


FMCSA Vision Standards



The Alternative Vision Standard
including Monocular Vision

American Osteopathic College of Occupational and Preventive Medicine 

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DISCLOSURES

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I have no disclosures of any relevant financial relationships.

I will not be discussing "off label" use of drugs.

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Objectives

- Discuss medical standards for vision
- Discuss how to perform the visual exam
- Discuss recording of results
- Discuss Alternative Vision Standard

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"Traditional" CERTIFICATION (2013 – Present)

- **Driver may be certified if:**
 - Distant acuity of at least 20/40 in each eye
 - Binocular Acuity of at least 20/40
 - Horizontal Fields of at least 70 degrees
 - Distinguish between red, green and amber

(This is still THE Vision Standard)

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Vision Standard

History of Eye Disorders or Impaired vision

- Retinopathy
- Cataracts
- Aphakia
- Glaucoma
- Macular Degeneration

Use of ophthalmic preparations?

ANY "Yes" answers require clarification and documentation

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Testing for Vision

Central Visual Acuity

- May be performed with Snellen Chart or vision screening machine, result must be recorded in Snellen Values
- Drivers that need glasses should be tested with glasses

Peripheral Vision

- Confrontation, fingers, or vision screener, if inconclusive refer for perimetry

Color vision

- Distinguish **Red, Amber, Green**. Vision screener, Ishihara, Paper clips, wire bundles, door flags

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Physical Exam

Examine for:

- Pupillary equality
- Reaction and accommodation
- Ocular Motility
- Ocular muscle imbalance
- Extra-Ocular movements
- Exophthalmos

Note abnormal findings, discuss value of regular visual examinations

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MEDICAL EXAMINER DETERMINATION (Federal)

Use this section for examinations performed in accordance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (49 CFR 391.41-391.49):

Does not meet standards (specify reason): _____

Meets standards in 49 CFR 391.41; qualifies for 2-year certificate

Meets standards, but periodic monitoring required (specify reason): _____

Driver qualified for: 3 months 6 months 1 year other (specify): _____

Wearing corrective lenses Wearing hearing aid Accompanied by a waiver/exemption (specify type): _____

Accompanied by a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate Qualified by operation of 49 CFR 391.64 (Federal)

Driving within an exempt intracity zone (see 49 CFR 391.62) (Federal)

Determination pending (specify reason): _____

Return to medical exam office for follow-up on (must be 45 days or less): _____

Medical Examination Report amended (specify reason): _____

If amended: Medical Examiner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Incomplete examination (specify reason): _____

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Monocular Vision History

- Prior to ~ 2005
 - OK to certify monocular vision if > 6 months since loss of eye
- 2012 – 3/21/2022
 - CDME determine that vision waiver is required, issued medical “card” indicating it must be accompanied by a federal monocular vision waiver
 - Driver would start FMCSA waiver application
 - Driver would discover that they needed a special eye exam, and try to schedule
 - Collect and submit driving record (> 3 years safe driving)
 - Submit application to FMCSA
 - FMCSA might want a road test from the employer
 - Driver would wait many months, then get a waiver

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Alternative Vision Standard

- The new alternative vision standard eliminates the need for a Federal vision exemption program and allows certified MEs, in consultation with an ophthalmologist or optometrist and utilizing the new Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871, to evaluate and determine whether to grant a Medical Examiner’s Certificate, Form MCSA-5876, for up to one year.

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Monocular Vision New System – Started 3/22/2022

- Aka: The Alternative Vision Standard
- Replaces the Monocular Vision Waiver and “Grandfathered” drivers (1996 program)
- Waivers and “Grandfathering” expires 3/22/23
- **All previously waived or “grandfathered” drivers must meet the new standard to be certified with their next examination after 3/22/22**
- “Due to the publication of the Qualifications of Drivers; Vision Standard final rule, the vision grandfather provision will be eliminated on March 22, 2023.”

