

A Breakdown of the Skilled Performance Exam (SPE)

Clarification of the Process & Helpful Advice

Who is eligible for a SPE?

Individuals with a fixed deficit (not caused by a progressive disease) of an extremity are eligible. This includes those who are missing, or have permanent loss of function, of a hand, foot, leg, or arm.

What is required of the medical examiner?

The medical examiner's role is to complete the DOT physical and certify the driver.

- Mark the third bullet on page 4 of the exam form (MCSA-5875) that states, "Meets standards, but periodic monitoring required", then marking the box that states, "Accompanied by a Skill Performance Evaluation (SPE) Certificate"
- The same box is marked on the medical certificate

The driver must be certified prior to applying for a SPE certificate

What is needed to apply for a SPE certificate?

A driver who is employed must submit a **Joint** application, meaning the application is completed and submitted by both the driver and the employer.

A driver who is self-employed or not currently employed as a commercial driver submits a **Unilateral** application, meaning the application is completed and submitted solely by the driver.

- Undergo a DOT physical and obtain a medical certificate
- Have the Medical Evaluation Summary completed by a physiatrist or orthopedic surgeon
- Provide a description of any bracing, assistive, or prosthetic devices being used
- Obtain a driving record of the past three years from their state drivers licensing agency
- A road test must be performed using the trailer type the driver intends to use
- The individual must complete a driver employment application or provide a statement that the driver was not previously employed

What is the Medical Evaluation Summary?

The five-page Medical Evaluation Summary begins on page 13 of the SPE document. There are three parts of the Medical Evaluation Summary.

- Parts I and II are completed by the driver and/or employer
- Part III is FMCSA's version of a functional capacity evaluation
 - It must be completed by a board-qualified or board-certified physiatrist or orthopedic surgeon
 - The physician must first review parts I and II before completing part III

How do I find a clinic to do the Medical Evaluation Summary?

It is not the responsibility of the medical examiner to find a clinic for the driver. If you decide to help the driver, here are some key points to consider:

- You are **not** looking for someone to complete a SPE evaluation or to aid in the DOT/CDL medical certification process. This terminology will decrease the likelihood of finding a clinic
- Ask the receptionist if their office performs "functional capacity evaluations"
- You may then explain that the driver is required to have this evaluation completed prior to being permitted to drive a commercial motor vehicle
- If needed, you can emphasize that this is not part of the DOT physical

How does the driver submit their completed SPE application?

The application must contain a copy of all the documents created by performing each of the steps noted above. The application must be addressed to the applicable FMCSA field service center for the State in which the applicant is licensed, or where the co-applicant motor carrier's principal place of business is located. A list of service centers is found on page 5 of the SPE document.

[Download the SPE Application](#)

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