

RE: _____ SSN: _____ DOB: _____

Dear Doctor:

Date _____

The above patient/driver is being evaluated to determine whether he/she meets the medical standards of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to operate a commercial motor vehicle. The Federal Regulation that addresses the use of medications which may impair safe operation of a commercial motor vehicle is;

§ 391.41(b)(12) – A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

- (i) **Does not use a controlled substance identified in 21 CFR 1308.11 Schedule I, an amphetamine, a narcotic, or any other habit-forming drug.**
- (ii) **Exception. A driver may use such a substance or drug, if the substance or drug is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner who:**
 - (A) Is familiar with the driver’s medical history and assigned duties; and**
 - (B) Has advised the driver that the prescribed substance or drug will not adversely affect the driver’s ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle; and**
 - (C) Has no current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism.**

The FMCSA explains that a commercial driver “must have the perceptual skills to monitor a sometimes complex driving situation,” and “the judgment skills to make quick decisions.” There is increasing recognition that both prescription and nonprescription medications can impair the performance of tasks requiring concentration, such as driving. Certain classes of medications, including benzodiazepines, anxiolytics, narcotic, and some nonnarcotic analgesics, sedating antihistamines, and sedatives, can impair performance on tasks such as driving to as great a degree as alcohol. This is especially relevant in the commercial driver who is held to a higher standard because they may operate larger vehicles, passenger-carrying vehicles, or vehicles carrying hazardous materials. The commercial driver also is on the road more hours each day, exposing the public to a greater risk if the driver becomes impaired. Whenever possible, medications should be utilized that do not have potentially impairing side effects. It is important not only to review the medication and its side effects, but also the status of the underlying disease process.

The Federal Highway Administration had sponsored several conferences to address medical conditions and commercial driving. In the conference on Psychiatric Disorders and the Commercial Driver, participants recommended that:

- Individuals requiring anxiolytic medications should be precluded from commercial driving. This recommendation would not apply to patients treated effectively with non-sedating anxiolytics such as buspirone.
- Individuals requiring hypnotics should only use drugs with half-lives of less than 5 hours for less than 2 weeks under medical supervision and only at the lowest effective dose.
- Some antidepressants do produce impairment that can be mitigated over time but not completely removed with chronic use. Individuals on antidepressants that may interfere with performance should not be allowed to drive commercial vehicles. Amitriptyline was specifically mentioned as an antidepressant to be avoided due to its sedating effects.
- Given strong evidence of impaired psychomotor performance associated with the use of all antipsychotic drugs, drivers should only be qualified after the effects of the illness and neuroleptic



have been reviewed by a psychiatrist familiar with the regulation and safety risks associated with medications and commercial driving.

- Lithium, in a stable, chronic dose and plasma level, is permissible for regularly monitored asymptomatic drivers.
- CNS stimulants, in therapeutic doses, impair driving by a variety of mechanisms. A person using these drugs should not be medically qualified to drive commercially. Legitimate medical use (ADHD, for example) with no demonstrable impairment of dosage escalation tendency, may receive an exemption after expert review.

MEDICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide the following information:

1. How long have you been treating this patient? _____
2. Please list medications, dosage, and duration of treatment at the current dose.

3. Have there been any side effects such as sedation or decreased concentration?
 Yes No
 If so, please explain _____

4. Will use of this (these) medication(s) likely interfere with safe operation of a commercial motor vehicle? Yes No
 If so, please explain and discuss whether alternate medications have been considered:

5. What condition(s) is/are being treated with these medications? _____

Are these conditions likely to interfere with the safe operation of a commercial motor vehicle?
 Yes No

6. Considering the complex mental requirements of operation a commercial motor vehicle (CMV), **and after reviewing the included federal regulations and conference report recommendation**, do you believe your patient can safely operate a CMV while taking the medications? Yes No

Additional Comments:

Physician Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____