



Administrative Manual for Testing Organizations



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Introduction

The National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (hereinafter known as “National Registry”) was established in accordance with the final rule published by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) in the Federal Register on April 20, 2012. This rule requires that all medical examiners (ME) who conduct physical examinations for interstate commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers:

- Maintain a valid State license to conduct medical examinations;
- Complete required training on FMCSA’s physical qualification standards;
- Pass the ME Certification Test to demonstrate a sound understanding of FMCSA’s physical qualification standards; and
- Complete refresher training every 5 years and recertification testing every 10 years.

Beginning May 21, 2014, all medical certificates issued to interstate truck and bus drivers must come from MEs on the National Registry.

NOTE: The National Registry does not change any of the physical qualification standards for CMV drivers.

This *National Registry Administrative Manual for Testing Organizations* explains:

- Qualifications to become a National Registry Testing Organization;
- Responsibilities of testing organizations; and
- Technical requirements for administering, storing, and transmitting test data.

The National Registry Overview

In August 2005, Congress enacted the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which authorized FMCSA to establish the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (49 U.S. Code 31149).

National Registry Background

The National Registry is designed to improve highway safety by producing trained, certified MEs who can determine whether a CMV driver meets FMCSA standards and guidelines.

Objectives

The objectives of the National Registry Program are:

- Improve highway safety;
- Ensure that MEs understand FMCSA medical standards and guidelines and how they apply to interstate CMV drivers;
- Maintain training and testing program for MEs;
- Promote public confidence in the quality of the MEs who certify CMV drivers; and
- Establish an online list of certified MEs.

ME Training and Certification Test Development Process

FMCSA performed an extensive role delineation study to identify the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform CMV driver physical examinations in accordance with current FMCSA regulations and advisory criteria. A variety of methods were used to complete the study, including a literature review, direct observations of CMV driver physical examinations, a national survey of MEs, and ME expert Working Integrated Product Team meetings. The study results provided a blueprint for the ME Certification Test and the development of core curriculum specifications for the initial ME training that will be provided by private-sector training organizations.

Dissemination of National Registry Information

FMCSA developed the National Registry Website and the National Registry Listserv to disseminate information including the latest National Registry developments and to facilitate communication with the program's primary stakeholders: medical professionals interested in becoming certified MEs; certified MEs; industry professionals; CMV drivers; employers; the general public; and all other interested parties.

The National Registry Website (<http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov>) provides information about FMCSA regulations and other requirements relevant to CMV driver physical examinations. The website will include a continually updated list of certified MEs who are authorized by FMCSA to perform physical examinations for interstate CMV drivers.

Medical professionals interested in becoming certified MEs and being listed on the National Registry can find information about the ME training and certification process on the National Registry Website.

FMCSA ME Certification

The training and testing requirement for ME certification is intended to ensure the ME's ability to determine whether a CMV driver can safely meet the mental and physical demands of the job. FMCSA certification is granted to those MEs who:

- Meet the professional requirements established in 49 CFR 390.5: "Medical Examiner means a person who is licensed, certified, and/or registered in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations to perform physical examinations. The term includes, but is not limited to, doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, and doctors of chiropractic."
- Complete required initial ME training on the FMCSA physical qualification standards, guidance and related knowledge for CMV drivers.
- Pass the FMCSA ME Certification Test.
- Maintain and demonstrate knowledge of the current Federal requirements through periodic training and recertification.
- Comply with administrative requirements including, submission of monthly reports, periodic monitoring/auditing, and responding promptly to requests for records from enforcement personnel.

All medical certificates issued on or after May 21, 2014, must be issued by MEs who are listed on the National Registry.

When the ME Certification credential is issued, it includes both the anniversary date of issuance and the unique ME identification number (National Registry Number). Each certification is issued for 10 years and may be renewed.

Recertification

Certified MEs must keep their certification and knowledge of the regulations and advisory criteria current through periodic training and recertification. The refresher training must be completed every 5 years. Successful completion of the training is a prerequisite to taking the recertification exam in the tenth year. Completing recertification restarts the recertification cycle for the next 10 years. The requirements for maintaining the certification are summarized in Table 1.

To ensure uninterrupted certification status, the ME must complete the training requirements and pass the certification test within the calendar year prior to the certification expiration date. If successful recertification is not completed within that time frame:

- The ME’s certification expires and
- The ME is no longer certified to perform medical examinations, but the ME’s name and contact information are still displayed on the National Registry website.

NOTE: FMCSA does not recognize physical examinations performed by a ME after his or her certification has expired.

