

# FMCSA (DOT) Certification Exam Updates

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# Agenda

- Alternative Vision Standard
- New Diabetes Standard
- FMCSA Periodic Training Discussion
- NRCME 10 Year Recertification Discussion





# Alternative Vision Standard

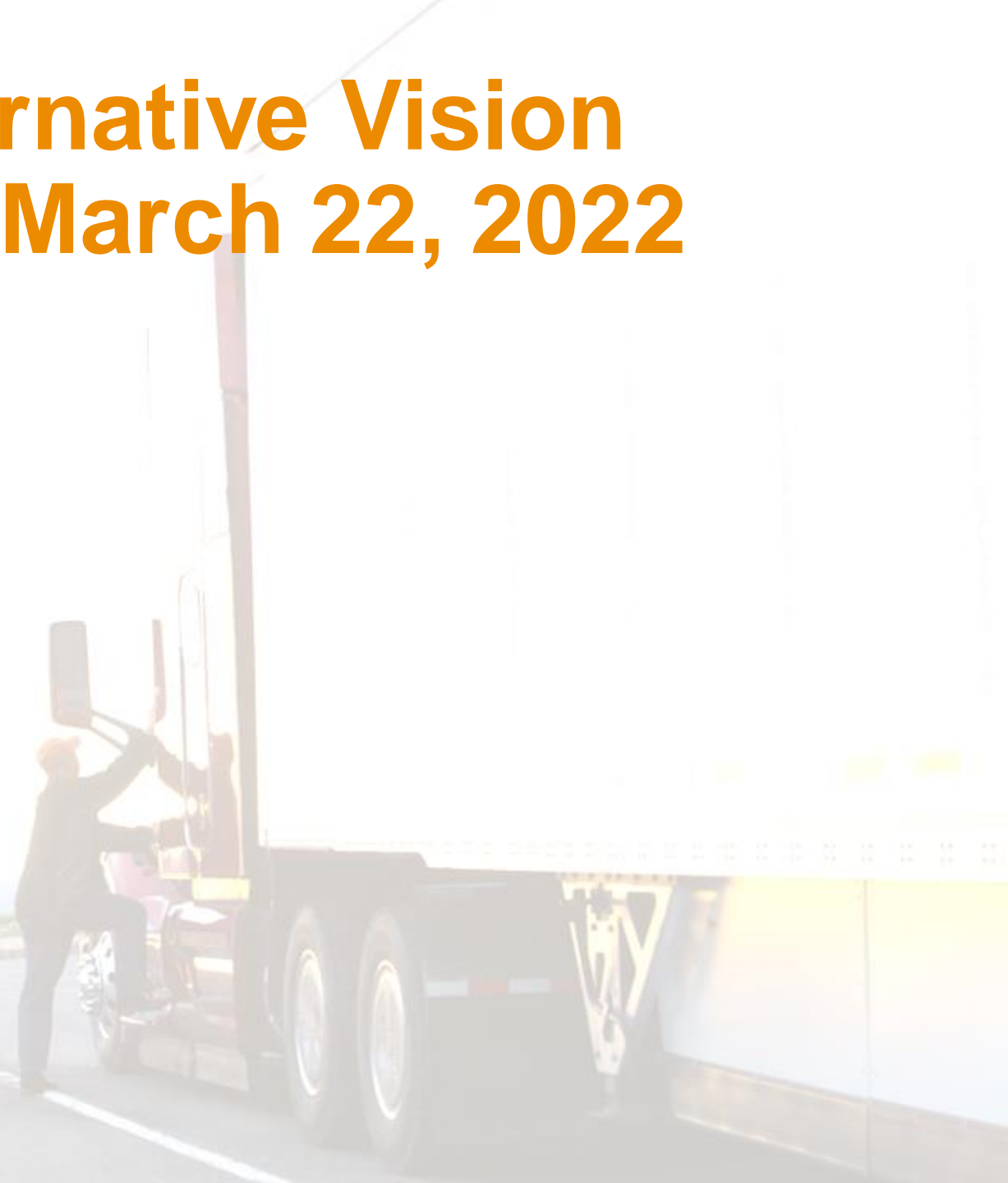
# §391.41 Physical Qualifications for Drivers

- (b)(10)(i) Has distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 in each eye without corrective lenses or visual acuity separately corrected to 20/40 or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of vision of at least 70 degrees 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; OR
- (ii) Meets the requirements in § 391.44, if the individual does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard **with corrective lenses** or the field of vision standard, or both, in paragraph (b)(10)(i) of this section.



