



DOT Certification and Sleep Apnea FAQ

Q: Why is my driver required to take a sleep apnea test when DOT regulations don't list it as a requirement for certification?

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) does not have a requirement that a commercial truck driver completes a sleep apnea test during a DOT physical, but it does grant medical examiners the discretion to determine whether testing for a respiratory disorder like sleep apnea is necessary to medically certify a driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV).

Concentra® medical examiners adhere to the FMCSA regulation known as the Pulmonary Standard:

Physical Qualifications for Drivers [49 CFR 391.41 (b) (5)]

(b) A person is physically qualified to drive a motor vehicle if that person:

(5) Has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of a respiratory dysfunction likely to interfere with his/her ability to control and drive a commercial motor vehicle safely;

Q: During the DOT certification process, one of my drivers was tested for and diagnosed with OSA. Now what?

A diagnosis of moderate-to-severe OSA is a disqualifying condition that must be corrected or brought under acceptable control before a driver is certified. His/her treating physician should discuss the results with the medical examiner and provide the driver with a treatment plan that will help him/her be medically cleared to operate a CMV. Conditional certification may be granted for 90 days pending a sleep evaluation by a sleep specialist and recommended treatment.

Q: How does my driver get recertified after following the prescribed sleep apnea treatment?

The driver will need to provide compliance data to be considered for DOT recertification. If the driver was placed on determination pending and not issued a DOT card, the driver must return before the determination pending expiration date with a sleep specialist's report. Please consult a Concentra medical examiner for more details.

Q: As the employer of CMV drivers, what are my obligations?

FMCSA states that an employer with CMV drivers may not require or permit a driver to operate a CMV if the driver has a condition that would affect his/her ability to safely operate the vehicle, such as sleep apnea.

Q: Is there a specific type or level of sleep apnea that disqualifies a driver?

Concentra may recommend a driver undergoes testing for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). An untreated diagnosis of moderate-to-severe OSA would disqualify a driver, as the condition's severity would make it unsafe for the driver to operate a CMV. The following are examples of other findings that may disqualify a driver:

- Driver experiences excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Driver was recently involved in a motor vehicle crash (or a near crash) caused by drowsy driving or sleepiness.
- Driver is not compliant with treatment plan following OSA diagnosis.

During a sleep study, a specialist determines whether a driver has OSA using the Apnea-Hypopnea Index (AHI), which measures sleep apnea severity. AHI is determined by the number of apneas

plus hypopneas (i.e., abnormally slow or shallow respirations) divided by the hours of sleep time. A hypopnea is defined as at least a 50-percent airflow reduction for 10 seconds or more.

AHI	Level
<5	Minimal (no sleep apnea diagnosis)
5-15	Mild
16-30	Moderate
>30	Severe

Q: Is it true that your examiners look at a driver's neck size to determine if a sleep apnea test is required?

During a DOT physical, our medical examiners look for deformities that might interfere with breathing or swallowing. These abnormalities can be predictors of sleep apnea, which could prompt an examiner to refer a driver to a specialist for OSA testing; however, neck circumference is only one of several

factors that can increase the risk of sleep apnea. Other factors we consider include (but are not limited to):

- Age
- Sex
- Presence of diabetes or hypertension
- Smoking habits
- BMI
- Receding chin

Q: What if I have a driver who was already diagnosed with sleep apnea? How can I make sure he/she gets certified?

If your driver was previously diagnosed with sleep apnea, make sure his/her treatment plan is compliant with FMCSA regulations. The driver should bring a copy of his/her CPAP compliance report to the DOT physical. If the driver has more than one machine and mask, a compliance report for each should be presented at the exam. If possible, the CPAP compliance data should be less than one month old and preferably include data for the entire time of use from the last DOT physical.