Reinstatement

If a ME has been removed from the National Registry for any reason but desires to resume CMV driver physical examinations, **reinstatement** is required. The requirements for certification, recertification, and reinstatement are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Certification Requirements

| Status | Description | Training Required | Certification Test |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| Certification | Initial approval to be a FMCSA ME. | Initial FMCSA ME training successfully completed for the first time. | Pass test within 3 years of completing the initial FMCSA ME training. |
| Recertification | Re-approval of FMCSA certified ME already listed in the National Registry. | Complete Periodic Refresher Training by fifth and tenth years. | Pass test prior to expiration of current certification. |
| Reinstatement | Re-approval of a prior FMCSA ME who has been removed from the National Registry for any reason. | FMCSA ME training is current (every 5 years). | Certification test is current (every 10 years). |

Becoming an FMCSA ME Certification Testing Organization

To accommodate the number of potential MEs and their geographic dispersion, the ME Certification Test is administered by multiple, private-sector, professional Testing Organizations. In addition, the Agency is permitting testing organizations to offer on-line monitored testing. Given the variety of testing organizations and methods used, it is important to maintain common standards of test presentation, facilities, data security, and other factors. These standards must be carefully defined and applied so MEs have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge without concern for the reliability or validity of the test and its administration. 49 CFR 390.107 establishes these standards, and states (in part):

- (a) The testing organization has documented policies and procedures that:
 - 1. Use secure protocols to access, process, store, and transmit all test items, test forms, test data, and candidate information and ensure access by authorized personnel only.
 - 2. Ensure testing environments are reasonably comfortable and have minimal distractions.
 - 3. Prevent to the greatest extent practicable the opportunity for a test taker to attain a passing score by fraudulent means.
 - 4. Ensure that test center staff that interact with and proctor examinees or provide technical support have completed formal training, demonstrate competency, and are monitored periodically for quality assurance in testing procedures.
 - 5. Accommodate testing of individuals with disabilities or impairments to minimize the effect of the disabilities or impairments while maintaining the security of the test and data.

- (b) Testing organizations that offer testing of examinees at locations that are not operated and staffed by the organization by means of remote, computer-based systems, must, in addition to the requirements of paragraph (a), ensure that such systems
 - 1. Provide a means to authenticate the identity of the person taking the test.
 - 2. Provide a means for the testing organization to monitor the activity of the person taking the test
 - 3. Do not allow the person taking the test to reproduce or record the contents of the test by any means.

- (c) The testing organization has submitted its documented policies and procedures as defined in paragraph (a) of this section to FMCSA; and agreed to future reviews by FMCSA to ensure compliance with the criteria listed in this section.

- (d) The testing organization administers only the currently authorized version of the Medical Examiner Certification Test developed and furnished by FMCSA.

Application Process

Organizations wishing to be approved to administer the FMCSA ME Certification Test need to complete the following steps:

1. Register on the National Registry
2. Affirm statements agreeing to:
 - National Registry/FMCSA Terms of Use and Privacy Policy
 - Transmit to FMCSA ME Certification Test results within 24 business hours
 - Future reviews by FMCSA
 - All information you have submitted to FMCSA is true and correct
3. Upload via the National Registry the policies and procedures for the testing organization, associated test centers, and facilities including documentation of:
 - Security Protocols
 - Testing Environment
 - Fraud Protections
 - Any online testing protocols, policies and procedures
4. Undergo FMCSA site visit to assure security and verify that documented policies and procedures are in place.
5. Receive approval from FMCSA to be listed as a test provider.
6. Register all affiliated test centers.
7. Receive test download and answer key from FMCSA.
8. Store tests and answers securely.
9. Transmit completed tests, results and test taker information to the National Registry system.

NOTE: The site visit should include an assessment of the NIST 800-53 security controls that are relevant to the location. These controls would include some of the following groups of controls: Physical and Environmental, Access Control, Personnel Security, Configuration Management, and Auditing. As a part of the site review the assessor would need to not only describe and document the controls but also verify and validate that the controls are actually in place. The mitigation of security control weaknesses would depend upon the type, severity and impact of the weakness. Security control weaknesses can be documented and tracked through acceptance and/or remediation using the Plan of Action and Milestone (POA&M) document for the National Registry system with the approval of the FMCSA Security officer.

Documenting Policies and Procedures

Professional testing organizations who wish to become FMCSA ME Certification Testing Organizations must meet FMCSA criteria (see 49 CFR 390.107) and submit its documented policies and procedures to FMCSA for approval. They must also agree to future FMCSA reviews to ensure continuing compliance.