# 49 CFR 391.44 Alternative Vision Standard effective March 22, 2022

- **Have in the better eye a distant visual acuity of at least 20/40**, with or without corrective lenses
- Field of vision of at least 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian in the better eye
- Be able to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber
- **Have a stable vision deficiency**
- **Have had sufficient time to adapt to and compensate for the change in vision**





# Alternative Vision Standard Process

# 2-step process

## Step 1

### Individual must have a vision evaluation conducted by an ophthalmologist or optometrist

- The ophthalmologist or optometrist records the findings of the vision evaluation and provides specific medical opinions on the new Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871
- Qualification examination must **begin not more than 45 days after an ophthalmologist or optometrist signs and dates the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871 & attaches formal perimetry testing for both eyes**



# 2-step process

## Step 2

### **Medical examiner (ME) performs a physical qualification examination**

and determines whether the individual meets the alternative vision standard, as well as FMCSA's other physical qualification standards

If the ME determines the individual meets the physical qualification standards, the ME may issue a Medical Examiner's Certificate (MEC) for a maximum of 12 months





# MCSA-5871

Form MCSA-5871  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

OMB No.: 2126-0066 (pending)  
Expiration Date:

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2126-0066. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 8 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, MC-RRA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

### VISION EVALUATION REPORT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

**Information for the Individual:**  
The medical examiner must receive this report and begin the physical qualification examination not more than 45 calendar days after an ophthalmologist or optometrist signs this report.

**Information for the Ophthalmologist or Optometrist:**  
This individual is being evaluated as part of the process to determine whether the individual meets the vision standard of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce. This report is required to provide information for an individual who has "monocular vision," as defined by FMCSA, or did not meet FMCSA's vision standard at a physical qualification examination. An ophthalmologist or optometrist should complete this report to the best of the ophthalmologist's or optometrist's ability based on the evaluation of the individual and knowledge of the individual's medical history. The determination as to whether the individual meets the vision standard and is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle will be made by a medical examiner on FMCSA's National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners.

*FMCSA defines monocular vision as:*

- (1) in the better eye, distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (with or without corrective lenses) and field of vision of at least 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian; and
- (2) in the worse eye, either distant visual acuity of less than 20/40 with corrective lenses or field of vision of less than 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian, or both.

For general informational purposes only, to meet FMCSA's monocular vision standard, an individual must:

- (1) have in the better eye distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen), with or without corrective lenses, and field of vision of at least 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian;
- (2) be able to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber;
- (3) have a stable vision deficiency; and
- (4) have had sufficient time pass since the vision deficiency became stable to adapt to and compensate for the change in vision.

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Rev 1/18/22

Form MCSA-5871  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

OMB No.: 2126-0066 (pending)  
Expiration Date:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK/FILL IN REQUESTED INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT):**

1. I am:  an ophthalmologist  an optometrist
2. Date of vision evaluation (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Distant visual acuity (select N/A if there is no vision in an eye):  
Uncorrected: Right eye: 20/\_\_\_\_ or N/A  Left eye: 20/\_\_\_\_ or N/A   
Corrected: Right eye: 20/\_\_\_\_ or N/A  Left eye: 20/\_\_\_\_ or N/A   
Type of correction:  Glasses  Contacts
4. Field of vision, including central and peripheral fields, utilizing a testing modality that tests to at least 120 degrees in the horizontal. Formal perimetry is required. Attach a copy of the formal perimetry test for each eye and interpret the results in degrees of field of vision.  
Right eye: \_\_\_\_ degrees ("normal" or "full" are not acceptable)  
Left eye: \_\_\_\_ degrees ("normal" or "full" are not acceptable)  
Test used to determine results: \_\_\_\_\_ **ATTACHABLE**
5. Is the individual able to recognize the standard red, green, and amber traffic control signal colors?  Yes  No
6. Date of last comprehensive eye examination (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_ or  Date unknown
7. Does the individual have monocular vision as it is defined by FMCSA?  Yes  No  
If yes, cause of the monocular vision (describe): \_\_\_\_\_
8. Date the monocular vision began (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_
9. Current treatment: \_\_\_\_\_ or  N/A
10. Does the individual have any progressive eye condition or disease (e.g., macular edema, cataracts, glaucoma, or retinopathy)?  
 Yes  No  
If yes, provide the condition or disease, date of diagnosis, severity (mild, moderate, or severe), current treatment, and whether the condition is stable:  
a. Condition or disease: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ Severity:  Mild  Moderate  Severe  
Current treatment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is condition stable?  Yes  No If no, why: \_\_\_\_\_

