

not compromise safety. The agency has concluded that granting these exemptions will provide a level of safety that will equal or exceed the level of safety maintained without the exemptions for these commercial motor vehicle drivers.

DATES: This decision is effective March 23, 2003.. Comments from interested person should be submitted by April 18, 2003.

ADDRESSES: You can mail or deliver comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Dockets Management Facility, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You can also submit comments at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Please include the docket numbers that appear in the heading of this document in your submission. You can examine and copy this document and all comments received at the same Internet address or at the Dockets Management Facility from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you want us to notify you that we received your comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard.

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>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Sandra Zywockarte, Office of Bus and Truck Standards and Operations, (202) 366-2987, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

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 commercial motor vehicles in interstate commerce, for a 2-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 37 individuals who have requested renewal of their exemptions in a timely manner. The FMCSA has evaluated these 37 petitions for renewal on their merits and decided to extend each exemption for a renewable 2-year period. They are:

Carl W. Adams
Glenn A. Babcock, Jr.
David W. Ball
David F. Bardsley, Sr.
William E. Beckley
Joseph M. Blankenship
Willie Burnett, Jr.
Charles C. Chapman
Dennis J. Christensen
Robert P. Conrad, Sr.
David L. Davis
Jerald O. Edwards
Elias Gomez, Jr.
Robert K. Hodge
William G. Holland
Thomas E. Howard
Spencer E., Leonard
Thomas F. Marczewski
Boy E. Mathews
Velmer L. McClelland
Duane A. McCord
James T. McGraw, Jr.
Clarence M. Miles, Jr.
Robert A. Moss
Robert A. Murphy
John E. Musick
Henry C. Patton
Bobby G. Pool, Sr.
Robert Radcliff, Jr.
Billy G. Saunders
Daniel J. Schaap
George D. Schell
Scottie Stewart
Clarence L. Swann, Jr.
Thaddeus E. Temoney
Harry C. Weber
Yu Weng

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 2 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. 3135(b)(1), an exemption may be granted for no longer than 2 years from its approval date and may be renewed upon application for additional 2-year periods. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), each of the 37 applicants has satisfied the entry conditions for obtaining an exemption from the vision requirements (65 FR 33406, 65 FR 57230, 65 FR 45817, 65 FR 77066, 65 FR 66286, 66 FR 13825, 65 FR 78256, 66 FR 16311). Each of these 37 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 2 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 2 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 April 18, 2003.

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