

Inspections. The researchers collected data at crash scenes through driver, passenger, and witness interviews. The 28-page truck driver interview form, for example, covered areas such as:

- Crash scene description, including roadway and weather;
- vehicle rollover, fire, jackknife, cargo shift, and component problems with brakes, tires, steering, engine, and lights; driver credentials, history, method of wage payment, physical condition, fatigue (sleep pattern, work schedule, recreational activities, etc.), inattention/distraction, perception, and decisions; and
- trip information, including intended start time, purpose, intended length, and familiarity with the route.

After the crash, each truck and truck driver were subjected to a thorough inspection/evaluation. The inspection covered thirteen critical areas such as brakes, exhaust systems, frames, cargo securement, tires, wheels and rims, and fuel systems. It covered driver data on licenses, medical cards, duty status, and log books. After leaving the crash scene, researchers collected additional interview data by telephone from the motor carriers responsible for the trucks, and drivers of trucks and other vehicles when the actual drivers could not be interviewed due to a fatality or serious injury. Researchers also reviewed police crash reports, hospitals records, and coroners' reports. In addition, researchers often revisited the crash scene to make more accurate scene diagrams and search for additional data. Together the teams collected data on approximately 1,000 variables on each crash." (p.5 Report to Congress, March 2006.)

In the more than 15 years since the original study, many changes in technology, vehicle safety, driver behavior and roadway design have occurred that effect how a driver performs. Since the study ended in 2003, fatal crashes involving large trucks decreased until 2009 when they hit their lowest point in recent years (2,893 fatal crashes). Since 2009, fatal crashes involving large trucks have steadily increased to 4,415 fatal crashes in 2018, a 52.6 percent increase when compared to 2009. Over the last three years (2016–2018), fatal crashes involving large trucks increased 5.7 percent. This study will help FMCSA identify factors that are contributing to the growth in fatal large truck crashes, and in both injury and property damage only (PDO) crashes. These factors will drive new initiatives to reduce crashes on our nations roadways.

This includes factors such as the dramatic increase in distraction caused

by cell phones and texting, the level of driver restraint use, the advent of in-cab navigation and fleet management systems, as well as equipment designed to enhance safety, such as automatic emergency braking (AEB) systems. Therefore, FMCSA is interested in conducting a revised crash study and is seeking information on the most effective methodology for best collecting a representative set of crash data for identifying the primary factors involved in large truck crashes. Findings from the study can be used to inform technology developers in the autonomous vehicle environment of the kinds of driver behaviors that need to be addressed.

This new study will develop a baseline of large truck crash factors to help guide mitigating crash avoidance strategies to prevent future crashes even in the SAE International driving automation level 4 and 5 vehicles.<sup>1</sup> Knowing more about driver behaviors will identify areas where new driving automation systems can be of help, and aid in formulating performance metrics and standards that may need to be considered if they are to reduce crashes involving large trucks. In addition, because some of the driver assistance systems are already deployed in many fleets, this study can provide data on their effectiveness in determining what crash avoidance capabilities may need to be incorporated in the Automated Driving Systems (ADS) that may be provided on the CMV platforms in the future.

In your proposal please include the answers to the following:

1. Should FMCSA pursue a nationally representative sampling approach or can convenience sampling serve the needs?
2. What type of study are you recommending (e.g., nationally representative vs. convenience sampling), and what are the pros and cons of this approach?
3. How important is it for the new study results to be comparable with findings of the original LTCCS?
4. What other sources of data can enrich the new study? How can they be identified and included?

Issued on: January 9, 2020.

**Jim Mullen,**  
Acting Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2020–00557 Filed 1–14–20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910–EX–P**

<sup>1</sup> SAE Level 4 is High Automation, where the vehicle is capable of performing all driving functions under certain conditions. SAE Level 5 is Full Automation, where the vehicle is capable of performing all driving functions under all conditions. For more information on the SAE levels, and automated vehicles please refer to: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/technology-innovation/automated-vehicles-safety>.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2019–0112]

#### Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Hearing

**AGENCY:** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of applications for exemption; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** FMCSA announces receipt of applications from eight individuals for an exemption from the hearing requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) in interstate commerce. If granted, the exemptions would enable these hard of hearing and deaf individuals to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before February 14, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA–2019–0112 using any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2019-0011>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail:* Docket Operations; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12–140, Washington, DC 20590–0001.