Periodic Review of Test Providers

All Testing Organizations will be subject to periodic review by FMCSA. As part of this review, Testing Organizations will be asked to submit documentation showing compliance with FMCSA testing organization technical and administrative requirements. This compliance documentation can be uploaded to FMCSA using the National Registry System.

A Testing Organization found to be out of compliance with the requirements will receive a written notification from FMCSA specifying the non-compliance issues and corrective actions for the test

provider to complete. FMCSA also reserves the right to revoke the organization's authorization to deliver the certification test until corrective actions are taken or for other reasons.

Listing on the National Registry Website

The Testing Organizations that deliver the FMCSA ME Certification Test are listed on the National Registry website "Training & Testing Organization" page: (http://nrcme-cie.fmcsa.dot.gov/train_test.aspx).

Certification Test Delivery

FMCSA develops and provides the FMCSA ME Certification Test forms and updates. Testing Organizations are responsible for the proper delivery of the test to medical examiners, reporting individual test results (score) to each ME, and transmitting a record of item responses from each test taker to the National Registry.

Medical Examiner Eligibility for Certification Test

ME applicants for the FMCSA ME Certification must provide proof of their eligibility to take the test. They must provide:

- One of the following forms of identification (ID) (Note: temporary forms of ID, such as a temporary driver's license or temporary employment card, are *not* acceptable):
 - U.S. driver's license with photograph.
 - State-issued ID card with photograph.
 - U.S. Passport
 - U.S. Military ID card with photograph.
 - Permanent Resident Card with photo
 - Native American Tribal ID Card with photo
 - Foreign government-issued passport with photo
 - Canadian Provincial driver's license with photo
 - Indian and Northern Affairs Canada card with photo (INAC)
- A valid license to practice in their healthcare profession
- A certificate of completion of training provided by an accredited training organization
- The ME candidate's National Registry Number

NOTE: A candidate who fails the FMCSA ME Certification Test must wait 30 days before retaking the test.

Scheduling the Certification Test

Testing Organizations are responsible for advertising of the testing service, determining the test schedule, managing applications for testing, scoring the test, and transmitting test data to the National Registry system.

Certification Test Procedure

Certification test procedures must be followed for each ME candidate who takes the National Registry Certification Test whether the test is administered at a test center or on-line. As part of the standard test procedure the test provider must:

- Verify medical examiner identity by obtaining the documents listed above.
- Login to the National Registry System using the MEs National Registry Number.
- Verify the information on the screen with the photo identification and licensure provided.
- Obtain information about which test form to administer from the National Registry System.
- Administer the test form indicated.
- Inform candidate of test results.
- Store test results.

Test Security/Test Administration

At a test center

The Testing Organization must monitor every test session to maintain a standardized testing environment. This ensures that every ME has an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and protects the integrity of the test. The following security procedures must be enforced by the person (proctor) administering the test:

- No cameras, notes, documents, audio or video recorders, personal digital assistants (PDA), pagers, cellular phones, calculators or other electronic devices are permitted in the testing area.
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the test room.
- Except for keys and wallets, no personal items, including purses, business cases, backpacks, valuables or weapons may be brought into the test room.

During testing the following applies:

- Eating, drinking and smoking are not permitted inside the test room.
- Pencils/markers may be provided and may be available during testing.
- Blank scratch paper or dry-erase boards may be provided during testing, and they must be returned to the proctor at test completion. No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the testing area.
- The proctor may not answer any questions concerning the test content or requests for interpretations during testing.
- No conversations with others during the test (except with proctors/monitors).

Online testing

The test security requirements for online testing are similar to those described above for test administration at a test center. The Testing Organization must provide monitoring for every test session, to the extent possible. This ensures that every ME has an equal opportunity to demonstrate his or her knowledge and protects the integrity of the test. The following security procedures must be enforced by the testing organization:

- No cameras, notes, documents, audio or video recorders, personal digital assistants (PDA), pagers, cellular phones, calculators or other electronic devices are permitted within view or reaching distance of the test taker.
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the room.
- No conversations with others during the test (except with proctors/monitors).
- No personal items such as purses, business cases, and backpacks are allowed within view or reaching distance of the test taker.

During testing the following applies:

- The use of the internet, books, reference materials etc. is not permitted during the exam.
- Pencils/markers may be used.
- Blank scratch paper may be used.
- No conversations with others during the test (except with proctors/monitors).
- No telephone communications are permitted
- The candidate must remain in the room, seated at the computer within range of the webcam.

