

MEDICAL CARD

WHAT IS A MEDICAL CARD?

It is a document, typically wallet-sized, that has been signed by a qualified medical professional indicating that the driver has passed a *DOT Physical* and is generally physically qualified, under federal law, to drive a truck. That DOT physical looks at a specified set of conditions including such things as eyesight and hearing, range of motion in joints, loss of limbs, and the presence of potentially debilitating disorders such as diabetes or seizures. While most physicians are medically qualified to conduct the physical, not all offer the service. Special examination forms are available online.

MEDICAL EXAMINER CERTIFICATION

Since May 20, 2014, interstate drivers are allowed to use only those examiners who are USDOT certified to give the DOT physical. The restriction significantly cuts the availability of the service – especially in sparsely populated areas of the state.

REQUIREMENT TO HAVE A MEDICAL CARD

Federal law [49 CFR 391] and Illinois law generally start from the premise that virtually everyone who drives a truck or a truck-trailer combination of 10,001 pounds or more in commerce (including farming) is subject to the requirement.

REQUIREMENT [49 CFR 391.1]

Drivers of commercial vehicles generally must undergo a DOT driver physical once every two years and carry a card (unless it is registered in Commercial Driver's License Information Center [CDLIS]) signed by the examining physician indicating he/she is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle. With some exceptions, a medical card must be obtained by a driver if they:

1. Operate a commercial vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or a Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR) of 10,001 pounds or more in a commercial enterprise (includes farming); or
2. Operate a passenger vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers – 8 or more if for hire – including the driver; or
3. Operate a vehicle required by federal regulations to be placarded while transporting hazardous materials.

Note: This definition of "Commercial vehicle" differs from that used for the CDL.

MEDICAL CARD AND THE CFV [49 CFR 391.2(D)]

Drivers operating a CFV are exempt from the requirement to have a Medical Card. Specifically, the exemption is from the rules in Part 391, Subpart E.

MEDICAL CARD EXEMPTIONS

Covered Farm Vehicles (CFV): This one is very simple. It applies the exception from the DOT physical to all drivers who operate a CFV, whether straight truck or a combination vehicle.

REQUIREMENT TO CARRY A MEDICAL CARD

All drivers required to undergo a DOT physical must continue to carry a medical card with them unless they have been certified as "NI" (Non-Exempt Interstate). See below. Those NI drivers may now leave their medical cards at home – their medical card record is included in the federal electronic database for CDL drivers known as CDLIS.

CDL HOLDERS MUST COMPLY

All drivers who have a CDL (whether you are required to have that CDL or not) had to appear in person at a CDL testing facility to affirm whether they are required to have passed a recent DOT physical and whether they drive on an interstate or intrastate basis. Generally, those interstate drivers who are required by law to undergo a DOT physical had to have proof of compliance in-hand at the time of that visit.

FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to comply will result in the driver's CDL status being reduced to Non-CDL. There will likely be a 30-day grace period in which to reclaim your CDL through certification. If not certified within the grace period, the CDL could be permanently forfeited and you would need to start from scratch to get a new one.

REPORTING STATUS

It is up to the driver to make his or her own decision about which category to declare. The Secretary of State's staff has been instructed to not make that decision for the driver. There are four categories from which to choose:

1. **Non-excepted Interstate (NI):** Drive on an interstate basis and meet 49 CFR 391 requirements (must have a medical certificate – must provide the state's Driver's License Agency with an original Copy of the Medical Certificate).
2. **Excepted Interstate (EI):** Drive on an interstate basis and excepted from 49 CFR 391 requirements (does not need medical certificate to drive interstate).
3. **Non-excepted Intrastate (NA):** Drive on an intrastate basis and subject to state medical card requirements as in law today.
4. **Excepted Intrastate (EA):** Drive on an intrastate basis and excepted from all or part of State medical card 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

Your operation can be considered trucking in “interstate commerce” in either of two ways. Crossing the state line is clearly an interstate move; however, traveling point-to-point within the State of Illinois is also considered interstate commerce if the load you are hauling is part of an interstate shipment – generally, cargo that originates in one state and is ultimately destined for another state or country.

1. If you operate in interstate commerce, then report yourself as an Interstate Driver by selecting either “NI” or “EI”.
2. If you operate in intrastate commerce, then report yourself as an Intrastate Driver by selecting either “NA” or “EA”.

K RESTRICTION

If you have declared yourself to be an intrastate-only driver (NA or EA), then a “K” restriction will be added to your CDL. That prohibits the use of your CDL for operating a truck outside the state of Illinois.

