

DOT Physical: What You Need to Know [2023]

What Does a DOT Physical Consist of?

1. Vision Test

Drivers must have a minimum 20/40 visual acuity in both eyes. This can include corrected vision with eyeglasses or contact lenses.

The examiner will also test to ensure the driver has a minimum peripheral vision of at least 70" in both eyes.

2. Hearing Test

Examiners test the driver's hearing to see whether he or she can hear a "forced whisper" from five feet away or less.

A driver can pass the hearing exam with or without the use of hearing aids.

The forced whisper test checks to see whether the driver has a hearing loss in their good ear of fewer than 40 decibels.

3. Blood Pressure and Pulse Checks

The blood pressure and pulse rate of the driver will be taken.

The examiner will check for irregular heartbeats and hypertension.

4. Urine Test

Drivers must undergo urine tests as a part of the DOT physical.

The examiner will analyze the sample for indicators of underlying health conditions, including diabetes.

5. Sleep Apnea Test

Drivers who report the following symptoms might have to undergo a sleep apnea test:

- Daytime fatigue or drowsiness
- Headaches in the morning
- Sore throat/dry mouth upon waking
- Gasping while sleeping
- Heavy snoring

6. Physical Examination

During the physical examination, the medical examiner will check the driver's:

- Overall appearance
- Eyes (to check for specific conditions, including glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, and others)
- Ears (to check for problems such as perforated ear drums, tympanic membrane scarring, and others)
- Throat and mouth (to check for swallowing or breathing problems)
- Heart (to listen for extra sounds, heart murmurs, and other issues)
- Chest and lungs (to check for respiratory conditions)
- Driver's abdomen (to check for muscle weakness, liver enlargement, and visceral issues)
- Vascular system (to check for abnormal pulse rates, varicose veins, and carotid problems)
- Genito-urinary system (to look for hernias)
- Extremities (to check for limb deformities or defects that could interfere with driving)
- Spine and musculoskeletal system
- Neurology (to check for neurological impairments and reflexes)

DOT Disqualifying Medical Conditions

Drivers with certain physical or mental health conditions will be disqualified from driving.

Disqualifying Physical Conditions

Under [49 CFR, part 391 § 391.41](#), the following physical conditions can disqualify drivers:

- Loss of a hand, foot, leg, or arm unless they have received a skill performance evaluation certificate.
- Hand or finger disorders that prevent grasping.
- Limb defects or impairments that prevent drivers from safely operating a commercial vehicle.
- Diabetes mellitus, including insulin-controlled diabetes without an exemption.
- Cardiovascular disease or congestive heart failure.
- Respiratory disease that could result in loss of consciousness.
- High blood pressure that could interfere with the safe operation of a commercial vehicle.
- Musculoskeletal disorders that could interfere with the safe operation of a commercial vehicle.
- Epilepsy and other conditions that could result in a loss of consciousness.
- Visual acuity in either eye with or without correction of greater than 20/40.
- Peripheral vision of less than 70" in either eye.
- Red/green colorblindness.
- Hearing loss that can't be corrected to less than 40 dB or less from five feet away.

Disqualifying Mental Conditions

Drivers must also meet the DOT mental health requirements, including rules for taking certain prescription drugs such as antidepressants.

Some [disqualifying mental conditions](#) include the following:

- Major depressive disorders with a history of suicidal or homicidal ideations, psychosis, or suicide attempts
- Psychotic disorders
- Antisocial personality disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorders
- Bipolar disorders

DOT Disqualifying Medications for 2023

Under FMCSA rules, drivers will be disqualified if they use any Schedule I controlled substance. This prohibition includes marijuana even if the driver has a prescription for it.

The [FMCSA](#) also states that a driver who takes a prescription medication without a valid prescription will be disqualified.

In addition to the DOT physical, drivers must submit a urine sample for a [DOT drug test](#), which checks for recent use of the following illicit substances:

- Marijuana
- Cocaine
- Amphetamines (methamphetamine, amphetamine, MDMA, or MDA)
- Opiates (heroin, oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, codeine, oxymorphone, hydromorphone)
- Phencyclidine (PCP)

Drivers [can also be disqualified](#) for taking any other scheduled drug, including amphetamines, benzodiazepines, and others that are habit-forming or narcotic.

When a driver has a valid prescription from a licensed medical doctor for a non-schedule I drug, they won't be disqualified if the doctor has advised them that the drug will not adversely affect their ability to drive after reviewing their medical history.

New DOT Physical Requirements for 2023

FMCSA Medical Qualifications

To receive a medical certification, drivers must meet the qualifications under [49 CFR, part 391 § 391.41](#).

Visual Acuity

Under [49 CFR, part 391 § 391.41\(b\)\(10\)\(i\)](#), drivers must have visual acuity with or without corrective lenses of at least 20/40 in each eye.

They must also have a peripheral vision of at least 70" in both eyes.

However, under [49 CFR, part 391 § 391.44](#), a driver might still be qualified to drive if they fail either the visual acuity or peripheral vision tests in one eye but passes the other physical qualifying conditions and/or passes a skills performance assessment.

Hearing

Under [49 CFR, part 391 § 391.41\(b\)\(11\)](#), a driver must hear a forced whisper from five feet or less away with or without a hearing aid with the better ear.

If the driver passes the hearing test while using a hearing aid, they must wear it whenever they operate a commercial vehicle.

Blood Pressure

Drivers will pass the blood pressure test if their blood pressure is less than 140/90 under [49 CFR, part 391 § 391.41\(b\)\(6\)](#).

What can I expect during my exam?

You will need to bring a list of your medications and the names and addresses of your prescribing doctors.

You will need to complete a health history form, which can be completed before the appointment to save time.

The DOT physical examination will be much more comprehensive than a regular annual physical.

The medical examiner will check to see whether you have any underlying conditions that could affect your ability to drive a commercial vehicle and will check your vision, hearing, general health, heart, lungs, abdomen, genito-urinary tract, spine, and vascular system.

They will check for eye problems such as cataracts or glaucoma, hernias, sleep problems, and others.

You will also be required to provide a urine sample to test for conditions like diabetes.