

McClatchy Medical Center

What You Need to Know about ...

Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery

What is the Rule?

49 CFR Part 391.41 "A person is physically qualified to drive a motor vehicle if that person has no current clinical diagnosis of myocardial infarction (heart attack), angina pectoris (chest pain), coronary insufficiency, thrombosis (blood clot), or any other cardiovascular disease of a variety known to be accompanied by syncope (passing out), dyspnea (shortness of breath), collapse (fainting) or congestive heart failure."

What are your responsibilities?

Before going to a DOT exam you need to gather the information required by the DOT in able to be certified on that visit. If you do not have the required information then you risk not being able to be certified on that visit and it may take you off the road until the information is gathered or prevent you from being hired. The reason for these rules is to protect not only the public by to protect you and your company.

What is required?

1. A Driver must wait 3 months after bypass surgery and be without symptoms.
2. The DOT requires:
 - a. Obtain an ejection fraction prior to return to driving.
 - b. No myocardial infarction within 6 months before surgery or during perioperative period.
 - c. Results of a thallium exercise tolerance test annually starting five years after surgery that is negative for a blockage, has an appropriate blood pressure response on both systolic and diastolic and shows no dysrhythmia (skipped or missed beats), no clinical symptoms of ischemia (shortness of breath, weakness, fainting), and no angina (chest pain) when the patient has completed 6 METS or Bruce stage II or has obtained 85% of predicted heart rate for age.
 - d. May re-certify annually.

What you need to bring to the DOT exam?

You must go to your cardiologist with this information and have him write a letter showing compliance with the above regulations. Many drivers will go to their family doctor to have these tests performed but they must be performed prior to the examination date or you cannot complete the examination.