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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-00-7165, FMCSA-04-19477]

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 authority to exempt individuals from the vision requirement if the exemptions granted will not compromise safety. The Agency has concluded that granting these exemptions will provide a level of safety that will be equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety maintained without the exemptions for these commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers.

DATES: This decision is effective January 14, 2007. Comments must be received on or before February 8, 2007.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket Management System (DMS) Docket Numbers FMCSA-00-7165, FMCSA-04-19477, using any of the following methods.

- *Web Site:* <http://dmses.dot.gov>.

Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site.

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

- *Mail:* Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- *Hand Delivery:* Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions must include the Agency name and docket

numbers for this Notice. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://dms.dot.gov>, including any personal information provided. Please see the Privacy Act heading for further information.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time or Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The DMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. If you want us to notify you that we received your comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard or print the acknowledgement page that appears after submitting comments on-line.

Privacy Act: Anyone may search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or of the person signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review the Department of Transportation's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477; Apr. 11, 2000). This information is also available at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Mary D. Gunnels, Chief, Physical Qualifications Division, (202) 366-4001, maggi.gunnels@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 8301, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Exemption Decision

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may renew an exemption from the vision requirements in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), which applies to drivers of CMVs in interstate commerce, for a two-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 procedures for requesting an exemption (including renewals) are set out in 49 CFR part 381. This notice addresses 20 individuals who have requested renewal of their exemptions in a timely manner. FMCSA has evaluated these 20 applications for renewal on their merits and decided to extend each exemption for a renewable two-year period. They are:

Johnny Becerra
Ross E. Burroughs
Lester W. Carter
Larry Chinn
Christopher L. DePuy
John B. Ethridge
Larry J. Folkerts
Randolph D. Hall
Richard T. Hatchel
Paul W. Hunter
Robert L. LaFollette
Ray P. Lenz
Michael B. McClure
Lamont S. McCord
Francis M. McMullin
Joe L. Meredith, Jr.
Norman Mullins
Harold W. Mumford
Clarence H. Redding
David J. Triplett

These exemptions are extended subject to the following conditions: (1) That each individual have a physical examination every year (a) by an ophthalmologist or optometrist who attests that the vision in the better eye continues to meet the standard 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 and retain a copy of the certification on his/her person while driving for presentation to a duly authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement official. Each exemption will be valid for two years unless rescinded earlier by FMCSA. 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.

Basis for Renewing Exemptions

Under 49 U.S.C. 31315(b)(1), an exemption may be granted for no longer than two years from its approval date and may be renewed upon application for additional two year periods. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, each of the 20 applicants has satisfied the entry conditions for obtaining an exemption from the vision requirements (65 FR 33406; 65 FR 57234; 69 FR 64806; 70 FR 2705). Each of these 20 applicants has requested timely renewal of the exemption and

has submitted evidence showing that the vision in the better eye continues to meet the standard specified at 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) and that the vision impairment is stable. In addition, a review of each record of safety while driving with the respective vision deficiencies over the past two years indicates each applicant continues to meet the vision exemption standards. These factors provide an adequate basis for predicting each driver's ability to continue to drive safely in interstate commerce. Therefore, FMCSA concludes that extending the exemption for each renewal applicant for a period of two years is likely to achieve a level of safety equal to that existing without the exemption.

Request for Comments

FMCSA will review comments received at any time concerning a particular driver's safety record and determine if the continuation of the exemption is consistent with the requirements at 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315. However, FMCSA requests that interested parties with specific data concerning the safety records of these drivers submit comments by February 8, 2007.

FMCSA believes that the requirements for a renewal of an exemption under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315 can be satisfied by initially granting the renewal and then requesting and evaluating, if needed, subsequent comments submitted by interested parties. As indicated above, the Agency previously published notices of final disposition announcing its decision to exempt these 20 individuals from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10). The final decision to grant an exemption to each of these individuals was based on the merits of each case and only after careful consideration of the comments received to its notices of applications. The notices of applications stated in detail the qualifications, experience, and medical condition of each applicant for an exemption from the vision requirements. That information is available by consulting the above cited **Federal Register** publications.

