



**U.S. Department
of Transportation**

**Federal Motor Carrier
Safety Administration**

**1200 New Jersey Ave,
SE**

**Waiver For Commercial Driver's License Holders, Commercial Learner's Permit Holders,
and Motor Carriers During Initial National Registry II Implementation**

December 30, 2025

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Grant of waiver.

SUMMARY: FMCSA grants a waiver from certain regulations applicable to interstate commercial driver's license (CDL) holders, commercial learner's permit (CLP) holders, and motor carriers to allow them to continue to rely on a paper copy of the medical examiner's certificate as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days after the date the medical examiner's certificate was issued. FMCSA strongly recommends that, in addition to submitting physical qualification examination results electronically, all medical examiners continue to issue paper Medical Examiner's Certificates, Form MCSA-5876, to drivers at the time of their examination until further notice.

DATES: This waiver is effective January 11, 2026, and expires on April 10, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Evangela Hollowell, National Registry II Program Manager, Office of Policy, FMCSA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001, (202) 527-4750.

Legal Basis

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (Pub. L. 105-178, § 4007, 112 Stat. 107, 401, June 9, 1998) provides the Secretary of Transportation (the Secretary) authority to grant a waiver that relieves a person from compliance, in whole or in part, with any of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations issued under either 49 U.S.C. 31136 or Chapter 313 of Title 49 of the United States Code (49 U.S.C. 31136(e), 31315(a)). The Secretary must make a determination that the waiver is in the public interest and that it is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety that would be obtained in the absence of the waiver. Individual waivers may be granted only for nonemergency and unique events for a period not in excess of three months. TEA-21 authorizes the Secretary to grant waivers without requesting public comment and without providing public notice.

The Administrator of FMCSA has been delegated authority under 49 U.S.C. 113(f) and 49 CFR 1.87(e) and (f) to carry out the functions vested in the Secretary by 49 U.S.C. chapter 313, relating to commercial motor vehicle operators, and 49 U.S.C. chapter 311,

subchapters I and III, relating to commercial motor vehicle programs and safety regulations.

Background

FMCSA published the Medical Examiner's Certification Integration (NRII) final rule in 2015 (80 FR 22790, Apr. 23, 2015). The Agency extended the original compliance date several times, most recently on June 22, 2021 (86 FR 32643), with compliance ultimately being required as of June 23, 2025. The NRII rule modernizes how driver medical certification is shared, replacing the outdated paper-based process with a secure, electronic transmission system. The NRII rule mandates that certified medical examiners use specific forms to document physical qualification examinations and issue medical certificates to qualified commercial motor vehicle drivers. Among other changes that were implemented on June 23, 2025, medical examiners are no longer required to issue the original/paper Medical Examiner's Certificate, Form MCSA-5876 (MEC), to CLP applicants and CDL holders. CLP applicants and CDL holders are no longer required to submit a paper MEC to their State Driver's Licensing Agency (SDLA). Instead, FMCSA will electronically transmit examination results and medical variance information for CLP applicants and CDL holders from the National Registry to the SDLAs. SDLAs will post the driver's information on the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) driver motor vehicle record (MVR).

As of the date of this waiver, 42 States and the District of Columbia have implemented NRII. Eight States have not yet implemented NRII and are continuing to rely on the paper MEC. FMCSA is aware that during this initial period of transition to NRII, some CLP applicants and CDL holders may face delays in the time between receipt of their medical certification and the update to their CDLIS driver MVR as medical examiners and SDLAs onboard to the new system.

FMCSA strongly recommends that, in addition to submitting physical qualification examination results electronically, medical examiners continue to issue paper Medical Examiner's Certificates, Form MCSA-5876, to drivers at the time of their examination until further notice. The paper copy allows the driver to troubleshoot and resolve issues with the SDLA while States continue to transition to NRII. Some States have not yet implemented NRII and still rely on paper records. A complete list of States that have not yet implemented NRII is available at: <https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov/nriilearning-center>.