- *Hand Delivery:* West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12–140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

- *Fax:* (202) 493–2251.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. See the “Public Participation” portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for instructions on submitting comments.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Christine A. Hydock, Chief, Medical Programs Division, (202) 366–4001, [fmcsamedical@dot.gov](mailto:fmcsamedical@dot.gov), FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W64–224, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions regarding viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Docket Operations, (202) 366–9826.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

## I. Public Participation

### A. Submitting Comments

If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this notice (Docket No. FMCSA–2019–0112), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation. You may submit your comments and material online or by fax, mail, or hand delivery, but please use only one of these means. FMCSA recommends that you include your name and a mailing address, an email address, or a phone number in the body of your document so that FMCSA can contact you if there are questions regarding your submission.

To submit your comment online, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2019-0112>. Click on the “Comment Now!” button and type your comment into the text box on the following screen. Choose whether you are submitting your comment as an individual or on behalf of a third party and then submit.

If you submit your comments by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit comments by mail and would like to know that they reached the facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope.

FMCSA will consider all comments and material received during the comment period.

### B. Viewing Documents and Comments

To view comments, as well as any documents mentioned in this notice as being available in the docket, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2019-0112> and choose the document to review. If you do not have access to the internet, you may view the docket online by visiting the Docket Operations in Room W12–140 on the ground floor of the DOT West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

### C. Privacy Act

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its rulemaking process. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL–14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at [www.transportation.gov/privacy](http://www.transportation.gov/privacy).

## II. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA may grant an exemption from the FMCSRs for no longer than a 5-year period if it finds such exemption would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption. The statute also allows the Agency to renew exemptions at the end of the 5-year period. FMCSA grants medical exemptions from the FMCSRs for a 2-year period to align with the maximum duration of a driver’s medical certification.

The eight individuals listed in this notice have requested an exemption from the hearing requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(11). Accordingly, the Agency will evaluate the qualifications of each applicant to determine whether granting the exemption will achieve the required level of safety mandated by statute.

The physical qualification standard for drivers regarding hearing found in § 391.41(b)(11) states that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV if that person first perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear at not less than 5 feet with or without the use of a hearing aid or, if tested by use of an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1,000 Hz, and 2,000 Hz with or without a hearing aid when the audiometric device is calibrated to American National Standard (formerly ASA Standard) Z24.5–1951.

This standard was adopted in 1970 and was revised in 1971 to allow drivers to be qualified under this standard while wearing a hearing aid, 35 FR 6458, 6463 (April 22, 1970) and 36 FR 12857 (July 3, 1971).

On February 1, 2013, FMCSA announced in a Notice of Final Disposition titled, “Qualification of Drivers; Application for Exemptions; National Association of the Deaf,” (78 FR 7479), its decision to grant requests from 40 individuals for exemptions from the Agency’s physical qualification standard concerning hearing for interstate CMV drivers. Since that time the Agency has published additional notices granting requests from hard of hearing and deaf individuals for exemptions from the Agency’s physical qualification standard concerning hearing for interstate CMV drivers.

## III. Qualifications of Applicants

### Matthew Armstrong

Mr. Armstrong, 63, holds a class CM license in Texas.

### Michael Haessly

Mr. Haessly, 65, holds a class A CDL in Minnesota.

### Jared Gunn

Mr. Gunn, 36, holds a class D license in Illinois.

### Derek Kangas

Mr. Kangas, 39, holds a class DM license in Wisconsin.

### Joshua McElroy

Mr. McElroy, 32, holds a class DM license in Illinois.

### Walt Pindor

Mr. Pindor, 58, holds a class A CDL in Arizona.

### Jonathan Turner

Mr. Turner, 33, holds a class E license in Florida.

### Abel Talamante

Mr. Talamante, 41, holds a class D license in Washington.

## IV. Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on the exemption petitions described in this notice. We will consider all comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated under the **DATES** section of the notice.

Issued on: January 10, 2020.

**Larry W. Minor,**

*Associate Administrator for Policy.*

[FR Doc. 2020–00555 Filed 1–14–20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910–EX–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2012–0332; FMCSA–2015–0329; FMCSA–2016–0003; FMCSA–2017–0058]

### Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Hearing

**AGENCY:** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of renewal of exemptions; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** FMCSA announces its decision to renew exemptions for 11 individuals from the hearing requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) for interstate commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers. The exemptions enable these hard of hearing and deaf individuals to continue to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.