

data. For non-CDL holders, the Agency reviews the driving records from the State Driver's Licensing Agency. These factors provide an adequate basis for predicting each driver's ability to continue to safely operate a CMV in interstate commerce. Therefore, FMCSA concludes that extending the exemption for each renewal applicant for a period of 2 years is likely to achieve a level of safety equal to that existing without the exemption.

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), the following groups of drivers received renewed exemptions in the month of December and are discussed below.

As of December 16, 2019, and in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), the following five individuals have satisfied the renewal conditions for obtaining an exemption from the epilepsy and seizure disorders prohibition in the FMCSRs for interstate CMV drivers:

William Brown (NC)
Robert J. Forney (WI)
Curtis Alan Hartman (MD)
Wendell F. Headley (MO)
Marion Legg (MD)

The drivers were included in docket numbers FMCSA–2015–0115, FMCSA–2015–0116, and FMCSA–2015–0119. Their exemptions are applicable as of December 16, 2019, and will expire on December 16, 2021.

As of December 23, 2019, and in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), the following five individuals have satisfied the renewal conditions for obtaining an exemption from the epilepsy and seizure disorders prohibition in the FMCSRs for interstate CMV drivers:

Gary Freeman (WI)
Aaron Gillette (SD)
David Kestner (VA)
Chad Smith (MA)
Trevor Williams (MN)

The drivers were included in docket number FMCSA–2006–25854, FMCSA–2013–0108, and FMCSA–2014–0382. Their exemptions are applicable as of December 23, 2019, and will expire on December 23, 2021.

As of December 28, 2019, and in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), the following individual has satisfied the renewal conditions for obtaining an exemption from the epilepsy and seizure disorders prohibition in the FMCSRs for interstate CMV drivers: David Pamperin (WI).

This driver was included in docket number FMCSA–2017–0252. His exemption is applicable as of December 28, 2019, and will expire on December 28, 2021.

V. Conditions and Requirements

The exemptions are extended subject to the following conditions: (1) Each driver must remain seizure-free and maintain a stable treatment during the 2-year exemption period; (2) each driver must submit annual reports from their treating physicians attesting to the stability of treatment and that the driver has remained seizure-free; (3) each driver must undergo an annual medical examination by a certified ME, as defined by § 390.5; and (4) each driver must provide a copy of the annual medical certification to the employer for retention in the driver's qualification file, or keep a copy of his/her driver's qualification file if he/she is self-employed. 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 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(b).

VI. Preemption

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

VII. Conclusion

Based on its evaluation of the 11 exemption applications, FMCSA renews the exemptions of the aforementioned drivers from the epilepsy and seizure disorders prohibition in § 391.41(b)(8). In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), each exemption will be valid for 2 years unless revoked earlier by FMCSA.

Issued on: December 20, 2019.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2019–0019]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

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

ACTION: Notice of applications for exemption; request for comments.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces receipt of applications from 11 individuals for an exemption from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in interstate commerce. If granted, the exemptions will enable these individuals to operate CMVs in interstate commerce without meeting the vision requirement in one eye.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before January 29, 2020.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA–2019–0019 using any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2019-0019>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail:* Docket Operations; 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., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

- *Fax:* (202) 493–2251.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. See the “Public Participation” portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for instructions on submitting comments.

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 W64–224, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions regarding viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Docket Operations, (202) 366–9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Participation

A. Submitting Comments

If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this notice (Docket No. FMCSA–2019–0019), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation. You may submit your comments and

material online or by fax, mail, or hand delivery, but please use only one of these means. FMCSA recommends that you include your name and a mailing address, an email address, or a phone number in the body of your document so that FMCSA can contact you if there are questions regarding your submission.

To submit your comment online, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2019-0019>. Click on the "Comment Now!" button and type your comment into the text box on the following screen. Choose whether you are submitting your comment as an individual or on behalf of a third party and then submit.

If you submit your comments by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit comments by mail and would like to know that they reached the facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope.

FMCSA will consider all comments and material received during the comment period.

B. Viewing Documents and Comments

To view comments, as well as any documents mentioned in this notice as being available in the docket, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2019-0019> and choose the document to review. If you do not have access to the internet, you may view the docket online by visiting the Docket Operations in Room W12-140 on the ground floor of the DOT West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

C. 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

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA may grant an exemption from the FMCSRs for no longer than a 5-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 5-year period. FMCSA grants medical exemptions from the FMCSRs for a 2-year period to align with the maximum duration of a driver's medical certification.