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FMCSA 391.44

- **391.44 Physical qualification standards for an individual who does not satisfy, with the worse eye, either the distant visual acuity standard with corrective lenses or the field of vision standard, or both.**
- (a) *General.* An individual who 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 § 391.41(b)(10)(i) is physically qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce provided:
 - (1) The individual meets the other physical qualification standards in § 391.41 or has an exemption or skill performance evaluation certificate, if required; and
 - (2) The individual has the vision evaluation required by paragraph (b) of this section and the medical examination required by paragraph (c) of this section.
- (b) *Evaluation by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.* Prior to the examination required by § 391.45 or the expiration of a medical examiner’s certificate, the individual must be evaluated by a licensed ophthalmologist or licensed optometrist.
- (1) During the evaluation of the individual, the ophthalmologist or optometrist must complete the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871.

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FMCSA 391.43

- c) **Examination by a medical examiner.** At least annually, an individual who 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 § 391.41(b)(10)(i) must be medically examined and certified by a medical examiner as physically qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle in accordance with § 391.43. The examination must begin not more than 45 days after an ophthalmologist or optometrist signs and dates the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871.

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Monocular Vision - Definition

In the **better** eye, distant visual acuity of **at least 20/40** (with or without corrective lenses) **AND a field of vision of at least 70 degrees** in the horizontal meridian
AND
 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**.

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MCSA-5875 DOCUMENTATION

Vision
 Standard is at least 20/40 acuity (Snellen) in each eye with or without correction. At least 70° field of vision in horizontal meridian measured in each eye. The use of corrective lenses should be noted on the Medical Examiner's Certificate.

Acuity	Uncorrected	Corrected	Horizontal Field of Vision
Right Eye:	20/___	20/___	Right Eye: ___ degrees
Left Eye:	20/___	20/___	Left Eye: ___ degrees
Both Eyes:	20/___	20/___	

Applicant can recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors Yes No

Monocular vision Yes No

Referred to ophthalmologist or optometrist? Yes No

Received documentation from ophthalmologist or optometrist? Yes No

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Monocular Vision

New System – Started 3/22/2022

- Driver has their Eye Doctor complete MCSA-5871 form (**MUST use form – a Letter is NOT acceptable**)
- CDME exam within **45 days of MCSA-5871**
- **YOU** determine if driver meets standard & certify

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MCSA-5871

- Driver takes MCSA-5871 to Eye Specialist
- Can be either Optometrist or Ophthalmologist
- Eye Doc completes form
 - Current Diagnosis
 - Stability of condition
 - Formal Perimetry
 - Exams more often than annually?



VISION EVALUATION REPORT

Form: _____ Date: _____

Driver's License Number: _____

Information for the Individual

Information for the Ophthalmologist or Optometrist

General Information (please check to cause FMCSA's attention if checked, as indicated)

(1) Is the driver's vision stable? Yes No

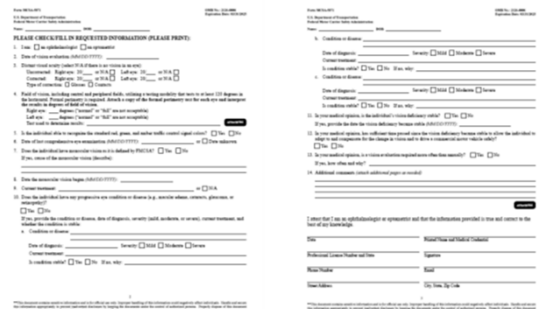
(2) Is the driver's vision stable? Yes No

(3) Is the driver's vision stable? Yes No

(4) Is the driver's vision stable? Yes No

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MCSA-5871



PLEASE CHECK/INITIAL IN REQUIRED INFORMATION PLEASE PRINT:

1. Date of examination: _____

2. Date of vision test: _____

3. Distance vision: _____

4. Field of vision: _____

5. Is the individual able to recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors? Yes No

6. Is the individual able to recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors? Yes No

7. Is the individual able to recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors? Yes No

8. Is the individual able to recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors? Yes No

9. Is the individual able to recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors? Yes No

10. Is the individual able to recognize and distinguish among traffic control signals and devices showing red, green, and amber colors? Yes No

