

WORKING TOGETHER
FOR A HEALTHIER
WORKFORCE

OFFICES IN
WASHINGTON AND
WAYNESBURG

WHS OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023



THIS ISSUE

- New DOT Guidelines
- Medical Marijuana

IT'S WHAT WE DO

We are a full-service Occupational Medicine Clinic, offering a wide variety of services to meet your needs:

- Injury care
- Pre-employment physicals
- Return to work physicals
- DOT/school bus physicals
- OSHA surveillance physicals
- Audiogram hearing tests
- Respirator fit tests
- Drug tests (urine, hair, saliva)
- MRO services

COMPANY PROFILE

We are always striving to improve communication with our clients. We create a company profile for each client we serve.

Please make sure to periodically contact us to ensure your information (contact names and phone numbers, fax numbers, emails, and workers compensation insurance info) is current.

STAYING CONNECTED TO OUR BUSINESS CLIENTS

Welcome to the quarterly edition of the WHS Occupational Medicine Newsletter. In this publication we'll cover various occupational health topics, workplace topics, services we provide, as well as tips and suggestions to make your employees' visits as smooth as possible. Our goal is to be your partner in promoting a healthy and productive workforce.

Please feel free to share this information with others in your organization.

NEW DOT GUIDELINES

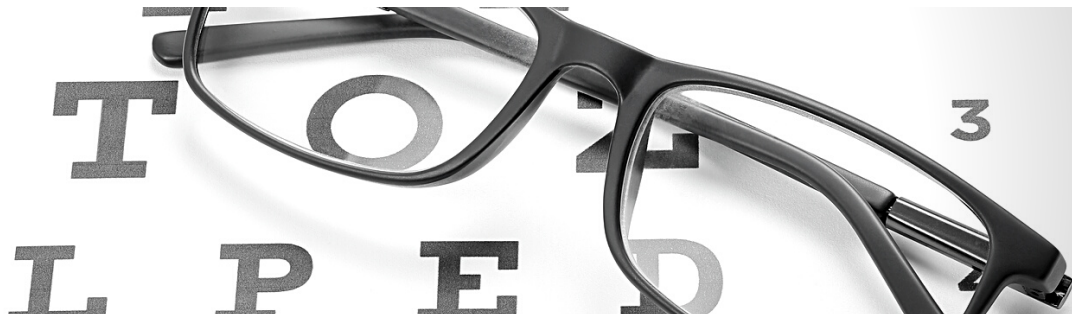
The FMCSA has changed the DOT guidelines regarding drivers prescribed insulin to treat diabetes and drivers with poor visual acuity in one eye (monocular vision). These changes eliminate the need for drivers to apply for a waiver or exemption.

Here is what your drivers need to know about these new guidelines:



FMCSA Insulin Treated Diabetes Mellitus Standard:

- Drivers must have an annual evaluation by their physician who must then complete the ITDM Assessment Form (MCSA-5870). This form is presented to the medical examiner (That's Us!) at each annual DOT physical. This form can be found on the DOT website: www.fmcsa.dot.gov. (Search for MCSA-5870)
- Waivers/exemptions are no longer needed
- No annual vision examination is required
- No annual/quarterly evaluation by Endocrinologist is required



FMCSA Monocular Vision Standard:

- In the better eye, distant visual acuity of at least 20/40 (with or without corrective lenses) and field of vision of at least 70 degrees in the horizontal meridian
- In the worse eye, does not meet either the minimum visual acuity and/or peripheral field of vision requirements
- Must be able to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber
- Must have a stable vision deficiency
- Must have had sufficient time pass since the vision deficiency became stable to adapt to and compensate for the change in vision
- Drivers must have an annual evaluation by their Ophthalmologist who must then complete the Vision Evaluation Report (MCSA-5871). This form is presented to the medical examiner (That's Us!) at each annual DOT physical. This form can be found on the DOT website: www.fmcsa.dot.gov. (Search for MCSA-5871)

These changes will now allow many drivers, who were denied a DOT medical card in the past, the ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.

Just to recap: the driver downloads the form from the DOT website, their treating physician completes the form, they bring the form to WHS Occ Med when they schedule a DOT physical. We'll take it from there! It's that simple.

Make WHS Occ Med your choice for DOT physicals. Our certified medical examiners will keep your drivers DOT compliant and on the road. Walk-ins welcome. We also do school bus physicals.