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Form MCSA-5871  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

OMB No.: 2126-0066 (pending)  
Expiration Date:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Condition or disease: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ Severity:  Mild  Moderate  Severe  
Current treatment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is condition stable?  Yes  No If no, why: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Condition or disease: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ Severity:  Mild  Moderate  Severe  
Current treatment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is condition stable?  Yes  No If no, why: \_\_\_\_\_
11. In your medical opinion, is the individual's vision deficiency stable?  Yes  No  
If yes, provide the date the vision deficiency became stable (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_
12. In your medical opinion, has sufficient time passed since the vision deficiency became stable to allow the individual to adapt to and compensate for the change in vision and to drive a commercial motor vehicle safely?  Yes  No
13. In your medical opinion, is a vision evaluation required more often than annually?  Yes  No  
If yes, how often and why? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Additional comments (attach additional pages as needed)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **ATTACHABLE**

I attest that I am an ophthalmologist or optometrist and that the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name and Medical Credential: \_\_\_\_\_  
Professional License Number and State: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

3

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- 3-page form

# What disqualifies?



## Not physically qualified if:

- In the **better eye**, the distant visual acuity is not **at least 20/40**, with or without corrective lenses, and the field of vision is **not at least 70 degrees** in the horizontal meridian
- **Individual is not able to recognize the colors of traffic signals** and devices showing standard red, green, and amber
- Individual's vision deficiency is **not stable**
- **Sufficient time has not passed** since the vision deficiency became stable to allow the individual **to adapt to and compensate** for the change in vision

# What disqualifies?



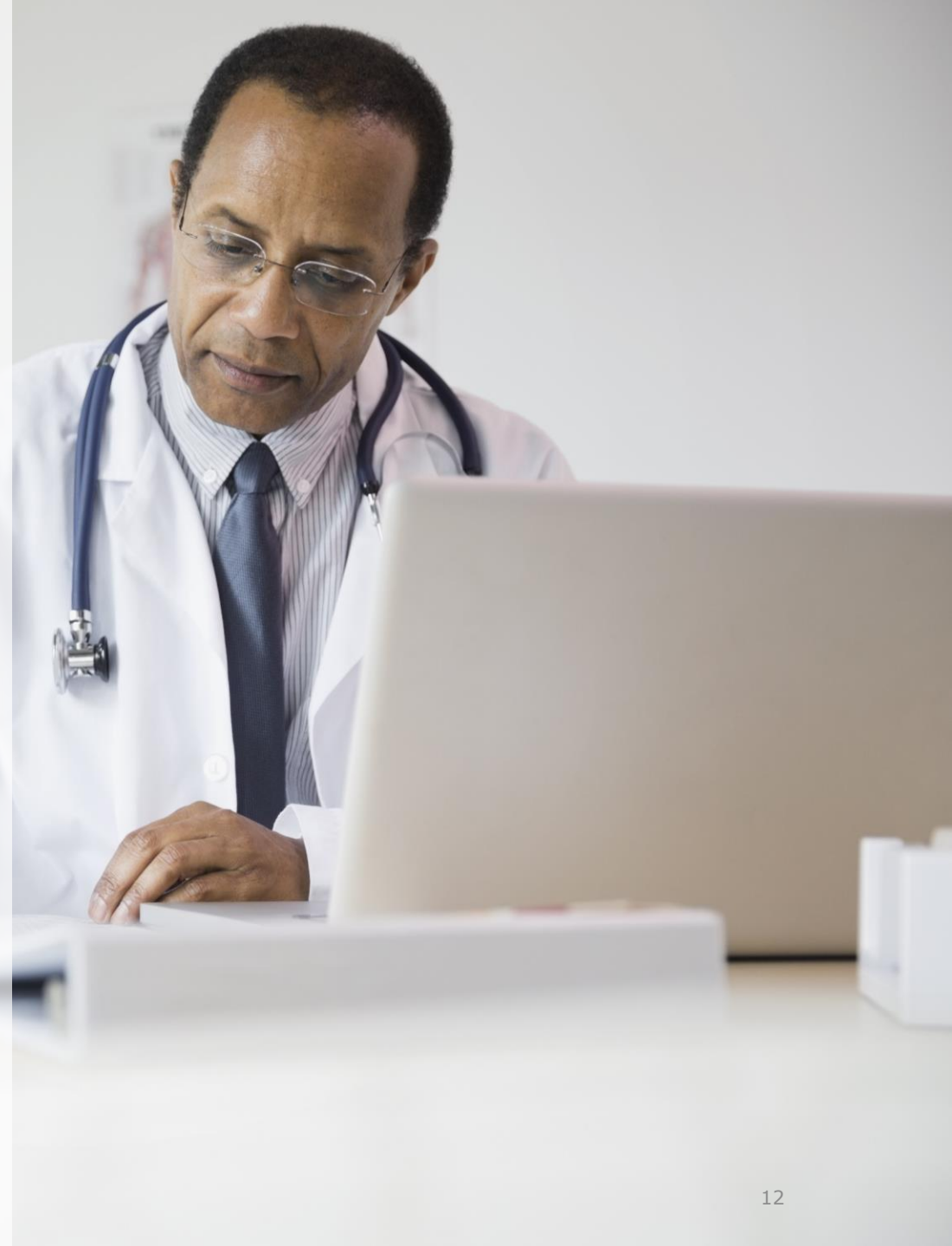
Individuals who choose not to obtain corrective lenses for the worse eye when the better eye meets the existing vision standard **must not** be physically qualified under §391.44

