

currently a package handler. He has 13 years experience driving dump trucks and three years experience driving a tractor. He would like to obtain a CDL and drive CMVs in interstate commerce, if granted an exemption.

Billy J. Warnock

Mr. Warnock holds a class M driver's license from the state of Indiana. He has 14 years experience driving CMV's in interstate commerce and has logged more than three million miles crossing 48 states. He recently was unable to pass the DOT hearing test and is no longer able to operate CMV's in interstate commerce. He would like to return to driving CMVs and possibly start his own business, if granted an exemption.

Kevin C. Willis

Mr. Willis holds a class C driver's license from the state of California. He has held a FAA Private Pilot Certificate since 2006 and flies private planes that weigh up to 12,500 pounds. He would like to obtain a CDL and pursue employment opportunities in the commercial transportation business, if granted an exemption.

James R. Wilson

Mr. Wilson holds a class C driver's license from the state of Georgia. He has experience driving forklifts and a super duty pickup truck for a private employer. He would like to obtain a CDL and drive CMV's in interstate commerce, if granted an exemption.

Holly Cameron Wright, Jr.

Mr. Wright holds a class C driver's license from the state of North Carolina. He has experience driving forklifts and commercial vehicles at his family-owned business site. He would like to obtain a CDL and drive CMVs in interstate commerce, if granted an exemption.

Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b)(4), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on the exemption petitions described in this notice. The Agency will consider all comments received before the close of business June 25, 2012. Comments will be available for examination in the docket at the location listed under the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. The Agency will file comments received after the comment closing date in the public docket, and will consider them to the extent practicable. In addition to late comments, FMCSA will also continue to file, in the public docket, relevant information that becomes available after the comment closing date. Interested

persons should monitor the public docket for new material.

Issued on: May 16, 2012.

Anne S. Ferro,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2012-12636 Filed 5-24-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2012-0039]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Vision

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

ACTION: Notice of final disposition.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces its decision to exempt thirteen individuals from the vision requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). The exemptions will enable these individuals to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) in interstate commerce without meeting the prescribed vision requirement in one eye. The Agency has concluded that granting these exemptions will provide a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the level of safety maintained without the exemptions for these CMV drivers.

DATES: The exemptions are effective May 25, 2012. The exemptions expire on May 25, 2014.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elaine M. Papp, Chief, Medical Programs Division, (202)-366-4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W64-224, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

You may see all the comments online through the Federal Document Management System (FDMS) at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> at any time or Room W12-140 on the ground level of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The FDMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. If you want

acknowledgement that we received your comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard or print the acknowledgement page that appears after submitting comments on-line.

Privacy Act: Anyone may search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or of the person signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's Privacy Act Statement for the FDMS published in the **Federal Register** on January 17, 2008 (73 FR 3316), or you may visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-785.pdf>.

Background

On April 6, 2012, FMCSA published a notice of receipt of exemption applications from certain individuals, and requested comments from the public (77 FR 20879). That notice listed thirteen applicants' case histories. The thirteen individuals applied for exemptions from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), for drivers who operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption for a 2-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 2-year period. Accordingly, FMCSA has evaluated the thirteen applications on their merits and made a determination to grant exemptions to each of them.

Vision and Driving Experience of the Applicants

The vision requirement in the FMCSRs provides:

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person has distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye without corrective lenses or visual acuity separately corrected to 20/40 (Snellen) or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of vision of at least 70° in the horizontal meridian in each eye, and the ability to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing requirement red, green, and amber (49 CFR 391.41(b)(10)).

FMCSA recognizes that some drivers do not meet the vision requirement but have adapted their driving to accommodate their vision limitation and demonstrated their ability to drive

safely. The thirteen exemption applicants listed in this notice are in this category. They are unable to meet the vision requirement in one eye for various reasons, including amblyopia, detached retina, complete loss of vision, esotropia, keratoconus and prosthesis. In most cases, their eye conditions were not recently developed. Ten of the applicants were either born with their vision impairments or have had them since childhood. The three individuals that sustained their vision conditions as adults have had them for a period of 10 to 30 years.

Although each applicant has one eye which does not meet the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), each has at least 20/40 corrected vision in the other eye, and in a doctor's opinion, has sufficient vision to perform all the tasks necessary to operate a CMV. Doctors' opinions are supported by the applicants' possession of valid commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) or non-CDLs to operate CMVs. Before issuing CDLs, States subject drivers to knowledge and skills tests designed to evaluate their qualifications to operate a CMV.

