

# National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners FAQs

## *General*

### **What is the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners?**

The National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (National Registry) is a Federal program that establishes requirements for healthcare professionals that perform physical qualification examinations for truck and bus drivers. To become a certified medical examiner (ME) and be listed on the National Registry, healthcare professionals must complete training and testing on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) physical qualifications standards and guidelines. The National Registry web site is accessible to carriers, drivers, enforcement officials, and the general public.

All healthcare professionals whose scope of practice authorizes them to perform physical examinations, as defined by the state in which they practice, and who intend to perform physical examinations and issue medical certificates for commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers to meet the requirements of Section 391.41 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) must be certified and listed on FMCSA's National Registry by May 21, 2014.

### **Why is the National Registry necessary?**

FMCSA developed the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners final rule as part of the agency's commitment to enhancing the medical oversight of interstate drivers, and preventing commercial vehicle-related crashes, injuries and fatalities. The final rule addresses four NTSB recommendations on a comprehensive medical oversight program for interstate drivers.

### **Who is impacted by this program?**

The program impacts medical examiners who need to obtain certification in order to continue issuing medical certificates for truck and bus drivers, CMV drivers who need to obtain medical certificates from examiners on the National Registry, motor carriers who must ensure their interstate drivers have been medically certified by an examiner on the registry, and training and testing organizations that will deliver these aspects of the program.

### **Are there any National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations related to the establishment of the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners?**

The National Registry final rule addresses four NTSB recommendations on a comprehensive medical oversight program for interstate drivers that include the following elements:

- Individuals performing medical examinations for drivers are qualified to do so and are educated about occupational issues for drivers (H-01-017);
- A tracking mechanism is established that ensures that every prior application by an individual for medical certification is recorded and reviewed. (H-01-018);

- Medical certification regulations are updated periodically to permit trained examiners to clearly determine whether drivers with common medical conditions should be issued a medical certificate. (H-01-019); and
- Individuals performing examinations have specific guidance and a readily identifiable source of information for questions on such examinations (H-01-020).

FMCSA staff will meet with NTSB staff to provide a briefing on the rule. The Agency will provide any additional technical assistance necessary for the NTSB to determine whether the recommendations have been satisfied through the rulemaking.

## ***Medical Examiners***

### **Who can perform FMCSA medical examinations for CMV drivers?**

FMCSA's current regulations require that all MEs be licensed, certified, and/or registered in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations to perform physical examinations. This includes but is not limited to doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, and doctors of chiropractic.

MEs must be knowledgeable of the specific physical and mental demands associated with operating a CMV and the requirements of Section 391.43(c), including the medical advisory criteria prepared by the FMCSA as guidelines to aid the medical examiner in making the individual determination whether a driver should be issued a medical certificate, and be proficient in following the medical protocols necessary to adequately perform the medical examination.

Beginning May 21, 2014, all MEs who wish to conduct medical examinations for interstate CMV drivers must complete training about FMCSA's physical qualifications regulations and advisory criteria and pass a certification test to be listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners. All medical certificates issued on or after this date must be issued by examiners listed on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners.

### **What do I have to do to become a certified ME?**

To become certified as a ME, you must complete the necessary training and pass the certification test required by FMCSA. In order to take the certification test, you must first register through the National Registry web site and receive a unique identification number. You will provide your unique identification number to the testing organization that you select from the list of approved testing organizations on the National Registry web site.

CMV drivers in interstate commerce must use MEs listed on the National Registry to obtain a medical certificate beginning May 21, 2014. Medical certificates issued prior to this date are valid until the expiration date. Contact information for the MEs is available online at the National Registry web site to drivers who wish to obtain a CMV driver physical examination.

### **How can a healthcare professional obtain more information about the National Registry?**

Go to the National Registry web site <http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov> and read the information provided. For ongoing updates, register for the National Registry Listserv by selecting the link.

### **When will a ME be required to complete a training program?**

**Compliance Date May 21, 2014** – All CMV drivers seeking a medical certificate must use a ME on the National Registry.

**ME Registration Date August 20, 2012** – MEs may register at the National Registry web site and receive their unique identification number that will be used to sign up for the mandatory testing.

### **How do MEs find training and testing organizations?**

Visit the National Registry web site at <http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov> and go to the training and testing section for more information.

### **How will a ME know that a training provider's program meets all of the National Registry requirements?**

The ME candidate may visit the National Registry web site at <http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov> to obtain the regulatory requirements for training, including the eight topics (the core curriculum) that must be covered by the training. The training organization must be accredited by a nationally-recognized medical profession accrediting organization that provides continuing medical education units and the training must include all of the topics outlined in the final rule. The training organization must provide training participants with proof of participation and FMCSA point-of-contact information.

Although FMCSA posts contact information on the National Registry web site for training organizations that send it to the National Registry, FMCSA does not approve or endorse training providers or courses. The ME candidate is required to determine whether a training course meets the regulatory requirements.