The 11 individuals listed in this notice have requested an exemption from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10). Accordingly, the Agency will evaluate the qualifications of each applicant to determine whether granting an exemption will achieve the required level of safety mandated by statute.

The physical qualification standard for drivers regarding vision found in § 391.41(b)(10) states that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV 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 standard red, green, and amber.

On July 16, 1992, the Agency first published the criteria for the Vision Waiver Program, which listed the conditions and reporting standards that CMV drivers approved for participation would need to meet (57 FR 31458). The current Vision Exemption Program was established in 1998, following the enactment of amendments to the statutes governing exemptions made by § 4007 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), Public Law 105-178, 112 Stat. 107, 401 (June 9, 1998). Vision exemptions are considered under the procedures established in 49 CFR part 381 subpart C, on a case-by-case basis upon application by CMV drivers who do not meet the vision standards of § 391.41(b)(10).

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 in intrastate commerce with the vision deficiency for the past three 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 <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=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 demonstrated the driving performance of experienced monocular drivers in the program is better than that of all CMV drivers collectively.¹ 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 three consecutive years of data, comparing the experiences of drivers in the first two years with their experiences in the final year.

III. Qualifications of Applicants

Brian K. Boyd

Mr. Boyd, 56, has had amblyopia in his left eye since childhood. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/20, and in his left eye, 20/150. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, "In my medical opinion Mr. Boyd's condition is stable, non-deteriorating and has sufficient vision to

¹ A thorough discussion of this issue may be found in a FHWA final rule published in the *Federal Register* on March 26, 1996 and available on the internet at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1996-03-26/pdf/96-7226.pdf>.

perform the driving tasks required to operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Boyd reported that he has driven straight trucks for two years, accumulating 21,000 miles, and tractor-trailer combinations for 20 years, accumulating 1.98 million miles. He holds a Class AM CDL from Texas. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Gary E. Collins

Mr. Collins, 59, has had amblyopia in his left eye since childhood. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/20, and in his left eye, 20/200. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, “In my medical opinion, Mr. Collins has sufficient vision to perform the driving tasks required to operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Collins reported that he has driven tractor-trailer combinations for 37 years, accumulating 2.4 million miles. He holds a Class AM CDL from Georgia. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Anthony A. DeCarlo

Mr. DeCarlo, 58, has had a retinal vein occlusion in his right eye since 2015. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/400, and in his left eye, 20/20. Following an examination in 2019, his ophthalmologist stated, “In my medical opinion, the patient has sufficient vision to perform the driving tasks required to operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. DeCarlo reported that he has driven tractor-trailer combinations for 30 years, accumulating 1.9 million miles. He holds a Class A CDL from North Carolina. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Darrel G. Jenkins

Mr. Jenkins, 61, has a prosthetic in his right eye due to a tumor in 2015. The visual acuity in his right eye is no light perception, and in his left eye, 20/20. Following an examination in 2019, his ophthalmologist stated, “In my professional medical opinion, the patient is visually able to safely operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Jenkins reported that he has driven tractor-trailer combinations for 41 years, accumulating 3 million miles. He holds a Class DA CDL from Kentucky. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Travis London

Mr. London, 43, has had optic neuropathy in his right eye since 2006. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/200, and in his left eye, 20/20. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, “In my opinion, I feel there is no ocular contraindication to driving a commercial or recreational vehicle.” Mr. London reported that he has driven straight trucks for six years, accumulating 30,000 miles, and tractor-trailer combinations for 15 years, accumulating 1.13 million miles. He holds a Class A3 CDL from North Carolina. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Vincent M. Najera

Mr. Najera, 62, has had amblyopia in his right eye since birth. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/70, and in his left eye, 20/20. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, “Mr. Najera has sufficient vision to perform the driving tasks required to operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Najera reported that he has driven straight trucks for 25 years, accumulating 375,000 miles, and tractor-trailer combinations for 25 years, accumulating 1.8 million miles. He holds a Class A CDL from California. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Jameson A. Otto

