

Blood Pressure: How Does This Affect Your DOT Medical Card?

One of the most frequent concerns we hear from commercial drivers regarding the DOT physical exam, is about high blood pressure. Here is the excerpt from FCMSA Rules and Regulations Part 391.41(b)(6) regarding blood pressure:

“A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person has no current clinical diagnosis of high blood pressure likely to interfere with his/her ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.”

Here are the medical guidelines according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). Note that employers are allowed to impose more stringent CDL requirements.

If a driver has hypertension and/or is being medicated for hypertension, he or she should be recertified more frequently. An individual diagnosed with Stage 1 hypertension (BP is 140/90-159/99) may be certified for one year. At recertification, an individual with a BP equal to or less than 140/90 may be certified for one year; however, if his or her BP is greater than 140/90 but less than 160/100, a one-time certificate for 3 months can be issued.

An individual diagnosed with Stage 2 (BP is 160/100-179/109) should be treated and a one-time certificate for 3-month certification can be issued. Once the driver has reduced his or her BP to equal to or less than 140/90, he or she may be recertified annually thereafter.

An individual diagnosed with Stage 3 hypertension (BP equal to or greater than 180/110) should not be certified until his or her BP is reduced to 140/90 or less, and may be recertified every 6 months.