### **Where will MEs go to take the test?**

The test will be offered by private sector test delivery organizations throughout the United States. FMCSA will post contact information for testing organizations on the National Registry web site. In addition, testing organizations may administer the test online with remote monitoring.

### **Are ME candidates required to pay for the training and testing?**

Yes. The ME candidate is responsible for paying any fees charged by the training and testing organizations.

FMCSA neither establishes nor regulates the schedules of fees established and collected by training or testing organizations, and does not receive any monies collected by these organizations or providers. Training and testing providers are not reimbursed by the Federal government but may charge fees for training and test delivery. The providers are responsible for the entire process of fee determination, collection, and refund, if warranted. The providers are also responsible for any advertising of their services, determining the schedules for training and testing sessions, and managing requests for training and testing.

**If an ME candidate does not pass the test can he/she take the test again?**

If the candidate fails the test, he or she must wait at least 30 days before taking the test again.

**How long will the ME's Certification be valid?**

FMCSA will issue a certification document that will expire 10 years from the date of issuance. After the initial training and certification, a ME must complete periodic training every 5 years to refresh his or her knowledge of both the medical standards for CMV drivers and any changes to FMCSA examination standards or guidelines. MEs are required to complete recertification testing every 10 years. FMCSA may remove a ME from the National Registry if he or she does not complete the periodic training (after 5 years) or pass the recertification testing (after 10 years on the National Registry).

**Do all medical examiners have to be certified?**

Yes. All MEs who intend to perform physical examinations and issue medical certificates for interstate CMV drivers must complete the mandatory training and testing requirements in the National Registry rule by May 21, 2014. The requirements are set forth in Section 390.101 through 390.115 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs).

**If I attended a medical examiner training course prior to the publication of the rule, does that qualify me to take the certification test?**

Yes, provided the curriculum for the training course covers all the topics outlined in the final rule and, the training organization must be accredited by a nationally-recognized medical profession accrediting organization that provides continuing medical education units.

**How will the exam be administered?**

The testing organizations may administer the exam at a testing facility where candidates can take the examination using test booklets and test forms, or using computer terminals. Alternatively, the testing organization may provide an on-line testing option where the candidate may take the test from his or her office or other location provided the testing organization has a monitoring mechanism to detect cheating or other inappropriate activity during the on-line test.

## **What will MEs be required to do after they are added to the National Registry?**

After an examiner is certified to be on the National Registry, the examiner must apply the qualifications standards consistently and uniformly during the examination of drivers. Each ME listed on the National Registry will also be required to complete and transmit to FMCSA once every calendar month the following information about each CMV driver examined during the previous month: name, date of birth, driver's license number and State, date of examination, an indication of the examination outcome (for example, medically qualified), whether intrastate driver only, and date of driver medical certification expiration. If the ME does not conduct any exams during any given month, he/she must submit that information. Data will be submitted electronically via a secure FMCSA National Registry web site.

## **Are there any other requirements that a ME must adhere to after they are added to the National Registry?**

Yes, MEs also have to comply with the following administrative requirements as of May 21, 2014:

- Submit Form MCSA-5850 for each driver examined electronically every month via the National Registry website. If no exams were performed during the month, that must also be reported;
- Retain original completed Medical Examination Reports for all drivers examined and a copy or electronic version of the driver's medical examiner's certificate for at least 3 years from the date of the examination;
- Submit to periodic audits;
- Provide FMCSA with medical examination report forms and other documents as requested;
- Continue to be licensed, registered, or certified in accordance with the applicable State laws and regulations of each State in which you perform examinations with a scope of practice that includes performing physical examinations;
- Submit any changes in the application information to FMCSA within 30 days of the change;
- Report to FMCSA any information related to any termination, suspension, or withdrawal of your license, registration, or certificate under State law; and
- Maintain documentation of State licensing, registration, or certification and completion of all required training.

## ***Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Drivers/Carriers***

### **What impact does the National Registry have on CMV drivers and motor carriers?**

As of May 21, 2014, interstate CMV drivers are required to obtain physical examinations and a medical examiner's certificate from a certified ME listed on the [National Registry website](#).

**Is this program applicable to both interstate and intrastate CMV drivers?**

No, this program applies to interstate drivers only. Intrastate drivers must follow State requirements concerning medical certification.

**How is the driver medical certificate issued by a ME on the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners different from the current driver medical certificate?**

The new driver medical certificate will contain the same medical information as the current driver medical certificate, but will now include the ME's National Registry number.

Additionally, this rule assures that all healthcare professionals, who perform medical exams for interstate truck and bus drivers, are trained, tested and certified on the specific physical qualifications standards that affect a driver's ability to safely operate the vehicle.

**Will the ME inform the State driver licensing agency that I have passed the physical examination?**

No, it is up to CMV drivers required to have a CDL to provide the medical certificate to the State agency issuing the license. Contact your State driver licensing agency for information about how to provide your medical certificate. As of May 21, 2014, States will be required to enter the National Registry Number from the medical examiner's certificate into CDLIS for each non-excepted interstate CDL driver. A driver's medical certificate is valid until it expires. If the expiration date is after May 21, 2014, the driver must obtain a medical certificate from a ME listed on the National Registry.