Medical Examiner (ME) may request additional information



# Determination made by examiner

“FMCSA emphasizes that the medical examiner (ME) is to consider the information provided on the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA–5871, but is to use independent medical judgment to evaluate the information and determine whether the individual meets the alternative vision standard. It is the ME who makes the physical qualification determination in the collaborative process.”



# Exemption/waiver holders



- Individuals certified with a vision exemption or qualified under 391.64 (Grandfather vision waiver) have one year after effective date (March 22, 2022) to comply with the alternative vision standard after that their exemption/waiver becomes void
- Will be notified by FMCSA via letter with details
- On and after March 22, 2022, any driver with monocular vision exemption must be certified under the alternative vision standard—**The ME SHOULD NOT CHECK THE EXEMPTION BOX** even if they have a current exemption/waiver
- Drivers certified under 391.64 may be certified under the provision up to March 21, 2023, on March 22, 2023 all waivers become void.



# Other Components of the MCSA-5871

# Determining stable and sufficient time for adjustment

## No requirement that the ophthalmologist or optometrist have previously treated the individual

- Expectation ophthalmologist or optometrist to request and review the individual's prior vision and medical records
- FMCSA: unlikely an ophthalmologist or optometrist would merely accept an individual's statement that the individual has adapted to and compensated for the vision loss

## Frequency of Exam by Optometrist/Ophthalmologist

- Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA–5871, asks whether vision evaluation is required more than annually
  - ME “may exercise medical discretion, based on the findings of the examination and driver health history, and require an eye evaluation more often than annually by medically certifying the individual for less than the maximum 12-month period”