Driver Reminders For Your DOT Medical Exam:

- Bring a list of all medications
- Bring glasses, contacts and/or hearing aids for vision and hearing tests
- If you use CPAP, bring a usage compliance report – minimum 1 month of data
- If you have diabetes bring a hemoglobin A1C lab result obtained within the last 3 months
- If you have heart-related issues, bring:
 - Cardiologist letter outlining your medical history and ability to drive a CMV
 - Stress test or echocardiogram from the last 1-2 years (for MI, CABG, or stent)
- If you take Coumadin (Warfarin), bring recent INR labs
- If you have any other medical conditions, including mental health, please bring a letter from your treating physician stating you are cleared to operate a CMV

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Many states have passed legislation which permits the use of medical marijuana for symptom relief of various medical conditions. While the use of medical marijuana may provide patients alternative therapies for conditions such as chronic pain, anxiety, nausea, (to name a few), it presents unique challenges to businesses regarding hiring practices, workplace safety and post-accident care.



WHS Occ Med is equipped to handle all your drug testing needs: Pre-employment, Random, Reasonable Suspicion, and Consortium testing. Dr. Leslie is a certified Medical Review Officer (MRO) and provides fast, accurate analysis of drug test results. Give us a call to discuss how our MRO services can benefit your business.

Medical Marijuana Facts

Medical marijuana is derived from the Cannabis Sativa plant. The plant contains more than 100 active compounds. Most important are delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is the primary compound which makes people "high." Medical marijuana is dispensed in various forms like dried leaves, oil, liquid, pill, and powder. Medical marijuana cards must be renewed annually. If a person's card expires, they will not be able to purchase marijuana products at any of the state approved dispensaries.

Studies report that medical marijuana has possible benefits for several medical conditions. Symptom relief varies from patient to patient. Qualifying conditions include (but are not limited to):

- Epilepsy/seizures
- Chronic pain/inflammation
- Nausea
- Glaucoma
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Crohn's disease
- HIV/AIDS
- Mental health conditions such as: PTSD, anxiety, schizophrenia

Possible side effects of medical marijuana include (but are not limited to):

- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness
- Impaired concentration and memory
- Slower reaction times
- Increased appetite
- Hallucinations or mental illness
- Increased risk of heart attack or stroke

U.S. federal law prohibits the use of marijuana. The DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) considers marijuana a schedule I drug – the same as heroin and LSD. The Department of Health and Human Services recently requested the DEA consider reclassifying marijuana as a schedule III drug, which would reduce restrictions on its sale – Stay Tuned!

For companies with commercial motor vehicle drivers, it is important to remember that the **FMCSA/DOT does not permit the use of medical marijuana.**

Navigating Medical Marijuana And The Workplace

Businesses face unique challenges developing workplace policy, especially with state and federal laws in opposition regarding marijuana use. The key is balancing workplace policies, state medical marijuana laws, and employee rights.

The following is taken from 2016 PA Act 16:

Employment.--

- (1) No employer may discharge, threaten, refuse to hire or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against an employee regarding an employee's compensation, terms, conditions, location or privileges solely on the basis of such employee's status as an individual who is certified to use medical marijuana.
- (2) Nothing in this act shall require an employer to make any accommodation of the use of medical marijuana on the property or premises of any place of employment. This act shall in no way limit an employer's ability to discipline an employee for being under the influence of medical marijuana in the workplace or for working while under the influence of medical marijuana when the employee's conduct falls below the standard of care normally accepted for that position.



Develop A Policy To Address These Challenges

- The best practice is to have a written medical marijuana policy. Make sure it is available to all employees and consistently enforced
- Update job descriptions and identify safety sensitive jobs
- Establish procedures to look for signs of impairment
- What steps will you take if an employee tests positive for THC or other controlled substances (remember, medical marijuana cards must be renewed annually)
- Be flexible, policies may need to change as state laws or court decisions change

Sources: pa.gov, nida.nih.gov, dea.gov, mayoclinic.org, kingspry.com

TIPS

To help reduce the time your employees spend in our clinic, download, and complete all necessary forms prior to the scheduled visit.

- DOT forms
- Pre-employment medical history
- OSHA Respiratory Questionnaire
- OSHA surveillance forms
- Audio history

Forms can be found on our website at whsoccmed.org. We can also provide you with a digital copy of these forms.



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