



**Motor Vehicle Division Policy Memo # 23-10**  
***Vision and Diabetes Waivers on CDL Medical Certificates.***

**DATE: 12/18/2023**

**FROM: Roneé Slagle, CDL Program Manager**

**TO: All Motor Vehicle Division staff, Iowa County Treasurers, and County Treasurer's staff that conduct CDL skills testing**

**EFFECTIVE: January 2, 2024**

**SUBJECT**

This policy memo explains the Motor Vehicle Division's change in policy regarding vision and diabetes exemptions on Medical Certificates.

**SUMMARY**

On March 22, 2022 FMCSA enacted a new rule establishing an alternate vision standard that eliminates the need for Federal vision exemptions for commercial driver's license holders. The new rule allows certified medical examiners, in consultation with an ophthalmologist or optometrist, to evaluate and determine whether to grant a Medical Examiners' Certificate for up to one year.

The Diabetes Standard final rule published on September 19, 2018 (83 FR 47486) also established an alternate standard for determining the physical qualifications of drivers who cannot otherwise meet the diabetes standards.

Since these new rules have become effective, we have advised driver's license issuance staff to continue to accept medical certificates that follow the old rule and are accompanied by a vision or diabetes waiver. Effective January 2, 2024, we will no longer accept medical certificates that follow the old rule and are accompanied by a vision or diabetes waiver.

When the new rules went into effect, Medical Examiners that complete medical certificates were made aware of the changes in vision and diabetes waivers and should understand that those waivers are no longer appropriate and should be following current FMCSA standards.

**LINK TO LEGISLATION**

New FMCSA Rule on Vision Standard:

<http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/21/2022-01021/qualifications-of-drivers-vision-standard>

New FMCSA Rule on Diabetes Standard:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/09/19/2018-20161/qualifications-of-drivers-diabetes-standard>

## **CURRENT**

When a driver submits a medical certification accompanied by a vision or diabetes waiver that does not meet the new FMCSA rule standards, we accept the form as valid and data enter the medical certificate information into ARTS.

## **NEW**

As of 01/02/2024, driver's license issuance staff will no longer accept any medical certification form that has vision or diabetes waiver marked and/or written in. If a driver presents a medical certificate with the vision or diabetes waiver selected, staff will return the form to the driver, inform them of the rule change and advise them to return the medical certification form to their doctor for an updated/corrected form.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **Who should contact a doctor to get a medical certificate corrected?**

The CDL holder that has presented the medical certificate should contact their medical provider. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that their medical certificate is correct.

### **Why are we no longer accepting waivers with vision or diabetes written in?**

FMCSA has advised that we must question the validity of the Medical Examiner's Certificate if it marked with either the vision or diabetes waiver. The verification should occur with the medical examiner to ensure they are cognizant of the medical changes and did apply/comply with the new alternative vision and diabetes standards as part of their physical examination.

### **Are all CDL holders required to have a medical certificate?**

No, FMCSA has determined that there are specific types of employment that are required to have a medical certificate. These are called Excepted Interstate and Excepted Intrastate Certifications.

### **Why don't all CDL drivers have to have a medical certificate?**

FMCSA has determined that a driver can be exempt from the medical certification rules if FMCSA has determined that it is in the best public interest. These exemptions apply to certain employment in both intrastate and interstate commerce. Please review the Self Certification Brochure to see the employment that falls under those exemptions.

### **Are physicians or the medical examiners aware of these changes regarding the vision and diabetes examinations?**

Yes, physicians and medical examiners were made aware of these new rules prior to their adoption and given the option to participate in webinars that fully explained the new changes to the Diabetes and Vision waivers.