

"People First In All We Do"



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CDL / Medical Card Merger

The so-called "medical card/CDL merger" rule, as published on December 1, 2008, will ultimately result in a variety of changes to the medical qualification and commercial driver's licensing process between now and January 30, 2014.

The final rule from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires states to begin placing each interstate driver's medical qualification status into the national commercial driver's license (CDL) database. In practical terms, this means:

- An interstate commercial motor vehicle (CMV) driver who is required to hold a CDL will have to provide each of his/her medical certificates (wallet cards) and any applicable variances/exemptions to the state that issued the CDL. The expiration date of the certificate, as well as other details about the driver's medical certification, is then placed in the CDL database for tracking by the state. The driver must submit each subsequent medical certificate to the state in order to maintain an active CDL for interstate commerce;
- The state will have to make sure the driver is medically qualified before issuing or renewing the CDL, and will have to add the driver's medical qualification status to the driver's driving record;
- As of January 30, 2014, employers will have to obtain each applicant's driving record to verify that he/she is medically qualified; and
- Because drivers' medical qualification status will be instantly accessible to enforcement officers, effective January 30, 2014, many drivers will no longer need to carry their medical cards with them in the truck or bus (at least for no longer than 15 days, as explained below).

Between January 30, 2012, and January 30, 2014, all interstate drivers who hold a CDL and are required to hold a medical card must begin providing their medical cards to their state driver licensing agencies, as well as letting the agencies know what type of driver they are (as outlined below). States may determine how the cards are to be delivered (e.g., in person, mail, fax, email), whether copies will be allowed, and whether a fee will be charged for medical card processing.

One-Year Extension

The Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCSA) today announced that it is extending by one year, until Jan. 30, 2015, a requirement that interstate commercial driver's license (CDL) holders retain paper copies of their medical examiner's certificate and continue to make the document available for review upon request at the roadside by federal and state commercial motor vehicle inspectors. In Dec. 2008, FMCSA issued a Final Rule modernizing, streamlining, and simplifying recordkeeping obligations for drivers, carriers and state governments by requiring that a driver's medical certification record be merged with state-issued CDLs. States received support from FMCSA to implement the necessary IT system upgrades and merge the records into one, online database – the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS). FMCSA announced the one-year extension today to protect commercial drivers from being cited for violations because some states are not yet in full compliance with the new system.

What does this mean for me?

GIS drivers that retain a CDL should try to comply with this new requirement as soon as they can. Meaning that when they have the time available, they should travel to their local DMV and present their medical certificate. This information will then be tracked in the DMV's system.

Drivers shall continue to keep their medical certificates on their person for the remainder of the extension (which is through Jan. 30, 2015) to prevent violations.

Remember:

After the final date of Jan. 30, 2015, it will be up to the **DRIVER** to present their new medical card to the DMV upon renewal...every time it is renewed to prevent violations.