

## Medical Advisory Criteria for Evaluation Under 49 CFR Part 391.41

### New Blood Pressure Guidelines For DOT Drivers



The Cardiovascular Advisory Panel of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) developed new guidelines for issuing medical certification.

**Starting September 1, 2004, these guidelines must be followed**

#### 391.41(b)(6)

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person has no current clinical diagnosis of high blood pressure likely to interfere with the ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.

Hypertension alone is unlikely to cause sudden collapse; however, the likelihood increases when target organ damage, particularly cerebral vascular disease is present. This advisory criteria is based on FMCSA's Cardiovascular Advisory Guidelines for the Examination of CMV Drivers, which used the Sixth Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (1997).

**Stage 1** hypertension corresponds to a systolic BP of 140-159 mmHg and/or a diastolic BP of 90-99 mmHg. The driver with a BP in this range is at low risk for hypertension-related acute incapacitation and may be medically certified to drive for a one-year period. Certification examinations should be done annually thereafter and should be less than 140/90. If less than 160/100, certification may be extended one time for three months, during which time the blood pressure must be brought back to 140/90.

A blood pressure of 160-179 systolic and/or 100-109 diastolic is considered **Stage 2** hypertension, and the driver is not necessarily unqualified during evaluation and institution of treatment. The driver is given a one time certification of three months to reduce his or her blood pressure to less than 140/90. A blood pressure in this range is an absolute indication for antihypertensive drug therapy. Provided treatment is well tolerated and the driver demonstrates a BP value of less than 140/90, he or she may be certified for one year from the date of the initial exam. The driver is certified annually thereafter.

A blood pressure at or greater than 180/110 is considered **Stage 3**, high risk for an acute BP-related event. The driver may not be qualified, even temporarily, until reduced to less than 140/90 and treatment is well tolerated. The driver may be certified for 6 months and biannually (every 6 months) thereafter if at recheck BP is less than 140/90.

An elevated BP finding should be confirmed by at least two readings on different days.

#### Quick Reference to Guidelines for Blood Pressure Evaluation

Reading	Category	Expiration Date	Recertification
140-159/90-99	Stage 1	1 year	1 year if 140/90. One-time certificate for 3 months if 140-159/90-99.
160-179/100-109	Stage 2	One-time certificate for 3 months.	1 year from date of exam if 140/90.
180/110	Stage 3	Disqualified	6 months from date of exam if 140/90, then every 6 months if 140/90.



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