

on to explain that because the current exception remains in the FMCSRs (40 CFR 391.41(b)(12)(ii)), they recommend guidelines be provided to MEs regarding the use of narcotics.

#### FMCSA Response

Although optional use of the 391.41 CMV Driver Medication Form was introduced as a result of the MRB and MCSAC recommendations related to the use of Schedule II medications by CMV drivers, the recommendation was for FMCSA to develop a standardized form to assist the certified ME when reviewing prescription medications that have been disclosed during the history and physical examination for CMV driver certification. Therefore, the form was not designed to specifically address Schedule II medications. The form was designed to address any prescription medications that a driver is taking that may impair his/her ability to safely operate a CMV. FMCSA is not considering a change in the regulations or guidance that would prohibit or advise the ME regarding Schedule II medications at this time. Therefore, these comments are outside of the scope of this notice.

#### 2. Qualifications of the ME

Several commenters stated that a ME might not be qualified to make a medical qualification decision if the driver uses Schedule II medications, because of a lack of training in pharmacology.

OOIDA stated that the personal physician is best equipped to review a driver's medical history and suggested that a personal physician be the one to review the driver's medical history and make the decision whether a medication will adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a CMV.

Dr. Hegmann advocated for implementation of the MRB's recommendation that ME eligibility be limited to those medically trained (*i.e.*, MD, DO, PA and NPs). He stated that the concept that these medically untrained examiners can make an informed judgment about driver impairment from narcotics, assess how opioids may interact with other medications, provide guidance to truck drivers, and judge fitness to drive is factually false. Dr. Hegmann feels that FMCSA does not rely on recommendations of the MRB and will selectively use whichever source of guidance is least restrictive which is directly contrary to the central, stated purpose of the Agency.

#### FMCSA Response

FMCSA responded to the question of who is qualified to be a ME in the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners final rule (77 FR 24106, April 20, 2012), and is not considering a change to the regulation in 49 CFR 390.103, Eligibility requirements for medical examiner certification in this notice. Therefore, these comments are outside the scope of this notice.

**Public Comments Invited:** FMCSA requests that you comment on any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) Whether the proposed collection is necessary for FMCSA to perform its functions, (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden, (3) ways for the FMCSA to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the collected information, and (4) ways that the burden could be minimized without reducing the quality of the collected information. Comments received in response to this notice are sent to the OMB Desk Officer to address.

Issued under the authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.87 on: June 30, 2016.

#### G. Kelly Regal,

Associate Administrator, Office of Research and Information Technology.

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BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2015-0345]

#### 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 19 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 January 21, 2016. The exemptions expire on January 21, 2018.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Christine A. Hydock, Chief, Medical Programs Division, (202) 366-4001, [fmcsamedical@dot.gov](mailto:fmcsamedical@dot.gov), FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W64-113, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions regarding 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](http://www.regulations.gov), as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at [www.dot.gov/privacy](http://www.dot.gov/privacy).

##### II. Background

On December 21, 2015, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of exemption applications from certain individuals, and requested comments from the public (80 FR 79414). That notice listed 19 applicants' case histories. The 19 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 19 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 a 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 19 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 amblyopia, central serous chorioretinopathy, central vision loss, complete loss of vision, optic atrophy, optic neuropathy, partial optic atrophy, phthisis, prosthetic eye, pseudophakia, refractive amblyopia, and retinal detachment. In most cases, their eye conditions were not recently developed. Ten of the applicants were either born with their vision impairments or have had them since childhood. The 9 individuals that sustained their vision conditions as adults have had it for a range of 5 to 42 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 19 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 for 3 to 38 years. In the

past three years, no drivers were involved in crashes, and 2 drivers 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 December 21, 2015 notice (80 FR 79414).

#### **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 19 applicants, no drivers were involved in crashes, and 2 drivers 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 19 applicants listed in the notice of December 21, 2015 (80 FR 79414).

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 19 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.

#### VI. Conclusion

Based upon its evaluation of the 19 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)):

Raed A. Abdelrahim (NH),  
 Dominic A. Berube (MA),  
 Gary L. Best (MI),  
 Therron K. Billings (VA),  
 Lucien A. Fregeau (CT),  
 Michael A. Gibbons (PA),  
 Fred M. Hill, Jr. (LA),  
 Freddie H. Johnson (ID),  
 Timothy C. Kohn (MO),  
 John D. Morgan (PA),  
 Brian M. Olivas (TX),  
 Douglas Pitts (OH),  
 Jesus R. Ponce (NY),  
 Eddie R. Schaefer (TX),  
 Brian J. Stoltie (SC),  
 Terry A. Strong (CA),  
 Michael A. Terry (IN),  
 Russell A. Wilkinson (FL),  
 Timothy W. Youngblood, Jr. (TX)

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: June 28, 2016.

**Larry W. Minor,**

*Associate Administrator for Policy.*

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**BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2016-0059]

#### Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System

In accordance with part 235 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), this document provides the public notice that by a document dated May 25, 2016, Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of a signal system. FRA assigned the petition Docket Number FRA-2016-0059.

*Applicant:* Norfolk Southern Railway, Mr. B. L. Sykes, Chief Engineer, C&S Engineering, 1200 Peachtree Street NE., Atlanta, GA 30309.

NS seeks approval of the modification of power-operated Switch 1723 at

Control Point (CP) BATH, at Milepost (MP) SP 172.29, on the NS Frankfort District, at Muncie, IN. Switch 1723 will be converted to a hand-operated switch. The existing 120RC signal at BATH will be moved southeast so that the new hand-operated switch will be outside the CP limits. The switch is to be converted to a hand-operated switch to improve operations at this location.

A copy of the petition, as well as any written communications concerning the petition, is available for review online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and in person at the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Docket Operations Facility, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Operations Facility is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number and may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.
- *Mail:* Docket Operations Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Communications received by August 22, 2016 will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable.

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of any written communications and comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the document, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its processes. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the