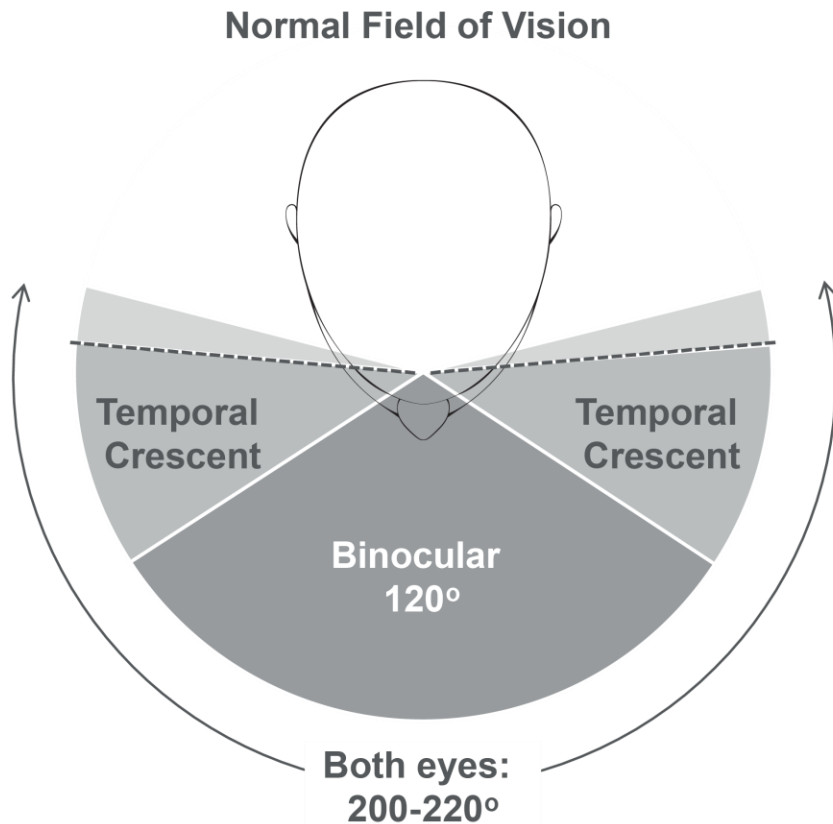
# What is stable vision?

“Ophthalmologists and optometrists who are trained to evaluate vision and know what constitutes stable vision are to provide medical opinions regarding when an individual’s vision is stable”

- Question added to MCSA-5871 after the ophthalmologist or optometrist provides an opinion regarding whether the individual’s vision deficiency is stable
  - “If yes, when did the vision deficiency become stable?”
  - Progressive eye conditions – FMCSA added a request for additional information if the condition is not stable (ME makes final decision)
- Proliferative retinopathy and severe non-proliferative retinopathy may not be disqualifying if the driver is not taking insulin



# Field of vision



- Multiple entities (including Concentra) recommended 120 degrees in better eye
- FMCSA decided 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian in the better eye to be the sufficient minimum standard for field of vision under 391.44
- An ophthalmologist or optometrist must conduct formal perimetry to assess the field of vision of each eye, including central and peripheral fields, utilizing a testing modality that tests to at least 120 degrees in the horizontal meridian
- The ophthalmologist or optometrist must “**Attach a copy of the formal perimetry test for each eye (to the MCSA-5871) and interpret the results in degrees of field of vision**”



