

and Auto Safety (Advocates) expressing continued opposition to the FMCSA's procedures for renewing exemptions from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10). Specifically, Advocates objects to the agency's extension of the exemptions without any opportunity for public comment prior to the decision to renew, and reliance on a summary statement of evidence to make its decision to extend the exemption of each driver.

The issues raised by Advocates were addressed at length in 69 FR 51346 (August 18, 2004). The FMCSA continues to find its exemption process appropriate to the statutory and regulatory requirements.

Issued on: December 2, 2004.

Rose A. McMurray,

Associate Administrator, Policy and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2002-12844]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

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

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

SUMMARY: This notice publishes the FMCSA decision to renew the exemptions from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for 22 individuals. The FMCSA has statutory authority to exempt individuals from vision standards 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 17, 2005. Comments from interested persons should be submitted by January 7, 2005.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT DMS Docket Number FMCSA-2002-12844 by any of the following methods:

- Web Site: <http://dms.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 on-line instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and docket numbers for this notice. For detailed instructions on submitting comments and additional information on the rulemaking process, see the Public Participation heading of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document. 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 under Regulatory Notices.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time or to 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Maggi Gunnels, Office of Bus and Truck Standards and Operations, (202) 366-4001, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Public Participation: The DMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. You can get electronic submission and retrieval help guidelines under the "help" section of the DMS Web site. 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 is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or 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 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Exemption Decision

Under 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), the FMCSA may renew an exemption from the vision requirement 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 22 individuals who have requested renewal of their exemptions in a timely manner. The FMCSA has evaluated these 22 applications for renewal on their merits and decided to extend each exemption for a renewable two year period. They are:

Thomas J. Boss, Howard F. Breikreutz, Ryan J. Christensen, William T. Cummins, John E. Evenson, Leon Frieri, Steven C. Humke; Leon E. Jackson, Neil W. Jennings, Craig M. Landry, Earl E. Louk, William R. Mayfield, Richard E. Nordhausen, Jr., Tony E. Parks, Andrew H. Rusk; Henry A. Shelton, Richard L. Sheppard, Deborah A. Sigle, Richard A. Stevens, Kenneth E. Vigue, Jr., David G. Williams, Richard A. Winslow.

These exemptions are extended subject to the following conditions: (1) That each individual have a physical exam 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 the 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. 31315 and 31136(e).

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. 31315 and 31136(e), each of the 22 applicants has satisfied the entry conditions for obtaining an exemption from the vision requirements (67 FR 68719 and 68 FR 2629). Each of these 22 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, the 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.

Comments

The 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. 31315 and 31136(e). However, the FMCSA requests that interested parties with specific data concerning the safety records of these drivers submit comments by January 7, 2005.

In the past the FMCSA has received comments from Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) expressing continued opposition to the FMCSA's procedures for renewing exemptions from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10). Specifically, Advocates objects to the agency's extension of the exemptions without any opportunity for public comment prior to the decision to renew, and reliance on a summary statement of evidence to make its decision to extend the exemption of each driver.

The issues raised by Advocates were addressed at length in 69 FR 51346 (August 18, 2004). The FMCSA continues to find its exemption process appropriate to the statutory and regulatory requirements.

Issued on: December 3, 2004.

Rose A. McMurray,

Associate Administrator, Policy and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Discretionary Cooperative Agreements for Research Under the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN)

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Announcement of discretionary cooperative agreements to support the research conducted under the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN) and to increase its benefits to the public.

SUMMARY: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announces discretionary Cooperative Agreement opportunities to provide funding to Level One Trauma Centers in support of the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN). NHTSA anticipates funding these Cooperative Agreements in annual installments for one base year plus 4 one-year option years at NHTSA's option and subject to available funding. Due to budgetary constraints and the levels of effort applicants may propose, NHTSA is uncertain as to the number of Cooperative Agreements that will be funded. However, multiple awards will be made under this announcement. These cooperative agreements will support projects to improve the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of motor vehicle crash injuries to reduce deaths, disabilities and human and economic costs. This **Federal Register** Notice solicits applications from Level One Trauma Centers. Interested applicants must follow the instructions in the application section of this **Federal Register** Notice. NHTSA will review the applications to determine which proposals will receive funding under this announcement.

DATES: Applications must be submitted to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Contracts and Procurement (NPO-220), Attention: Dianne Proctor, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 5301, Washington, DC 20590. All applications submitted must include a reference to NHTSA Cooperative Agreement Program

Number DTNH22-05-H-01001. Only complete packages received on or before 2 p.m. e.s.t. on February 8, 2005, will be considered for award.

Applicants shall provide a complete mailing address where Federal Express mail can be delivered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

General administrative and programmatic questions may be directed to Dianne Proctor, Office of Contracts and Procurement, by e-mail at Diane.Proctor@nhtsa.dot.gov or by phone at (202) 366-9562 and Karin E. Eddy, Office of Contracts and Procurement, by e-mail at Karin.Eddy@nhtsa.dot.gov or by phone at (202) 366-9568. To allow for sufficient time to address questions appropriately, all questions must be submitted in writing no later 2 p.m. e.s.t., December 20, 2004, via e-mail to Karin.Eddy@nhtsa.dot.gov. Response to the questions will be posted on <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-50/ciren/CIREN.html> by January 10, 2005 and in the **Federal Register**.

Any changes to this date will be posted on the Web site. Interested applicants are advised that no separate application package exists beyond the contents of this announcement.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Motor vehicles are the dominant means of travel in the United States for both personal and business trips and provide Americans with an extraordinary degree of mobility. Traffic fatalities account for more than 90% of all transportation-related fatalities. These injuries and fatalities are a major public health problem. More than 40,000 people die each year as the result of injuries received in motor vehicle crashes and more than 3 million people are injured. Motor vehicle injuries comprise nearly half of all traumatic injury deaths.

The large number of motor vehicle injuries places a considerable burden on the nation's health care system. It is estimated that about 20 percent of all Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls are motor vehicle related, and persons are treated in trauma centers largely as the result of motor vehicle crashes. This care results in a significant economic burden on society, estimated at more than \$17 billion a year. Because motor vehicle injuries often have long-term effects, they are a leading cause of long-term disability.

NHTSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). NHTSA's mission is to save lives, prevent injuries and reduce traffic-