



Goal

This program educates commercial motor vehicle drivers and their supervisors about alcohol- and drug-testing rules designed to reduce transportation-related deaths and injuries.

Objective

At the conclusion of this safety training program, commercial motor vehicle drivers will be able to:

- explain prohibited alcohol- and drug-related conduct and uses,
- describe the required alcohol and drug tests,
- explain how alcohol and drug testing is done, and
- explain the actions taken if a driver tests positive for drug or alcohol use.

Introduction

With few exceptions, drivers with a commercial driver's license (CDL) are subject to the controlled substance and alcohol testing rules enforced by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). This includes all full-time, part-time, intermittent, backup, and international drivers.

A CDL is required for drivers operating a vehicle in excess of 26,000 pounds, one designed to carry 16 or more passengers (including the driver), or one used in the transportation of hazardous materials. This extends to interstate and intrastate truck and motor coach operations, including those operated by

- federal, state, local, and tribal governments;
- church and civic organizations;
- farmers and custom harvesters;
- apiarian industries (bee keepers); and
- for-hire and private companies.

Active-duty military personnel and drivers whose place of reporting for duty (home terminal) is located outside the U.S. are exempt from these rules.

The FMCSA rules cover safety-sensitive transportation employees. The FMCSA defines safety-sensitive functions as

- waiting to be dispatched at a carrier or shipper plant, terminal, facility, or other property;
- inspecting, servicing, or conditioning equipment or commercial motor vehicles;
- being at the driving controls of a commercial motor vehicle;
- being on or in a commercial motor vehicle (except for time spent resting in the sleeper berth);
- loading or unloading a commercial motor vehicle, supervising or assisting in the loading or unloading, attending a vehicle being loaded or unloaded, remaining in readiness to operate a vehicle or in giving or receiving receipts for shipments loaded or unloaded; and
- repairing, obtaining assistance for, or remaining in attendance with a disabled vehicle.

The FMCSA prohibits performance of safety-sensitive functions

- while having a breath alcohol concentration of 0.04 percent or greater,
- while using alcohol,
- within four hour of using alcohol,
- when the employee refuses to submit to an alcohol or controlled-substances test, or
- within eight hours after an accident or until tested, whichever comes first.

The drug rules prohibit any unauthorized or illicit use of controlled substances. The FMCSA has additional rules that prohibit the use of legally prescribed controlled substances by drivers involved in interstate commerce, while other regulations require drivers to report any medical use of controlled substances.

Testing

Alcohol and drug tests are required during the following times:

- Pre-employment – may be conducted before applicants are hired or before a job offer is made, but must be conducted before performing safety-sensitive functions.

- Post-accident – conducted after accidents on drivers whose performance could have contributed to the accident (as determined by a citation for a moving traffic violation) and for all fatal accidents, even if the driver is not cited for a moving traffic violation.
- Reasonable suspicion – conducted when a trained supervisor or company official observes behavior or appearance that is characteristic of alcohol or drug misuse. The employer’s suspicion must be based on specific observations of the driver’s appearance, behavior, speech, or body odor. The employer must also be able to clearly articulate his or her observations and must do so around the time of the incident. To help them make appropriate determinations for reasonable-suspicion testing, all supervisors and officials of businesses with drivers must attend at least one hour of training in the signs and symptoms of drug abuse.
- Random – conducted on a random, unannounced basis immediately before, during, or immediately after performance of safety-sensitive functions.
- Return-to-duty and follow-up – conducted when an employee who has violated alcohol or controlled-substance-related conduct standards returns to performing safety-sensitive duties. Follow-up tests are unannounced, and at least six tests must be conducted during the first 12 months after a driver returns to duty.

Tests are required for

- marijuana (THC metabolite, cannabinoids, hash);
- cocaine (coke, crack);
- amphetamines (meth, speed, crank, ecstasy);
- opiates (heroin, opium, codeine, morphine); and
- phencyclidine (PCP, angel dust).

Alcohol Testing

Alcohol testing rules require the use of evidential breath testing (EBT) devices, also known as breathalyzers. Two breath tests are required to determine whether a person has a prohibited alcohol concentration. A screening test administered first with any result less than 0.02 alcohol concentration is considered a negative test. If the alcohol concentration is 0.02 or greater, a second confirmation test must be conducted using an EBT that prints the results, date, time, sequential test number, and brand and serial number of the EBT to ensure reliability of the results. The confirmation test results determine any actions to be taken.

Drug Testing

Drug testing is conducted by analyzing a driver’s urine

specimen. The driver provides a urine specimen that is sealed by a “collector” and then labeled and prepared for shipment. The analysis is performed at laboratories certified and monitored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Drivers who violate FMCSA rules on alcohol use or who test positive for drug use must be immediately removed from safety-sensitive functions. They cannot return to those duties until they have been evaluated by a substance abuse professional and have complied with any recommended treatments. Drivers whose conduct involved alcohol must undergo a return-to-duty alcohol test and must have a breath alcohol level less than 0.02. Drivers who test positive for drugs must have a return-to-duty drug test that is negative.

Employers must provide information on drug use and treatment resources to safety-sensitive drivers. Employers, drug testing laboratories, and substance abuse professionals must maintain driver drug and alcohol test results and records under strict confidentiality and cannot release the records to others without the written consent of the driver.

For more information, visit the FMCSA website at www.fmcsa.dot.gov.

Review Questions

1. What method is most often used when testing for drug use?
 - a. Hair sample
 - b. Urine sample
 - c. Blood sample
 - d. Saliva sample
2. What method is most often used when testing for alcohol use?
 - a. Hair sample
 - b. Urine sample
 - c. Blood sample
 - d. Evidential blood test (breathalyzer)
3. Operators of the following vehicles are subject to FMCSA testing criterion except for:
 - a. Pickup truck drivers
 - b. Vehicles in excess of 26,000 pounds
 - c. Vehicles for the transport of 16 or more passengers
 - d. Hazardous material transporters
4. If a driver’s breathalyzer test returns a positive result for alcohol, then that driver must:
 - a. Immediately stop performing safety sensitive functions
 - b. Drive directly to his or her home dispatch location
 - c. Drive directly to his or her house
 - d. Write a letter of apology to the FMCSA

5. The limit at which a commercial driver is deemed over the legal limit for alcohol is:
- a. 0.02 alcohol concentration
 - b. 0.002 alcohol concentration
 - c. 0.004 alcohol concentration
 - d. 0.04 alcohol concentration

Answers

- 1. b
- 2. d
- 3. a
- 4. a
- 5. d

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