All of these applicants satisfied the testing requirements for their State of residence. By meeting State licensing requirements, the applicants demonstrated their ability to operate a CMV, with their limited vision, to the satisfaction of the State.

While possessing a valid CDL or non-CDL, these thirteen drivers have been authorized to drive a CMV in intrastate commerce, even though their vision disqualified them from driving in interstate commerce. They have driven CMVs with their limited vision for careers ranging from 3 to 42 years. In the past 3 years, one of the drivers was involved in a crash, and one was convicted of a moving violation in a CMV.

The qualifications, experience, and medical condition of each applicant were stated and discussed in detail in the April 6, 2012 notice (77 FR 20879).

Basis for Exemption Determination

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, FMCSA may grant an exemption from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) if the exemption is likely to achieve an equivalent or greater level of safety than would be achieved without the exemption. Without the exemption, applicants will continue to be restricted to intrastate driving. With the exemption, applicants can drive in interstate commerce. Thus, our analysis focuses on whether an equal or greater level of safety is likely to be achieved by permitting each of these drivers to drive

in interstate commerce as opposed to restricting him or her to driving in intrastate commerce.

To evaluate the effect of these exemptions on safety, FMCSA considered the medical reports about the applicants' vision as well as their driving records and experience with the vision deficiency.

To qualify for an exemption from the vision requirement, FMCSA requires a person to present verifiable evidence that he/she has driven a commercial vehicle safely with the vision deficiency for the past 3 years. Recent driving performance is especially important in evaluating future safety, according to several research studies designed to correlate past and future driving performance. Results of these studies support the principle that the best predictor of future performance by a driver is his/her past record of crashes and traffic violations. Copies of the studies may be found at Docket Number FMCSA-1998-3637.

We believe we can properly apply the principle to monocular drivers, because data from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) former waiver study program clearly demonstrate the driving performance of experienced monocular drivers in the program is better than that of all CMV drivers collectively (See 61 FR 13338, 13345, March 26, 1996). The fact that experienced monocular drivers demonstrated safe driving records in the waiver program supports a conclusion that other monocular drivers, meeting the same qualifying conditions as those required by the waiver program, are also likely to have adapted to their vision deficiency and will continue to operate safely.

The first major research correlating past and future performance was done in England by Greenwood and Yule in 1920. Subsequent studies, building on that model, concluded that crash rates for the same individual exposed to certain risks for two different time periods vary only slightly (See Bates and Neyman, University of California Publications in Statistics, April 1952). Other studies demonstrated theories of predicting crash proneness from crash history coupled with other factors. These factors—such as age, sex, geographic location, mileage driven and conviction history—are used every day by insurance companies and motor vehicle bureaus to predict the probability of an individual experiencing future crashes (See Weber, Donald C., "Accident Rate Potential: An Application of Multiple Regression Analysis of a Poisson Process," Journal of American Statistical Association,

June 1971). A 1964 California Driver Record Study prepared by the California Department of Motor Vehicles concluded that the best overall crash predictor for both concurrent and nonconcurrent events is the number of single convictions. This study used 3 consecutive years of data, comparing the experiences of drivers in the first 2 years with their experiences in the final year.

Applying principles from these studies to the past 3-year record of the thirteen applicants, one of the drivers was involved in a crash and one was convicted of a moving violation in a CMV. All the applicants achieved a record of safety while driving with their vision impairment, demonstrating the likelihood that they have adapted their driving skills to accommodate their condition. As the applicants' ample driving histories with their vision deficiencies are good predictors of future performance, FMCSA concludes their ability to drive safely can be projected into the future.

We believe that the applicants' intrastate driving experience and history provide an adequate basis for predicting their ability to drive safely in interstate commerce. Intrastate driving, like interstate operations, involves substantial driving on highways on the interstate system and on other roads built to interstate standards. Moreover, driving in congested urban areas exposes the driver to more pedestrian and vehicular traffic than exists on interstate highways. Faster reaction to traffic and traffic signals is generally required because distances between them are more compact. These conditions tax visual capacity and driver response just as intensely as interstate driving conditions. The veteran drivers in this proceeding have operated CMVs safely under those conditions for at least 3 years, most for much longer. Their experience and driving records lead us to believe that each applicant is capable of operating in interstate commerce as safely as he/she has been performing in intrastate commerce. Consequently, FMCSA finds that exempting these applicants from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) is likely to achieve a level of safety equal to that existing without the exemption. For this reason, the Agency is granting the exemptions for the 2-year period allowed by 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315 to the thirteen applicants listed in the notice of April 6, 2012 (77 FR 20879).

