

DOT Exams

Effective May 21, 2014, all medical examiners performing DOT physicals must be trained and certified by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FCMSA).

The FCMSA recognizes that drivers often face long, hard hours, and they are concerned about the safety of drivers and others on the roadways. The updated DOT regulations require that all medical examiners be trained and certified in the new FCMSA standards and that all results are reported to the FCMSA.

Federal law requires drivers of commercial motor vehicles to receive and pass regular physical examinations. These DOT physicals are highly regulated for the drivers' safety and reflect physical, mental and emotional issues that may affect a driver's ability to safely operation a commercial vehicle.

Your DOT exam will include the following components:

- Past or recent illnesses or injuries.
- Review of current medications, including controlled substances.
- Review of any medical conditions such as heart disorders, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.
- Physical exam.
- Blood pressure & pulse.
- Vision acuity test.
- Hearing test.
- Urine dip screen.
- Possibly a urine drug screen, if taking controlled substances.
- If needed, other tests for cardiac or pulmonary & respiratory conditions.

The basic requirements for passing a DOT physical exam under the new standards are:

- At least 20/40 correctable vision in each eye as well as both combined. Glasses or contacts are allowed.
- Needs to be able to distinguish colors found on traffic signals.
- Forced whisper test to detect adequate hearing.
- Controlled blood pressure under 140/90. Prescription medication may be used to control blood pressure.
- Cannot have diabetes that requires insulin injections.
- Maximum blood sugar level allowed is 200.
- No use of a schedule I drug (controlled substance), amphetamine, narcotic or habit forming drug. Possibility of exemption if you provide letter from prescribing provider.
- For any exemptions for vision, diabetes, etc. , please bring the exemption to your physical exam.

Before you arrive at our office for your DOT exam, please do the following:

- Be sure that your DOT exam is scheduled with one of our providers who is a certified medical examiner. Not all of our providers now perform these exams. Due to the new regulations, the DOT exams have to be performed separately from a routine physical exam or routine office visit. They cannot be done on the same day.
- Arrive about 20 minutes early to complete necessary paperwork. Bring your completed DOT Form to your visit along with your driver's license and pocket certificate. Bring your glasses, contacts or anything you routinely use for vision.
- Bring all prescription medication bottles that you take including over the counter medications.
- Bring a list of doctors that you see and their phone numbers.
- Take any required medications prior to your visit, including blood pressure meds.
- Drink plenty of water. You'll be required to give a urine sample to screen for kidney problems.
- If you have any of the conditions below, bring the requested items.
- *Diabetes* - Bring a list of medications and the name of your prescribing doctor. Bring copies of your blood sugar results or hemoglobin A1C results from the past 3 months.
- *High blood pressure* - Bring a list of medications and the name of your prescribing doctor.
- *Heart condition* - If you've had a heart attack or cardiovascular disease, bring a copy of your last stress test or release from your cardiologist.
- *Sleep apnea* - Bring a copy of your latest sleep study results if you have one.

Passing or Failing your DOT exam:

- The most common reasons for failing a DOT physical are uncontrolled blood pressure and uncontrolled sugar in your urine. Both conditions can commonly be controlled and managed.
- Another reason for failing a DOT exam would be having any condition that would cause a loss of the ability to operate a commercial vehicle safely, including the loss or impairment of limbs, decreased sensation to limbs, poor vision, insulin controlled diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, epilepsy, mental disorders or use of certain drugs.
- DOT medical cards are typically issued for 2 years. However, your medical examiner may issue a card for one year, if you have a medical condition that requires monitoring, such as hypertension.
- If you fail your medical exam, your medical examiner may issue you a 3 month medical card and have you return for further follow-up, to be sure that your medical issue is now controlled.
- Drug testing is not a typical part of the DOT exam but may be required by your employer.