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MCSA-5871

- CDME review of the MCSA-5871
 - Make sure the driver's evaluation meets FMCSA minimums
 - Put it into your medical records with the rest of the FMCSA forms
- What if I disagree with the Eye Doc?
 - Consult with the eye specialist, but
 - **YOU make the final certification decision**

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FMCSA

- (iii) The individual is not physically qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle if the individual's vision deficiency is not stable.
- (iv) The individual is not physically qualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle if 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.
- **“Even though the ophthalmologist or optometrist has provided their input on the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871, MEs still have the ability to request any additional testing they find necessary to assist them in making a physical qualification determination.**
- **The final physical qualification determination rests with the ME.”**

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Monocular Vision – Disqualifying Findings

The individual is not physically qualified to operate a CMV if:

- His or her distant **visual acuity is not at least 20/40** (Snellen), with or without corrective lenses, and the **field of vision is not at least 70°** in the horizontal meridian, **in the better eye.**
- He or she is not able to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard **red, green, and amber.**
- His or her **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.

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Road Test

- For all NEW monocular drivers
- Done by the Motor Carrier
 - After Medical Exam
 - Before Commercial Driving
 - Carrier issues a certificate to their file
- No mention of a process for Self-Employed drivers ???

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Road Test

- Not Required if (meets ANY of the following):
 - Operated a CMV intrastate or interstate for at least 3 years with the vision deficiency
 - Driver certifies when vision deficiency began
 - Operated 3 years intrastate or interstate under 390.3T(f) or 391.2
 - Had a valid federal vision exemption that was valid on 3/22/2022
 - Medically certified under Grandfather clause 391.64(b)

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FMCSA 391.31

- (3) An individual physically qualified under this section for the first time is not required to complete a road test in accordance with § 391.31 if the motor carrier responsible for completing the road test under § 391.31(b) determines the individual possessed a valid commercial driver's license or non-commercial driver's license to operate, and did operate, a commercial motor vehicle in either intrastate commerce or in interstate commerce excepted by § 390.3T(f) of this subchapter or § 391.2 from the requirements of this subpart with the vision deficiency for the 3-year period immediately preceding the date of physical qualification under this section for the first time.
- (i) The individual must certify in writing to the motor carrier the date the vision deficiency began.

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MER DOCUMENTATION

MER DOCUMENTATION



Input from Eye Doc will be via MCSA-5871

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Summary Vision Certification

- Driver may be certified if:
 - Distant acuity of at least 20/40 in each eye
 - Binocular Acuity of at least 20/40
 - Horizontal Fields of at least 70 degrees
 - Distinguish between red, amber and green
- OR**
- Meet requirements of Alternative Vision Standard, with form MCSA-8571 completed by an eye doc within last 45 days

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Summary Vision Certification

- If driver must wear corrective lenses to meet standard this must be notated in the “wearing corrective lenses” checkbox
- Advise drivers to carry a spare set of glasses or contacts

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Question!

- Is it appropriate for an ME to place an individual in a determination pending status in connection with the alternative vision physical qualification standard in 49 CFR 391.44?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

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Determination Pending

- The correct answer is b. No. An ME should not place any individual in a determination pending status who fails the vision screening during a physical qualification examination. Instead, the ME should not qualify the driver. This applies to individuals who first learn they may not satisfy the vision standard during the examination, have a known vision deficiency that cannot be corrected, or need evaluation by
- an ophthalmologist or optometrist to correct a refractive error. This also applies to new drivers, as well as those drivers who do not have a current Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876. The ME should instruct the individual to see an ophthalmologist or optometrist to have a vision evaluation. When the ME believes it is likely that the individual may be physically qualified under the alternative vision standard in 49 CFR 391.44, the ME should instruct the individual to have the ophthalmologist or optometrist complete the Vision Evaluation Report, Form MCSA-5871. After the vision evaluation, the individual can obtain a new physical qualification examination.

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Determination Pending

- An ME may place an individual in a determination pending status only when the individual already has completed a vision evaluation by an ophthalmologist or optometrist and provides a completed Vision Evaluation Report, MCSA-5871, to the ME. This status affords an individual up to 45 days to provide additional information from the ophthalmologist or optometrist to the ME and to complete the physical qualification examination.

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Thank You



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