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Friday Safety Brief

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What Happens If I Fail My DOT Physical?

In order to keep your CDL current, you must get a medical examiner's certificate and keep it up to date. This typically means you need to have a physical examination every two years for the [Department of Transportation \(DOT\)](#). If you fail the physical for any reason, your commercial driver's license could be downgraded to a regular driver's license, and you would no longer be eligible to operate commercial motor vehicles.

Can I get a second opinion on my DOT physical?

Sometimes a medical issue that causes a physician to fail a truck driver for their DOT physical exam is a clear cut necessity because the driver could pose a threat to themselves or other motorists if they were to operate a commercial motor vehicle. But that is not always the case. There are some areas where the physician must use their best judgment because the issue isn't as black and white. If you're on the cusp of having high blood pressure, for example, your doctor may fail you. But if you can improve those numbers with lifestyle or diet changes and be re-evaluated, you may get a passing grade from a different physician. In these cases, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) allows you to get a second opinion for your DOT physical as long as you are honest about your medical history and do not try to mislead the physician in an effort to fraudulently get your DOT medical examiner's card.

You should know that the FMCSA gets a copy of all medical examination reports for DOT physicals regardless of whether you pass or fail. So if you go doctor shopping to get a passing grade, the FMCSA may decide to investigate.

What happens if I lie on my DOT physical?

Lying during your DOT physical is illegal and can lead to fines and other penalties. Not to mention that you could be putting your life (and the lives of other drivers on the road) at risk if you lie to get your DOT medical examiner's card knowing that you have a medical condition that makes it dangerous for you to operate a semi-truck. It is absolutely critical that you are honest about your medical history and answer all of the questions truthfully.

Why do people fail the DOT physical exam?

There are a variety of reasons a certified medical examiner (CME) can fail a trucker for their DOT physical. High blood pressure, epilepsy, narcolepsy, sleep apnea, [diabetes](#), heart disease, poor eyesight, loss of an extremity, alcoholism, and use of amphetamines (even when used under a physician's care) are all reasons why people fail their DOT physicals.

There are variances available from the FMCSA for drivers who, for example, are missing an extremity