We recognize that the vision of an applicant may change and affect his/her ability to operate a CMV as safely as in the past. As a condition of the exemption, therefore, FMCSA will

impose requirements on the thirteen individuals consistent with the grandfathering provisions applied to drivers who participated in the Agency's vision waiver program.

Those requirements are found at 49 CFR 391.64(b) and include the following: (1) That each individual be physically examined every year (a) by an ophthalmologist or optometrist who attests that the vision in the better eye continues to meet the requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10) and (b) by a medical examiner who attests that the individual is otherwise physically qualified under 49 CFR 391.41; (2) that each individual provide a copy of the ophthalmologist's or optometrist's report to the medical examiner at the time of the annual medical examination; and (3) that each individual provide a copy of the annual medical certification to the employer for retention in the driver's qualification file, or keep a copy in his/her driver's qualification file if he/she is self-employed. The driver must have a copy of the certification when driving, for presentation to a duly authorized Federal, State, or local enforcement official.

Discussion of Comments

FMCSA received one comment in this proceeding. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has reviewed the driving histories for David L. Schachle, Richard D. Sparkman, and Joshua A. Wheaton and is in favor of granting Federal vision exemptions to them.

Conclusion

Based upon its evaluation of the thirteen exemption applications, FMCSA exempts Juan Castanon (NM), Donald F. Erke (MI), Ronald D. Flanery (KY), Mark G. Kleinheider (MO), Joseph C. Powell (VA), David L. Schachle (PA), Michael E. See (NY), James A. Settlemyre (IN), Steven K. Simone (KS), Mark J. Sobczyk (WI), Richard D. Sparkman (PA), Joshua A. Wheaton (PA) and John K. Wright (MT) from the vision requirement in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(10), subject to the requirements cited above (49 CFR 391.64(b)).

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315, each exemption will be valid for 2 years unless revoked earlier by FMCSA. The exemption will be revoked if: (1) The person fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the exemption; (2) the exemption has resulted in a lower level of safety than was maintained before it was granted; or (3) continuation of the exemption would not be consistent with the goals and objectives of 49 U.S.C. 31136 and 31315.

If the exemption is still effective at the end of the 2-year period, the person may apply to FMCSA for a renewal under procedures in effect at that time.

Issued on: May 16, 2012.

Larry W. Minor,

Associate Administrator for Policy.

[FR Doc. 2012-12763 Filed 5-24-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2012-0046]

Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System

In accordance with Part 235 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), this document provides the public notice that by a document dated February 23, 2012, the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway (EJ&E) has petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of a signal system. FRA assigned the petition Docket Number FRA-2012-0046.

Applicant: Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway Company, Mr. Thomas W. Hilliard, Senior Manager S&C Construction, 17641 South Ashland Avenue, Homewood, Illinois 60430.

EJ&E seeks approval of the proposed discontinuance of an automatic block signal (ABS) system and a traffic control signal (TCS) system on the Lakefront Subdivision in Gary, IN. The discontinuance consists of the removal of the ABS from Milepost (MP) 9.8 (approach to Michigan Avenue) to MP 11.1 (Stockton 1); the removal of the TCS from MP 11.1 (Stockton 1) to MP 12.2 (Kirk Yard Junction), including removal of the Stockton 1 control point; and the removal of the TCS on the Stockton Lead at MP 12.2 to Kirk Yard Junction and Clark Road Lead at MP 11.9.

The reason given for the proposed changes is that, due to the lack of traffic on the Lakefront Line, the cost of maintenance on the signal systems is no longer feasible.

A copy of the petition, as well as any written communications concerning the petition, is available for review online at www.regulations.gov and in person at the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Docket Operations Facility, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Operations Facility is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number and may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.

- *Mail:* Docket Operations Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., W12-140, Washington, DC 20590.

- *Hand Delivery:* 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Communications received by July 9, 2012 will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable.

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of any written communications and comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78), or online at <http://www.dot.gov/privacy.html>.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 21, 2012.

Ron Hynes,

Acting Deputy Associate Administrator for Regulatory and Legislative Operations.

[FR Doc. 2012-12785 Filed 5-24-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2012-0032]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has