerous situations with the exhaust at the time of manufacture, we will truly have no understanding of how that system will perform 10 or 15 years later."

FMCSA Response

FMCSA acknowledges the commenter's concern that exhaust systems, like other vehicle components and equipment, are subject to wear and tear as vehicles age. However, 49 CFR part 396 requires a motor carrier to systematically inspect, repair, and maintain all motor vehicles subject to its control (§ 396.3(a)), and ensure that all parts and accessories are in safe and proper operating condition at all times (§ 396.3(a)(1)). Further, § 396.17 requires every CMV to be inspected at least once every 12 months in accordance with the provisions of Appendix G to Subchapter B of Chapter III of the FMCSRs, "Minimum Periodic Inspection Standards," which includes a review of the vehicle's exhaust system. Finally, FMCSA expects that, as these exhaust systems wear out, vehicle owners will replace them with exhaust systems identical or equivalent to the original

equipment, ensuring an equivalent level of performance.

As noted below, this temporary exemption is valid for a limited period of 2 years, and any party possessing information that would demonstrate that motor carriers using Ford Transit-based CMVs are not achieving the requisite statutory level of safety should immediately notify FMCSA. The Agency will evaluate any such information and, if safety is being compromised or if the continuation of the exemption is not consistent with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), will take immediate steps to revoke the exemption.

FMCSA Decision

The FMCSA has evaluated the Ford exemption application. The Agency believes that granting the temporary exemption to allow the operation of Model Year 2015 Ford Transit-based gas bus models (of all gross vehicle weight ratings), vans over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, and corresponding future Transit-based models of the same design produced during the effective period of the exemption will provide a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety achieved without the exemption. Ford conducted performance-based testing that demonstrates that the design of the exhaust system for the Model Year 2015 and later Ford Transit CMVs (1) results in CO exposure limits that are well below EPA, OSHA, and NIOSH established thresholds, and (2) will maintain a level of safety that is equivalent to the level of safety achieved without the exemption.

Terms and Conditions for the Exemption

The Agency hereby grants the exemption for a 2-year period, beginning August 12, 2015 and ending August 14, 2017. During the temporary exemption period, motor carriers will be allowed to operate Model Year 2015 Ford Transit-based gas bus models (of all gross vehicle weight ratings), vans over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, and corresponding future Transit-based models of the same design produced during the effective period of the exemption that do not meet the exhaust system location requirements. The exemption will be valid for 2 years unless rescinded earlier by FMCSA. The exemption will be rescinded if: (1) Motor carriers and/or commercial motor vehicles fail 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(b).

Interested parties possessing information that would demonstrate that motor carriers using Ford Transit-based CMVs are not achieving the requisite statutory level of safety should immediately notify FMCSA. The Agency will evaluate any such information and, if safety is being compromised or if the continuation of the exemption is not consistent with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), will take immediate steps to revoke the exemption.

Preemption

During the period the exemption is in effect, no State shall enforce any law or regulation that conflicts with or is inconsistent with this exemption with respect to a person operating a vehicle covered by the exemption.

Issued on August 5, 2015.

T.F. Scott Darling, III,
Chief Counsel.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2015-0048]

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 26 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 June 6, 2015. The exemptions expire on June 6, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles A. Horan, III, Director, Carrier, Driver and Vehicle Safety Standards,

(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. If you have questions on 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., 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 May 6, 2015, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of exemption applications from certain individuals, and requested comments from the public (80 FR 26139). That notice listed 26 applicants' case histories. The 26 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 26 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 at 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 vision limitation and demonstrated their ability to drive safely. The 26 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 prosthetic eye, corneal scarring, complete loss of vision, amblyopia pseudophakia secondary to a cataract, glaucoma, and anisometropic amblyopic correction, field of vision loss, scarring, esotropia, strabismic amblyopia, hyphema, strabismus, cataract, torn retina, macular scar, retinal scar, and retinal detachment. In most cases, their eye conditions were not recently developed. Eighteen of the applicants were either born with their vision impairments or have had them since childhood.

The eight individuals that sustained their vision conditions as adults have had it for a range of four to 30 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 26 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 from three to 40 years. In the past three years, no drivers were

involved in crashes, and two 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 May 6, 2015 notice (80 FR 26139).

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 26 applicants, no drivers were involved in crashes, and two were convicted of moving violations 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 26 applicants listed in the notice of May 6, 2015 (80 FR 26139).

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 26 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 no comments in this proceeding.

IV. Conclusion

Based upon its evaluation of the 26 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)):

R.J. Bauernfeind (NY)
Ralph H. Bushman (IL)

Stephen M. Cook (PA)
Roderick Croft (FL)
Jeffrey S. Daniel (VA)
Lawrence M. Davis (VT)
Bobby C. Floyd (TN)
Jayme L. Gilbert (NY)
Jesse M. Greene (TN)
David A. Hayes (GA)
George E. Holbrook (MA)
James T. Johnson, Jr. (KY)
Robert W. Kleve (IA)
Bruce E. Koehn (KS)
Corey S. Kuborn (IL)
Collin C. Longacre (PA)
Raymond W. Meier (WA)
Michael L. Penrod (IA)
Harry M. Pierson, Jr. (OR)
Daniel A. Pyle (PA)
David P. Ramos (CA)
Jimmy L. Stevens (SC)
David B. Stone (OK)
Dale G. Stringer (TX)
Carlyle D. Strong (NE)
Michael J. Tauriac, Jr. (LA)

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: July 28, 2015.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2006–25246; FMCSA–2013–0028; FMCSA–2013–0029; FMCSA–2013–0030]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

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

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

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to renew the exemptions from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for 20 individuals. FMCSA has statutory