FMCSA's Determination and Regulatory Provisions Waived

Consistent with the statutory requirements for waivers, FMCSA determined that it is in the public interest to issue a waiver, limited in scope and circumstances, that is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level of safety that would be obtained in the absence of the waiver, until April 10, 2026. Drivers with valid medical certification and their employers should not be penalized for delays outside of their control as medical examiners and SDLAs transition to a new system.

To respond to this unique event of transition to NRII and to continue the ability of interstate CDL holders, CLP holders, and motor carriers to continue operations uninterrupted, this waiver:

1. Extends until April 10, 2026, the ability of a motor carrier to continue to use a copy of the MEC as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days from the date of the medical certification by waiving the end date of June 22, 2025, and the 15-day time period in 49 CFR 391.23(m)(2)(iii) and 49 CFR 391.23(m)(3)(i)(C).
2. Extends until April 10, 2026, the ability of a driver to continue to use a copy of the MEC carried on his or her person as proof of the driver's medical certification for up to 60 days from the date of the medical certification by waiving the end date of June 22, 2025, and the 15-day time period in 49 CFR 391.41(a)(2)(i)(A) and 49 CFR 391.41(a)(2)(ii).
3. Extends until April 10, 2026, the ability of a motor carrier to continue to use a copy of the MEC in the driver qualification file for up to 60 days from the date of the medical certification by waiving the end date of June 22, 2025, and the 15-day time period in 49 CFR 391.51(b)(6)(ii).

Interstate CDL holders, CLP holders, and motor carriers are covered under this waiver without further action.

Public Interest

FMCSA finds that the granting of this waiver is in the public interest to ensure that the operations of interstate CDL holders, CLP holders, and motor carriers are not interrupted, and drivers may continue transporting the Nation's goods to businesses, customers, and communities safely, reliably, and efficiently.

Safety Equivalence

Due to the limited scope of this waiver, the short duration, and the ample precautions that remain in place, FMCSA has determined that the waiver is likely to achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to the level of safety that would be obtained absent the waiver. This waiver does not alter the requirement that a person may not operate a commercial motor vehicle unless he or she is certified by a medical examiner listed on the National Registry as physically qualified to do so. This waiver does not alter any physical qualification requirements for drivers, nor does it alter any requirements for certified medical examiners or the requirement for States to come into substantial compliance with the requirements of NRII. This waiver simply allows drivers and motor carriers to continue using a paper copy of the MEC for a 60-day period, during a limited transition period to NRII.

FMCSA believes that the measures listed below under Terms, Conditions, and Restrictions of the Waiver, taken collectively, provide the assurance needed to meet the legal standard that granting the waiver is likely to achieve an equivalent level of safety.

Unique Circumstances

FMCSA finds that the circumstances surrounding this waiver are unique due to the transition from paper MECs to electronic transmission under the NRII final rule and the continued implementation of NRII by States.

Terms, Conditions, and Restrictions of the Waiver

This waiver covers interstate CDL holders, CLP holders, and motor carriers for the period beginning at 12:00 a.m. on January 11, 2026, through 11:59 p.m. on April 10, 2026.

- (1) This waiver does not apply to a driver if the driver does not have a copy of his or her current, valid MEC on his or her person that was issued by a certified medical examiner within the prior 60 days.
- (2) This waiver does not apply to a motor carrier if the motor carrier does not have a copy of the driver's current, valid MEC that was issued by a certified medical examiner within the prior 60 days.
- (3) FMCSA reserves the right to revoke this waiver if the waiver results in a lower level of safety than was maintained before it was granted, or continuation of the waiver would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(a).

Preemption

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31315(d), as implemented by 49 CFR 381.600, during the period this waiver is in effect, no State shall enforce any law or regulation applicable to interstate commerce that conflicts with or is inconsistent with this waiver with respect to a driver or motor carrier operating under the waiver. States may also adopt the same waiver or policy with respect to operations in intrastate commerce.



Issued: December 30, 2025

Derek D. Barrs
Administrator