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**\$3.97 USD**

# Friday Safety Brief®

## Why Conduct a Road Test?

As you might guess, this question touches on a larger issue: liability versus complying with DOT regulations. The requirement to road test prospective drivers was amended several years ago. The regulations did not eliminate the requirement to conduct a road test altogether. An exemption was added, however, allowing prospective employers to accept a valid CDL (if the road test was conducted in the type of equipment you are to assign), or a certificate of road test issued within the previous three years (§391.33).

Regardless of experience, prospective drivers should be road tested to make certain they can safely operate the vehicles they will be assigned. The public exposure and inherent liabilities of operating a CMV on public roadways is high. By not giving a road test, an exposure to liability is created.

A clean driving record and acceptable past employer references does not always equate to a safe driver. He/she could either be a safe driver or one that just has not been involved in an accident – yet. The road test is your opportunity to find out what kind of driver he/she is.

To think of it another way, would you entrust your personal vehicle to a stranger? Why entrust a tractor-trailer and cargo to one? Other issues that should be weighed against the time it takes to conduct a road test are: 1) your company's reputation; 2) punitive damages; 3) stolen equipment/cargo, etc.

The road test should be a positive experience. Remember that this will be one of the first in-depth experiences that person has with your company. Consider it not only as a safeguard, but also as a training session (e.g., reinforce what they are doing right and correct what they are doing wrong). Among the primary benefits of this interaction are: 1) the driver knows that you are serious about safety and 2) they know you are concerned about them and their safety.

There are certain things that a road test should always include as outlined below. Keep three things in mind. First, it is suggested that you have the driver verbally explain to you what he/she is doing (and why) while they are doing it. Second, road test forms should be filled out carefully, completely, and honestly. Lastly, you want the evaluation to be fair, so pre-determine the road test course and always follow it.



The beginning of the test should be a complete vehicle inspection, then the road test course should incorporate, at a minimum:

1. *Urban and rural traffic.*
2. *Four-lane highway/interstate long enough to complete both right and left lane changes and observe the driver's traffic awareness and how he/she reacts to stressors (beware road rage).*
3. *A section of curved roadway that is tight enough to challenge the driver's lane control through the curve.*
4. *A set of controlled railroad tracks.*
5. *An overhead clearance situation such as a marked underpass.*
6. *Safe shoulder areas for emergency parking procedures.*
7. *A steep grade if terrain permits where the driver's ability and climbing/descending hills can be evaluated.*
8. *Backing.*
9. *Any other factors that your drivers regularly encounter.*

Remember that two things drive your company: your drivers and your customers; however, only one of them affects your safety record. Road test prospective drivers to limit your exposures and ensure that you hire people who can safely do what you have hired them to do: DRIVE. ☼

### Medical Certification Requirements as Part of the CDL; Extension of Certificate Retention Requirements

**AGENCY:** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** The FMCSA proposes to keep in effect until January 30, 2014, the requirement that interstate drivers subject to the commercial driver's license (CDL) regulations and the Federal physical qualification requirements must retain a paper copy of the medical examiner's certificate. Interstate motor carriers would also be required to retain a copy of the medical certificate in the driver qualification files. This action is being taken to ensure the medical qualification of CDL holders until all States are able to post the medical self-certification and medical examiner's certificate data on the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) driver record. This proposed rule would not, however, extend the mandatory dates for States to comply with the requirement to collect and to post to the CDLIS driver record data from a CDL holder's medical self-certification and medical examiner's certificate.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before **June 29, 2011**.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by Docket Number FMCSA-1997-2210 using any one of the following methods:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

More information: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-06-14/html/2011-14653.htm>

**Federal Register:  
June 14, 2011**