

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Docket:** For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time, or to Room PL-401 on the plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**Privacy Act:** 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 (DOT) complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477), or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

**Background**

The agency established the current standard for diabetes in 1970 because several risk studies indicated that diabetic drivers had a higher rate of accident involvement than the general population. The diabetes requirement provides that: A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently requiring insulin for control (49 CFR 391.41(b)(3)).

Since 1970, the agency has considered the diabetes requirement and undertaken studies to determine if its diabetes standard for commercial drivers in interstate commerce should be amended. It is FMCSA's view that its physical qualification standards should be based on sound medical, scientific and technological grounds, and that individual determinations should be made to the maximum extent possible consistent with FMCSA's responsibility to ensure safety on the nation's highways. The FMCSA published a notice of intent to issue exemptions to insulin-using diabetic drivers in the **Federal Register** on July 31, 2001 (66 FR 39548). This notice of intent discussed the regulatory history and research activity addressing the issue of diabetes and CMV operation.

**Feasibility Study To Qualify Insulin-Treated Diabetics to Operate CMVs**

Section 4018 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (Pub. L. 105-178, 112 Stat. 107) directed the Secretary of Transportation (the Secretary) to determine if it is feasible to develop a safe and practicable program for allowing

individuals with insulin-treated diabetes mellitus (ITDM) to operate CMVs in interstate commerce. In making the determination, the Secretary was directed to evaluate research and other relevant information on the effects of ITDM on driving performance. TEA-21 stated that, to accomplish this, the Secretary shall consult the states with regard to their programs for CMV operation by ITDM drivers, evaluate the DOT policies in other modes of transportation, analyze pertinent risk data, consult with interested groups knowledgeable about diabetes and related issues, and assess the possible legal consequences of permitting ITDM individuals to operate CMVs in interstate commerce. TEA-21 also directed the Secretary to report the findings to Congress and, if a program is feasible, describe the elements of a protocol to permit individuals with ITDM to operate CMVs. The FMCSA submitted the report to Congress on August 23, 2000. It is entitled "A Report to Congress on the Feasibility of a Program to Qualify Individuals with Insulin Treated Diabetes Mellitus to Operate Commercial Motor Vehicles in Interstate Commerce as Directed by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century," July 2000 (TEA-21 Report to Congress). It concludes that a safe and practicable protocol to allow some ITDM individuals to operate CMVs is feasible. For a detailed discussion of the report findings and conclusions, see July 31, 2001 (66 FR 39548). A copy of the report is on FMCSA's Web site at [www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm).

**Authority—Exemptions**

Under 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), FMCSA may grant an exemption for a period up to two years 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 statute also allows the agency to renew exemptions at the end of the two-year period, or after the current exemption expires.

FMCSA must publish a notice in the **Federal Register** for each exemption requested, explaining that the request has been filed, and providing the public an opportunity to inspect the safety analysis and any other relevant information known to the agency, and comment on the request. Prior to granting a request for an exemption, the agency must publish a notice in the **Federal Register** identifying the person or class of persons who will receive the exemption, the provisions from which the person will be exempt, the effective

period, and all terms and conditions of the exemption. The terms and conditions established by FMCSA must ensure that the exemption will likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved by complying with the regulation.

In addition, the agency is required to monitor the implementation of each exemption to ensure compliance with its terms and conditions. If FMCSA denies a request for an exemption, the agency must periodically publish a notice in the **Federal Register** identifying the person(s) whom the agency denied the exemption to and the reasons for the denial.

Generally, the duration of exemptions is limited to two years from the date of approval, but may be renewed. FMCSA is required to immediately revoke an exemption 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 the exemption was granted; or

(3) Continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of the regulations issued under the authority of 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e).

**Process for Applying for an Exemption**

The procedures for applying for an exemption may be found at 49 CFR 381.300 through 381.330. The person applying for an exemption is required to send a written request to the FMCSA Administrator. The written request must include basic information such as the identity of the person who would be covered by the exemption, the name of the motor carrier or other entity that would be responsible for the use or operation of CMVs during the exemption period, and the principal place of business of the motor carrier or other entity. Under section 381.310, the application must include a written statement that:

(1) Describes the event or CMV operation for which the exemption would be used;

(2) Identifies the regulation from which the applicant is requesting relief;

(3) Estimates the total number of drivers and CMVs that would be operating under the terms and conditions of the exemption; and

(4) Explains how the recipient of the exemption would ensure that they achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety that would be obtained by complying with the regulation.