# Road Test & Other Requirements

# §391.44 (2) (d) Road Test

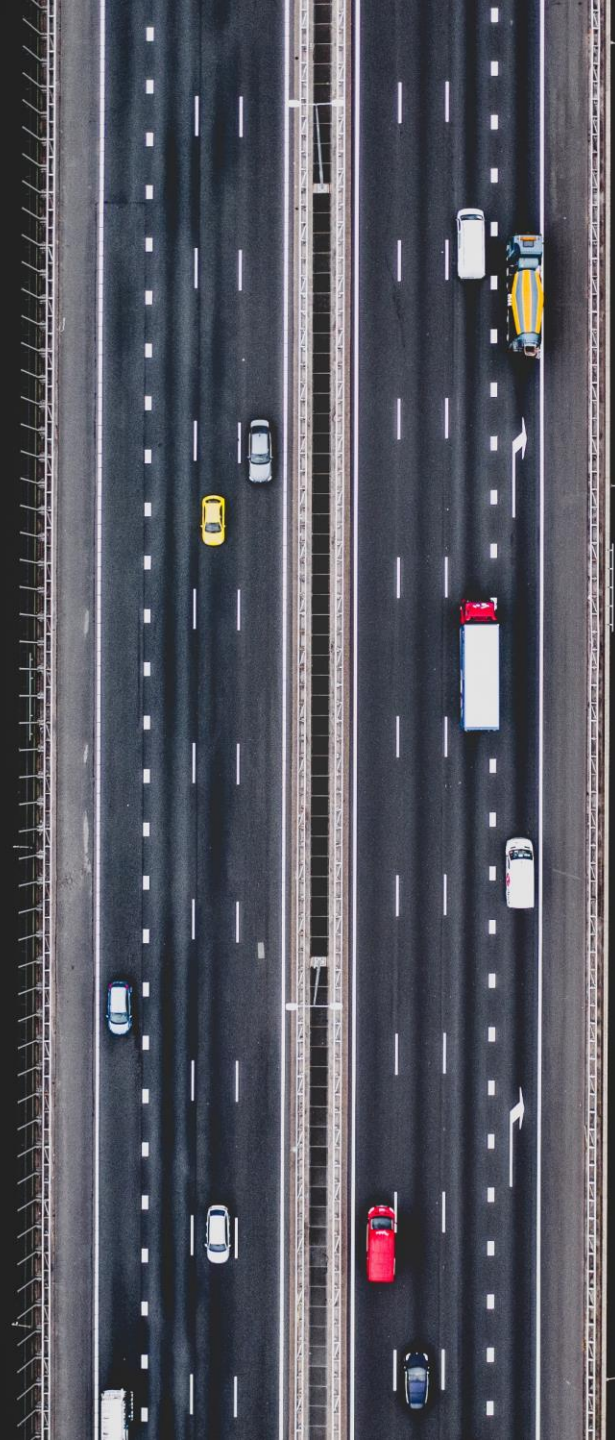
- (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (d)(3), (4), and (5) of this section, an individual physically qualified under this section for the first time shall not drive a commercial motor vehicle until the individual has **successfully completed a road test subsequent to physical qualification** and has been issued a certificate of driver's road test in accordance with § 391.31
- **An individual physically qualified under this section for the first time must inform the motor carrier responsible for completing the road test under §391.31(b) that the individual is required by paragraph (d) of this section to have a road test. The motor carrier must conduct the road test in accordance with § 391.31(b) thorough (g)**
- (i) **The individual must certify in writing to the motor carrier the date the vision deficiency began**

# Exemption from road test requirement

The employing motor carrier conducts the road test in accordance with road test standards already required under 49 CFR § 391.31.

CMV drivers are exempted from the road test requirement if

- they have 3 years of **intrastate** or specific excepted **interstate** CMV driving experience with the vision deficiency; or
- hold a valid Federal vision exemption; or
- are medically certified under the previously administered vision waiver study program in 49 CFR § 391.64(b)





# Questions to FMCSA

# FMCSA Posted a webinar & also answered questions in the Periodic Training Course

<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/medical/new-vision-standard-overview-webinar>.



How to handle the driver with monocular vision that presents without the MCSA-5871

**Answer: they should be disqualified**



Can a driver without a current MEC but with monocular vision and no MCSA-5871, be placed on Determination Pending?

**Answer: NO, a driver with monocular vision and no MCSA-5871 cannot be placed on Determination Pending**



# Case Scenarios

# Case #1

26 y/o with 20/30 vision OD, 20/60 vision OS and 20/40 vision OU. States he was told he needs glasses but wants to save up for LASIX surgery instead and wants to be certified under the new standard.

Certify with MCSA-5871?

NO per the FMCSA:

*Individuals who choose not to obtain corrective lenses for the worse eye when the better eye meets the existing vision standard **must not** be physically qualified under §391.44*



# Case #2

55 y/o with 20/30 vision OD, 20/100 vision OS and 20/40 vision OU. States she had surgery to correct for near vision in one eye and far vision in the other.

Certify with MCSA-5871?

NO per the FMCSA:

*Individuals who choose not to obtain corrective lenses for the worse eye when the better eye meets the existing vision standard **must not** be physically qualified under §391.44*

This driver should be disqualified; she can be certified if she returns with lenses to correct the vision in the worse eye.

# Case #3

65 y/o with 20/40 vision OD, 20/100 vision OS and 20/40 vision OU. States he had an injury as a child to the left eye but also has glaucoma in the better eye. His ophthalmologist completed the MCSA-5871 but notes that the condition is stable as long as he is compliant with treatment.

Certify?