Interested parties or organizations possessing information that would otherwise show that any, or all of these drivers, are not currently achieving the statutory level of safety should immediately notify FMCSA. The Agency will evaluate any adverse evidence submitted and, if safety is being compromised or if continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA will

take immediate steps to revoke the exemption of a driver.

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Larry W. Minor,

Office Director, Bus and Truck Standards and Operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of random drug and alcohol testing rates.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the random testing rates for employers subject to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) drug and alcohol rules.

DATES: *Effective Date:* January 9, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jerry Powers, Drug and Alcohol Program Manager for the Office of Safety and Security, (202) 366-2896 (telephone) and (202) 366-7951 (fax). Electronic access to this and other documents concerning FTA's drug and alcohol testing rules may be obtained through the FTA World Wide Web home page at <http://www.fta.dot.gov>, click on "Safety and Security."

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 1, 1995, FTA required large transit employers to begin drug and alcohol testing employees performing safety-sensitive functions and to begin submitting annual reports by March 15 of each year beginning in 1996. The annual report includes the number of employees who had a verified positive for the use of prohibited drugs, and the number of employees who tested positive for the misuse of alcohol. Small employers commenced their FTA-required testing on January 1, 1996, and began reporting the same information as the large employers beginning March 15, 1997. The testing rules were updated on August 1, 2001, and established a random testing rate for prohibited drugs and the misuse of alcohol.

The rules require that employers conduct random drug tests at a rate equivalent to at least 50 percent of their total number of safety-sensitive employees for prohibited drug use and at least 25 percent for the misuse of alcohol. The rules provide that the drug random testing rate may be lowered to

25 percent if the "positive rate" for the entire transit industry is less than one percent for two preceding consecutive years. Once lowered, it may be raised to 50 percent if the positive rate equals or exceeds one percent for any one year ("positive rate" means the number of positive results for random drug tests conducted under 49 CFR 655.45 plus the number of refusals of random tests required by 49 CFR 655.49, divided by the total number of random drug tests, plus the number of refusals of random tests required by 49 CFR Part 655).

The alcohol provisions provide that the random rate may be lowered to 10 percent if the "violation rate" for the entire transit industry is less than 0.5 percent for two consecutive years. It will remain at 25 percent if the "violation rate" is equal to or greater than 0.5 percent but less than one percent, and it will be raised to 50 percent if the "violation rate" is one percent or greater for any one year ("violation rate" means the number of covered employees found during random tests given under 49 CFR 655.45 to have an alcohol concentration of .04 or greater, plus the number of employees who refuse a random test required by 49 CFR 655.49, divided by the total reported number of random alcohol tests plus the total number of refusals of random tests required by 49 CFR Part 655.)

49 CFR 655.45(b) states that, "the Administrator's decision to increase or decrease the minimum annual percentage rate for random drug and alcohol testing is based, in part, on the reported positive drug and alcohol violation rates for the entire industry. The information used for this determination is drawn from the drug and alcohol Management Information System (MIS) reports required by 49 CFR Part 655. In determining the reliability of the data, the Administrator shall consider the quality and completeness of the reported data, may obtain additional information or reports from employers, and may make appropriate modifications in calculating the industry's verified positive results and violation rates."

The Administrator has determined that the random drug testing rate shall be reduced from 50 to 25 percent for 2007 due to a "positive rate" lower than 1.0 percent for random drug test data from 2003 through 2005. The random drug rates for the three preceding consecutive years are 0.96 for 2003, 0.89 percent for 2004 and 0.79 percent for 2005.

In 2006, the FTA retained the random alcohol testing rate of 10 percent (reduced previously from 25 percent)