Mr. Otto, 44, has had optic nerve hypoplasia in his left eye since birth. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/20, and in his left eye, no light perception. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, “I certify that he has sufficient vision to operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Otto reported that he has driven straight trucks for one year, accumulating 18,000 miles, and tractor-trailer combinations for seven years, accumulating 672,000 miles. He holds a Class A CDL from California. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Gerardo A. Padron

Mr. Padron, 39, has a corneal scar in his left eye due to an infection in childhood. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/20, and in his left eye, 20/50. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, “In my opinion, Mr. Padron Portilla [sic] has sufficient vision to perform the driving tasks required to operate a commercial

vehicle.” Mr. Padron reported that he has driven straight trucks for 13 years, accumulating 52,000 miles. He holds an operator’s license from Florida. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Charles J. Rowsey

Mr. Rowsey, 56, has a prosthetic in his right eye due to a traumatic incident in 1985. The visual acuity in his right eye is no light perception, and in his left eye, 20/20. Following an examination in 2019, his optometrist stated, “In my opinion, Mr. Rowsey has sufficient vision to perform the task required to operate a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Rowsey reported that he has driven straight trucks for 32 years, accumulating 2.2 million miles, and tractor-trailer combinations for 32 years, accumulating 1 million miles. He holds a Class A CDL from North Carolina. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Kenneth C. Stump

Mr. Stump, 50, has a macular scar in his left eye since 2016. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/20, and in his left eye, 20/100. Following an examination in 2019, his ophthalmologist stated, “In my opinion the patient has sufficient vision to perform the driving tasks required to operate a commercial vehicle as long as he is wearing his glasses at the time.” Mr. Stump reported that he has driven tractor-trailer combinations for six years, accumulating 1 million miles. He holds a Class A CDL from Florida. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

Jose M. Vasquez

Mr. Vasquez, 50, has macular scarring in his left eye due to an infection in childhood. The visual acuity in his right eye is 20/20, and in his left eye, counting fingers. Following an examination in 2019, his ophthalmologist stated, “Based on the Snellen Visual Acuity Scale, and my professional opinion, the patient has sufficient vision to perform tasks of operating a commercial vehicle.” Mr. Vasquez reported that he has driven straight trucks for 18 years, accumulating 129,000 miles. He holds a Class B CDL from New York. His driving record for the last three years shows no crashes and no convictions for moving violations in a CMV.

IV. Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on the exemption petitions described in this notice. We will consider all comments and material received before the close of business on the closing date indicated under the **DATES** section of the notice.

Issued on: December 20, 2019.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

[FR Doc. 2019–28161 Filed 12–27–19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2014–0385; FMCSA–2014–0387; FMCSA–2017–0058]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Hearing

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

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

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to renew exemptions for 34 individuals from the hearing requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) for interstate commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers. The exemptions enable these hard of hearing and deaf individuals to continue to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

DATES: The exemptions were applicable on December 26, 2019. The exemptions expire on December 26, 2021. Comments must be received on or before January 29, 2020.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA–2014–0385, FMCSA–2014–0387, or FMCSA–2017–0058 using any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2014-0385> or <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2014-0387> or <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2017-0058>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail:* Docket Operations; 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., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

- *Fax:* (202) 493–2251.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. See the “Public Participation” portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for instructions on submitting comments.

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 W64–224, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions regarding viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Docket Operations, (202) 366–9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Participation

A. Submitting Comments

If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this notice (Docket No. FMCSA–2014–0385; FMCSA–2014–0387; FMCSA–2017–0058), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation. You may submit your comments and material online or by fax, mail, or hand delivery, but please use only one of these means. FMCSA recommends that you include your name and a mailing address, an email address, or a phone number in the body of your document so that FMCSA can contact you if there are questions regarding your submission.

To submit your comment online, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2014-0385> or <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2014-0387> or <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2017-0058>. Click on the “Comment Now!” button and type your comment into the text box on the following screen. Choose whether you are submitting your comment as an individual or on behalf of a third party and then submit.

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B. Viewing Documents and Comments

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C. Privacy Act

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II. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA may grant an exemption from the FMCSRs for no longer than a 5-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 5-year period. FMCSA grants medical exemptions from the FMCSRs for a 2-year period to align with the maximum duration of a driver’s medical certification.

The physical qualification standard for drivers regarding hearing found in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11) states that a person is physically qualified to drive 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.