Maybe so or maybe not, per the FMCSA:

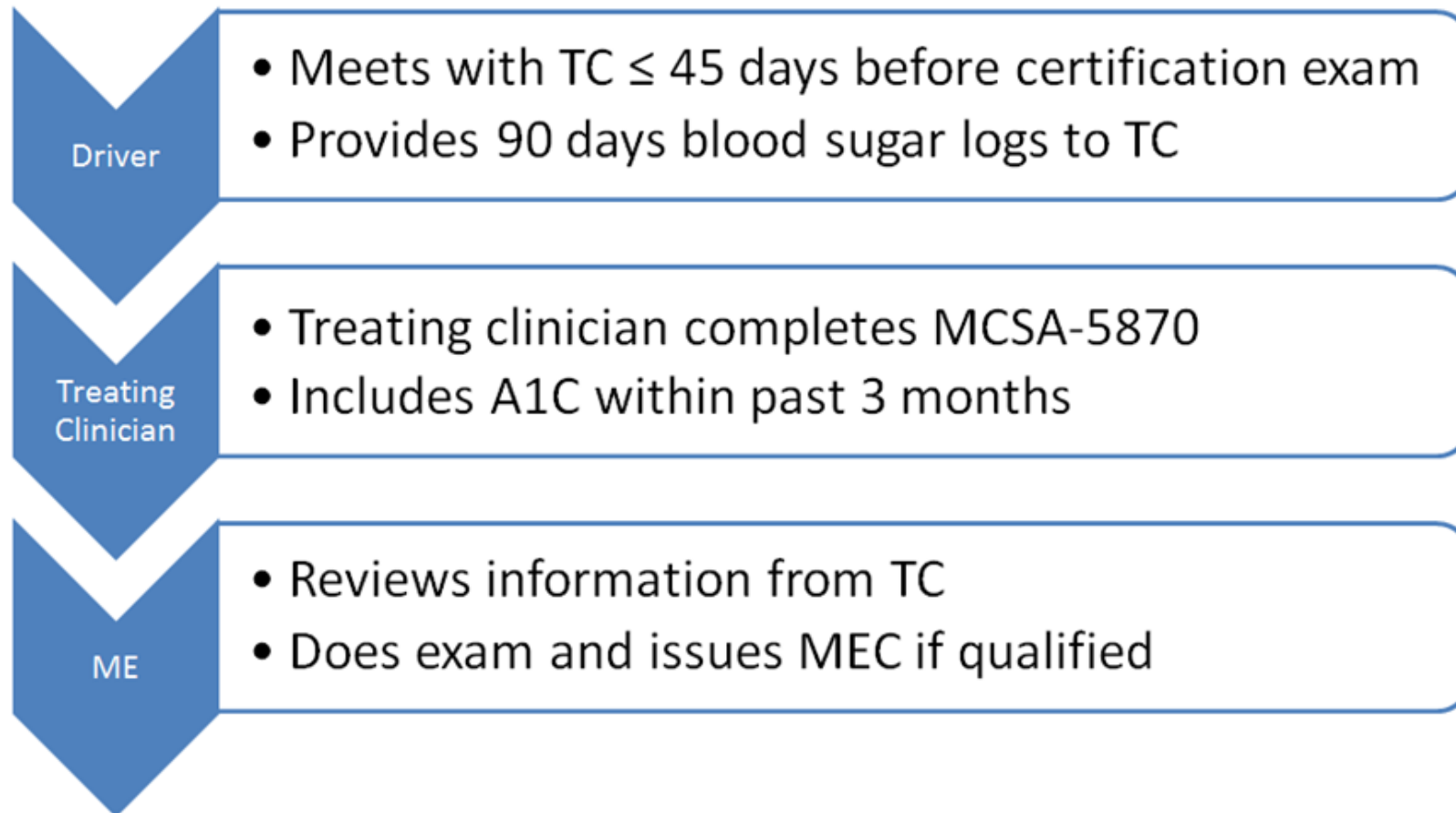
FMCSA emphasizes that the medical examiner (ME) is to consider the information provided on the MCSA–5871, but is to use independent medical judgment to evaluate the information and determine whether the individual meets the alternative vision standard. **It is the ME who makes the physical qualification determination in the collaborative process.**

# New Diabetes Standard

**§391.46**

# §391.46 Physical qualification standards for an individual with diabetes mellitus treated with insulin for control

## Road Map



# Are they qualified?

In making that determination, the medical examiner must consider:

- The information in the Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus Assessment Form, MCSA-5870 *AND*
- Utilize *independent medical judgment*, to apply the following qualification standards:
  - The individual is not qualified if he or she is not maintaining a stable insulin regimen and not properly controlling his or her diabetes mellitus.
  - If driver did not provide the treating clinician with at least the preceding 3 months of electronic blood glucose self-monitoring records (but can give three month card to obtain if that is only issue)
  - The individual is not qualified on a **permanent** basis if he or she has either severe **non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy** or **proliferative diabetic retinopathy**.
  - Severe diabetic nephropathy requiring dialysis and posing a safety issue.
  - Severe diabetic neuropathy resulting in driver not being able to safely manipulate vehicle pedals/controls.

# Determination Pending?

Can ME put driver in “Determination Pending” if they present without the MCSA-5870?

- In a word, no.
  - Remember insulin is still DQ *unless* they meet all requirements of 391.46
  - That means by letter of law, MCSA 5870 completed within 45 days preceding exam - 391.46(c)
- Determination Pending could result in a driver operating CMV on an existing MEC without meeting the standard.



# Severe Hypoglycemia

- Defined as: requiring assistance of others or resulting in a seizure, coma, LOC
- Driver must cease CMV operation temporarily
- Sees TC
  - TC completes NEW MCSA-5870 once cause of hypoglycemia has been identified, treated, and driver is again stable
  - Driver provides form to ME
- Driver resumes CMV operation
  - Rule does NOT state driver must have new exam after hypoglycemic episode **but**. 49 CFR 391.45 still applies – “Any driver whose ability to perform his/her normal duties has been impaired by a physical or mental injury or disease” is required to have new DOT PE

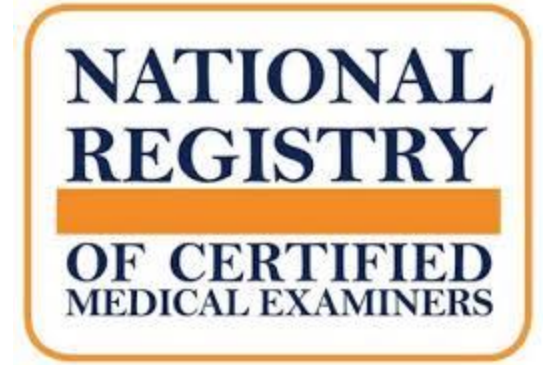
**There is NO mandatory  
waiting period anymore**



# FMCSA Periodic Training Discussion



# FMCSA 5 Year Periodic Training



- Must be completed by December 31, 2022 for all medical examiners (MEs) at the 5 yr post NRCME certification mark (email from FMCSA)
- Training is a series of 4 PDF Training Modules (found on ME NRCME Profile)
- Requirement to upload a signed completion certificate

# FMCSA 5 Year Periodic Training



## Module Content Discussion:

- No waiting period post stroke or TIA—there has NEVER been a regulated required waiting period, there has been only guidance, there has been NO CHANGE to the guidance
- No aneurysm parameters—there have never been regulated parameters and there is no change in the guidance
- An individual not meeting the vision standard cannot be placed in Determination Pending
- ETTs not required by the FMCSRs—they have never been required, the guidance recommends periodic ETTs for drivers with CAD
- OSA—while there is no FMCSA mandated testing, the FMCSA stated: ***MEs are advised that drivers who have been diagnosed with moderate to severe OSA but fail to adhere to treatment for the condition should be disqualified***
- Individuals certified with a hearing exemption can be given a 2 yr MEC



# **NRCME 10 Year Recertification Discussion**

# NRCME 10 Year Recertification

From the FMCSA:

- If you continue to be certified and listed on the National Registry, you will be required to **complete periodic training by a private sector training organization** at that time and **pass the certification test**, no sooner than **9 years and no later than 10 years** after the date of issuance of your ME certification credential, as you did during your initial certification process. FMCSA will issue a new ME certification credential which will be valid for 10 years
- If you certify early (at the 9 year mark), your certification expiration will continue to be 10 years from the original certification date
- If you take the exam and fail before your certification expires, you will not be removed from the NRCME

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