

# Know the New Rules for Truckers, Diabetes and Heart Health

Adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to die from heart disease than adults without diabetes, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Yet, in the past, truck drivers often ignored their blood sugar—and their heart-health risks—for fear of being ruled out of service.

Now, that's changed. A final rule from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) allows drivers with properly managed diabetes to drive interstate without needing to apply for an exemption, a process that used to include a waiting period of up to six months.

Three things you should know about the new rule:

1. Drivers with insulin-treated diabetes mellitus (ITDM) can now receive a one-year medical certificate to drive interstate.
2. To get the medical certificate, drivers must give their doctors three months of self-monitored blood glucose levels. (If you don't have three months of records, you can receive a certificate for up to three months until you get the needed records).
3. Your physician must fill out an ITDM Assessment Form and submit it to an FMCSA-certified medical examiner verifying that your diabetes is properly controlled.

Drivers who experience a severe hypoglycemic episode (dangerously low blood sugar that causes you to suffer a seizure, coma or loss of consciousness) will not be eligible to drive until a doctor verifies that their blood sugar is again under control. The same is true for drivers with certain types of diabetic retinopathy (serious eye damage caused by diabetes).



## Help Your Heart – Know Your Diabetes Risks

The rigors of truck driving create prime territory for diabetes and other heart conditions. Diabetes risk factors include:

- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Low “good” cholesterol (HDL) or high triglycerides
- Family history
- Being age 45 or older

So, in honor of American Heart Month in February, do yourself a favor. If you have any risk factors for diabetes, see your doctor and ask them to check your blood sugar. And if you already have diabetes, talk with your doctor about ways to manage it so you can stay on the road and remain heart-healthy.