Introducing the Test Procedure

At A Test Center/Online Testing

The following information should be presented to the candidate prior to taking the test as an introduction to the test procedure.

Regardless of the format used to administer the test, it is important that any advice on taking the test is presented uniformly to each test candidate and consistently from every Testing Organization. The following must be presented to and acknowledged by each candidate prior to taking the test:

- The FMCSA ME Certification Test is a two hour, timed examination. The test has 120 items: 100 are scored and 20 are not scored because they are being vetted for use in future tests. You will not be able to identify the scored and un-scored items. The correct response to each item that counts toward your score will have been previously validated.
- Each item in the ME Certification Test is based on a possible scenario in a typical physical examination. The correct response to a test item may not seem to you to be the best of all possible responses that could be available. However, you are limited to the four options listed. Select the best one of the four options. If you are uncertain about the best response to an item, select a response anyway since there is no penalty for guessing.
- Most of the items will test your knowledge of the process of the physical examination of CMV drivers. Some items focus on which information from the physical examination and how the information should be documented. Other items focus on the reasons that an additional consultation for more information may be needed before a certification decision is made. Understanding where you are in the process of gathering information about the driver and what you do with the information will be critical to success on the test.

- If there is a brief, unexpected interruption (e.g., power outage, building evacuation) while taking the test, your testing time will be extended so that you will have a full two hours to submit responses.

NOTE: Testing Organizations must develop policies and procedures when using automated monitoring online systems. These policies and procedures must be presented to each candidate taking the test.

Introducing Test Software

At A Test Center/Online Testing

As in the Test Introduction section above, it is important that the introduction to the test software be presented uniformly. A screen with instructions, a video or other method describing how to use the software may be used as long as the method is uniform.

Test Taking Misconduct and Responses

The test provider should dismiss from the test session, any candidate who engages in misconduct and should not submit their score to FMCSA. FMCSA expects testing providers to include procedures for handling test taking misconduct in their policies. Examples of misconduct are if the candidate:

- Creates a disturbance, is abusive or is otherwise uncooperative and disturbs others in the test room.
- Uses electronic communications equipment, such as pagers, cellular phones or PDAs.
- Gives or receives help or is suspected of doing so.
- Attempts to record test items or makes notes.
- Attempts to take the certification test for someone else.
- Uses notes, books, and other aids.
- Talks to another person (other than the proctor/monitor) while taking the test.

Testing Organizations are required to report to FMCSA any attempt by a candidate to pass the test by fraudulent means. FMCSA prohibits the candidate from retaking the test for 90 days.

Responding to Comments from Medical Examiners

Testing Organizations should refrain from collecting comments about the test from candidates taking the test. Once the candidate has completed the test, the proctor should advise them to submit comments directly to FMCSA. The candidate should be advised that submitting a comment does not affect their score.

Providing Certification Test Results

The Testing Organization notifies the candidate that the results will be sent to FMCSA.

After receiving the test answers from the testing center, FMCSA confirms the grading, ensures the validation of the candidate's credentials and issues a National Registry certificate. The candidate receives official notification via email about his or her certification status. The email includes the ME's National Registry Number, and information about maintaining certification.

Certification Retesting Procedure

An ME who does not pass the test for initial certification, recertification, or reinstatement may take it again by submitting another application to a Testing Organization and paying the appropriate fee. This is **retesting**. The retest does not have to be performed by the same test provider. The ME must wait 30 days before retaking the test, but there is no limit on the number of times that a ME may take the test. An ME candidate must pass the certification test within 3 years after completing initial training for initial certification or for reinstatement if FMCSA requires the ME candidate to retake the initial training.

If an ME listed on the National Registry fails to pass the certification test prior to the expiration of his or her FMCSA ME Certification, FMCSA may issue a Notice of Proposed Removal to the ME. If the ME passes the certification test and meets all the requirements in the Notice of Proposed Removal, FMCSA would issue a new certification. However, if FMCSA has removed the ME from the National Registry, the ME would be required to apply for reinstatement.

Certification Test Technical Requirements

At A Test Center

Testing Organizations must have an IT system that supports the National Registry business processes defined for testing of MEs. In addition, Testing Organizations may provide online testing alternatives. Testing Organizations are a critical component of FMCSA's approach to minimize fraud in the National Registry system. As such, test center employees will use the National Registry system website to verify ME identification and professional credentials.

