

McClatchy Medical Center

What You Need to Know about ...

Heart Attack – Myocardial Infarction

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. An individual is qualified to drive if that person has no current clinical diagnosis of high blood pressure likely to interfere with his ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.”

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 be 2 months out from a heart attack and be without symptoms.
2. The DOT requires:
 - a. Normal resting EKG (cardiogram)
 - b. Results of an exercise tolerance test 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.
 - c. At follow-up must be asymptomatic and have a negative exercise stress test every two after the heart attack until 55, then yearly.
 - d. Determination of an ejection fraction with the desired EF being at least 40%.

What you need to bring to the DOT exam?

You must go to your cardiologist or family doctor with this information and have him write a letter showing compliance with the above regulations. They must be performed prior to the examination date or you cannot complete the examination.