

MEDICAL CARD

WHAT IS A MEDICAL CARD?

A Medical Examiner's Certificate, commonly called a "medical card", is documentation signed by a qualified medical professional stating that a driver has passed a Department of Transportation (DOT) physical and is medically qualified under federal law to operate a commercial motor vehicle.

The DOT physical evaluates specific health standards, including vision, hearing, joint mobility, limb loss, and certain medical conditions such as diabetes or seizure disorders. The examination must be performed by a medical examiner listed on the FMCSA National Registry.

WHO IS REQUIRED TO HAVE A MEDICAL CARD?

Federal law (49 CFR Part 391) generally requires medical certification for drivers operating commercial motor vehicles in commerce. A medical card is typically required if a driver operates:

- A vehicle or vehicle combination with a **GVWR or GCWR of 10,001 pounds or more** in commerce (including farming);
- A passenger vehicle designed to transport **16 or more passengers, or 8 or more passengers** if for hire, including the driver; or
- A vehicle required to be **placarded for hazardous materials** under federal regulations.

Note: This definition of "commercial motor vehicle" differs from the definition used for CDL purposes.

COVERED FARM VEHICLE (CFV) EXEMPTION

Drivers operating a **Covered Farm Vehicle (CFV)** are **exempt from the DOT medical card requirement**.

Under 49 CFR 391.2(d), drivers of CFVs are exempt from the medical qualification standards found in Part 391, Subpart E. This exemption applies to both straight trucks and combination vehicles and applies regardless of whether the driver holds a CDL.

For most Illinois Farm Bureau members operating CFVs, a medical card is not required.

MEDICAL CARD POSSESSION

Drivers who are required to obtain medical certification must generally carry proof of that certification **unless it is electronically recorded**.

FMCSA regulations allow CDL holders who are classified as **Non-Excepted Interstate (NI)** drivers to have their medical certification recorded in the federal **Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS)**. When properly recorded, the driver is **not required to carry a physical medical card**.

Drivers whose medical certification is not electronically recorded must continue to carry their medical card while operating.

Best Practice: At the time of printing this book (February 26) FMCSA and states are transitioning to electronic recording. During this time, drivers subject to medical certification requirements are encouraged to carry a paper copy of their medical examiner's certificate during this transition period to avoid potential delays or enforcement issues.

CDL HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

All CDL holders, whether or not a CDL is required for their operation, must self-certify their driving status with the Illinois Secretary of State. Drivers must declare:

Failure to properly self-certify or maintain required medical certification may result in the CDL being downgraded to a non-CDL license. A limited grace period may apply; failure to comply within that period can result in permanent loss of CDL privileges.

SELF-CERTIFICATION CATEGORIES (CDL HOLDERS ONLY)

- **Non-Excepted Interstate (NI):**
Operates in interstate commerce and is required to meet federal medical certification requirements.
- **Excepted Interstate (EI):**
Operates in interstate commerce but is exempt from federal medical certification requirements (includes CFV operators).
- **Non-Excepted Intrastate (NA):**
Operates only in intrastate commerce and is subject to Illinois medical certification requirements.
- **Excepted Intrastate (EA):**
Operates only in intrastate commerce and is exempt from some or all Illinois medical certification requirements.

APPLIES ONLY TO DRIVERS WHO HAVE A CDL

	Interstate Commerce	Intrastate Commerce
Medical Card Required	NI	NA
Exempt from Medical Card	EI	EA

UPDATE BEFORE MEDICAL CARD EXPIRES

Generally, the driver is being asked two questions:
1. Are you an interstate or intrastate driver?
2. Are you required to have a medical card?

If your driver status changes, you must notify the Secretary of State immediately.

INTERSTATE VS. INTRASTATE COMMERCE

A driver is considered operating in **interstate commerce** if they:

- Cross state lines; **or**
- Operate entirely within Illinois while hauling goods that are part of an interstate shipment (originating in Illinois and is ultimately destined for another state or country).

Drivers who operate exclusively within Illinois and haul goods that both originate and terminate within the state are generally considered **intrastate** drivers.

Drivers who self-certify as intrastate-only (NA or EA) will receive a **"K" restriction** on their CDL, prohibiting operation outside Illinois.

REPORTING CHANGES

Drivers are responsible for notifying the Illinois Secretary of State immediately if their operating status changes. State personnel are not permitted and should not make this determination for the driver.