Testing Organizations must be able to securely receive electronic updates of test forms from the National Registry, and to securely transmit ME certification test results to the National Registry. Following is a list of specific IT system requirements and capabilities for a Testing Organization:

- The Testing Organization must protect any personally identifiable information associated with the medical examiner, using a NIST-approved encryption technique.
- The Testing Organization must receive the National Registry test forms (and updates) in XML format, and process those forms into a format useable by their internal test delivery system.
- The Testing Organization must securely store (using data-at-rest encryption) the National Registry test forms.
- Each test center must have internet access. Upon arrival to take the exam, the medical examiner will present his or her identification, training information, and medical credentials. The test center employee will be required to log on to the National Registry website, look up the medical examiner, and confirm that the information presented by the National Registry website is consistent with the documentation provided in person.
- Upon verification of ME identification, the National Registry system will determine the ME's eligibility to take the test, and determine which test form should be used to test the medical examiner, and will display this information to the test center employee. The test center employee must have the ability to use this information to select which test is actually presented to the medical examiner.
- The Testing Organization testing system must be capable of presenting the test form questions to the medical examiner in randomized order, and must report the test results to FMCSA in the same order as they were presented to the ME.

- The testing system must accurately compute each test grade and numeric score immediately upon test completion, and report the same to FMCSA.
- The testing system must save all test outcomes securely, using a NIST-approved encryption technique.
- The testing system must securely transmit all test results to the National Registry system using a web services call, in compliance with the Web Services Description Language (WSDL) over https protocol.

Online testing

In addition to the requirements above, if utilizing a third party online test delivery system, the Testing Organization must ensure secure transfer of test and personally identifiable information regarding the candidate.

Minimum Computer Configuration

Testing Organizations must submit information regarding their computer configuration to FMCSA for approval. Each testing station should be able to run the testing software independently. Hardware should be robust enough to display digitized images and transmit information to each testing station without delay. Testing organizations should provide minimum computer configuration standards for running the test to all test takers.

The software platform requires the following minimum configuration:

- Current operating system along with the most recent updates and service packs installed.
- Anti-virus software with current programs and data files.
- Encryption/decryption software.

Testing Station Computer Security

Testing Organizations must submit information regarding computer security to FMCSA for approval. The testing platforms must have access to the test provider's internal local area network (LAN).

Certification Test Data Management

The test provider must establish a test data management server that is separate from any of the testing platforms. This server may be any configuration (e.g., Apple, PC, UNIX, or Linux) capable of providing the following services:

Data Collection, Storage, and Backup

The testing organizations test data management server must be able to retrieve test results from the testing platforms and must provide long-term data storage. The data on the test data management server must be backed up routinely on a schedule that ensures the availability of the most current data in event of catastrophic failure. Data may be backed up to removable media, but it must be stored in a secure location.

Data Transfer/Certification Test Results Reporting

The testing system must securely transmit all test results to the National Registry system using a web services call, in compliance with the Web Services Description Language (WSDL) over https protocol.

Test results include the following data items:

- Test Center ID
- Medical Examiner First Name
- Medical Examiner Last Name
- Medical Examiner National Registry Number
- Name of the test provider
- Date of the administration (month/day/year as in xx/yy/yyyy)
- Identification information associated with the test form (8 characters)
- Total test score (maximum of 3 characters)
- Pass or fail label (p or f) associated with the total test score
- Alpha character (A, B, C, or D) associated with the option selected for each item and the character (.) associated with any missing option responses
- Point (0 or 1) associated with the option response to each item
- Test questions and answers in same sequence as administered

Data Security

The testing organization must submit their policies about secure transmission to show that they are able to transmit all test results securely.

If using a third party online test delivery system, the testing organization must define the security measures taken to protect test results and PII during transfer between online test delivery and the testing organization.

The data on the test data management server must not be accessible by any other server except when the test provider administrator is actively transferring data to FMCSA or to an online test delivery organization. The Testing Organization must securely store the National Registry test forms using data-at-rest encryption.

National Registry Policies and Procedures

Fees, Payment, and Refunds

Although FMCSA reviews the policies and procedures submitted by testing organizations before approving them to provide the test, it does not establish, or regulate the fees established and collected by testing organizations, and does not receive any monies collected by testing organizations or providers. Testing providers are not reimbursed by the Federal government, but may charge fees they deem appropriate for test delivery. The testing provider is responsible for the entire process of fee determination, collection, and refund, if warranted. The testing provider is also responsible for the advertising of the testing service, determining the testing schedule, and managing applications submitted by candidates for taking the certification test.