**Will FMCSA transmit the medical certificate information for interstate CDL drivers to the State driver licensing agencies?**

Not at this time. The final rule provides for reporting to FMCSA by the MEs of medical certificate information for all interstate CMV drivers. The Agency is considering a new rulemaking to require more frequent submission of medical certificate information by the MEs and for FMCSA to transmit to the SDLAs that information for interstate CDL drivers required to have a medical certificate.

**How will an employer or enforcement personnel verify that a ME is on the National Registry?**

They may visit the National Registry web site at <http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov> and search the registry for the ME who provided the driver's medical certificate. They can search by ME name or National Registry number.

**How will a driver/carrier find a ME?**

ME candidates who pass the exam will be listed in an [online registry](#) located on the National Registry web site. As of May 21, 2014, all interstate CMV drivers seeking a medical examination/certificate must use a ME listed on the National Registry.

To find a certified ME, visit the National Registry web site at <http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov> and conduct a basic or advanced search by:

- City and State
- ZIP Code
- Name of ME
- Business Name
- Employer Name
- Medical Profession
- National Registry ID #

**Will the medical examination reports be entered into the National Registry?**

No. The FMCSA will not routinely collect or store medical examination reports (i.e., the long form).

**If I lose my medical card, can I get a replacement copy from the National Registry?**

No. The National Registry is not intended to serve as a medical certificate database for drivers or carriers. To get a copy of your signed medical certificate you must contact the ME that issued it.

**If a driver receives a medical certificate from a ME who is later removed from the National Registry for fraudulent activities, is the medical certificate still valid?**

Yes. However, FMCSA may exercise its authority to review the ME's report (long form) and discuss the matter with the individual driver to make an individual determination whether to void the certificate.

**What happens to a ME who inappropriately or fraudulently certifies a driver?**

Errors, omissions, or other indications of improper certification by a ME of a driver in either the completed Medical Examination Reports or the medical certificates, may result in FMCSA initiating action to remove the ME from the National Registry. The final rule provides due process for addressing the removal of MEs from the National Registry.

**I prefer going to my doctor for my CMV physical exam. Can I still go to him/her once this rule is implemented?**

Yes, provided he/she is listed as a certified ME of the National Registry. If not, drivers will have to use a certified ME that is listed in the [online registry](#).

***Training Organizations***

## **What are the requirements for becoming a training organization for the National Registry program?**

Training organizations must:

- Be accredited by a nationally-recognized medical profession accrediting organization to provide continuing education units;
- Meet the current core curriculum specifications established by FMCSA for medical examiner training;
- Provide training participants with proof of participation; and
- Provide FMCSA point-of-contact information to training participants.

## **Is there a specific training method that we have to use?**

No, training organizations can use a variety of methods to train the MEs, including instructor-led, self-paced e-learning, blended learning, guided literature review, and/or a combination of methods.

## **Are there guidelines that training organizations must adhere to when developing the training for MEs?**

Yes, at a minimum, training must cover the eight topics defined in the core curriculum specifications established by FMCSA. An expanded description of these eight topics can be found in the *Guidance for the Core Curriculum Topics*.

FMCSA has developed a *Sample Training Manual*, a comprehensive example of ME training that demonstrates one way to cover the eight training topics in the core curriculum required by FMCSA.

## **Is Appendix A, *Guidance for the Core Curriculum Specifications*, part of the Code of Federal Regulations?**

The *Guidance for the Core Curriculum Specifications* was published in the Federal Register as Appendix A following the final rule for the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners. It is not part of the Code of Federal Regulations.

## ***Testing Organizations***

### **How do I apply to become a National Registry testing provider?**

Providers interested in being a testing organization must apply through the National Registry website. Information for testing providers can be found in the *Administrative Manual for Testing Organizations*.

### **Can a testing organization be declined? If so, why?**

Yes. There are several different reasons a prospective testing organization's request to participate in the National Registry program would be declined. For example, a testing organization would be declined if they do not have the proper protections and security safeguards for securing the exam, or they may be declined if they don't have the technical capabilities for uploading the test or for scrambling the test questions. Basically, a prospective testing organization can be declined if it does not meet the criteria and IT security requirements outlined in the *Administrative Manual for Testing Organizations*.

**As a testing organization, can I offer online testing for the ME certification examination?**

Yes, to do so you must meet the criteria established in the regulation. In addition to providing test security and processes to minimize cheating, you must be able to authenticate the identity of the person taking the test, verify the healthcare license and the ME training certificate, provide a means for monitoring the activity of the person taking the test, and create and retain a record of each test taken.

**Can the testing provider also be the training provider?**

No. To avoid potential conflict of interest and to protect the integrity of the certification test, testing providers cannot also be training providers.