

# Department of Transportation physical exam

## What the driver should expect

Before your appointment, you'll be asked to fill out Section 1 (Driver Information) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Medical Examination Report Form. Your medical examiner will fill out the rest of the form during the exam.

**If your appointment is with Kaiser Permanente:** Before your appointment, you'll be asked to sign the Authorization for Use and/or Disclosure of Member/Patient Health Information form for disclosing your Kaiser Permanente records to the Occupational Health Clinic. This form gives your examiner access to your medical information so Kaiser Permanente can best support your health and wellness – helping you perform your job safely.

## Top issues to see your primary care doctor about before your exam

Sleep apnea		
Definition	What the exam tests	What to do
<p>When your breathing is often blocked or partly blocked during sleep. This can be mild to severe, based on how often your lungs don't get enough air. May happen from 5 to 30 or more times an hour.</p> <p><b>Health risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daytime fatigue</li> <li>• High blood pressure/heart problems</li> <li>• Type 2 diabetes</li> <li>• Metabolic syndrome</li> <li>• Liver problems</li> </ul>	<p>Your examiner will make an assessment to see if you have risk factors for sleep apnea. They may refer you for a sleep study that diagnoses sleep apnea and measures whether the severity may result in a lapse of consciousness, dizziness, fatigue, or decreased mental awareness that may interfere with your ability to safely operate your vehicle.</p>	<p>If prescribed, use your CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) or BiPAP (bilateral positive airway pressure) machine to help you sleep better and reduce the health risks of sleep apnea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum usage requirement: at least 70% of nights, with a minimum of 4 hours per night, over the entire duration prescribed.</li> <li>• Bring all your CPAP or BiPAP data since your last exam with you to the appointment (you can upload the SD card data to the respiratory therapist beforehand).</li> </ul> <p>If you're newly diagnosed, contact your primary care doctor to create a plan for lifestyle changes.</p>

For more information, go to [kp.org](http://kp.org) and search "sleep apnea."

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High blood pressure		
Definition	What the exam tests	What to do
<p>When the pressure of the blood in your blood vessels is higher than it should be.</p> <p><b>Health risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heart attack</li><li>• Stroke</li><li>• Eye problems</li><li>• Kidney disease</li></ul>	<p>Tests whether your high blood pressure is decreasing to be “under control,” meaning below 140/90.</p> <p>Blood pressure greater than 180/110 is disqualifying. Blood pressure below 180/110 but above 140/90 will automatically shorten the period of certification.</p>	<p>Take blood pressure medication as prescribed by your primary care doctor.</p> <p>Eat a healthy diet low in salt, total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol but high in fresh fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>Stay or become more physically active and aim for a healthy weight.</p> <p>If you smoke, quit as soon as possible.</p> <p>Contact your primary care doctor to create a plan for lifestyle changes.</p>

For more information, go to [kp.org](http://kp.org) and search “high blood pressure” or “heart health.”

Diabetes		
Definition	What the exam tests	What to do
<p><b>Type 2 diabetes:</b> When your body can't make enough or properly use insulin.</p> <p><b>Type 1 diabetes:</b> When your pancreas stops making insulin.</p> <p><b>Health risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Skin infections</li><li>• Eye damage (retinopathy, cataracts, and glaucoma)</li><li>• Stroke, heart disease</li><li>• Nerve damage (neuropathy), especially in the feet</li></ul>	<p>Tests whether your diabetes is “under control,” meaning you keep your blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible through diet or oral medication.</p> <p>Exam may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Urine analysis for indications of uncontrolled diabetes</li><li>• Thorough review of vision and use of limbs, fingers, and toes</li></ul>	<p>Keep your blood sugar (glucose) levels well controlled by testing and taking medication as prescribed by your primary care doctor.</p> <p>Eat a healthy diet low in carbohydrates, salt, total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol but high in fresh fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>Stay or become more physically active and aim for a healthy weight.</p> <p>Requirements before the exam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Within the 3 months before the exam, get an A1c blood test. Results must be within 7% to 10%.</li><li>• Follow up with your primary care doctor periodically for diabetes management. Get an electrocardiogram (EKG) test every 2 years.</li></ul>

For more information, go to [kp.org](http://kp.org) and search “diabetes” or “key steps in diabetes care.”

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Medications that can affect driving		
Definition	What the exam tests	What to do
<p>Use of opiates, amphetamines, narcotics, or any habit-forming drug that can impact your judgement and affect driving.</p> <p><b>Health risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Weakened immune system</li> <li>• Hallucinations</li> <li>• Coma</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluates whether you take a Schedule 1 drug in one of the following classes of drugs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marijuana</li> <li>• Cocaine</li> <li>• Opiates</li> <li>• Phencyclidine (PCP)</li> <li>• Amphetamines and methamphetamines</li> </ul>	<p>Contact your primary care doctor to create a treatment plan to help you manage your condition without medications that affect safe driving.</p>

For more information, go to [kp.org](http://kp.org) and search “medicine side effects.”

Musculoskeletal injuries (that can be actively treated)		
Definition	What the exam tests	What to do
<p>Often called repetitive strain injuries (RSI), these are injuries caused by damage to muscles, joints, or bones.</p> <p><b>Health risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aching, fatigue, and weakness of affected limbs</li> <li>• Injury can become irreversible</li> <li>• Can lead to inability to sleep and perform light duties</li> </ul>	<p>Tests whether there is any musculoskeletal condition that interferes with your ability to control and operate a vehicle.</p>	<p>When sitting for long periods, take a 10-minute break each hour or as often as possible.</p> <p>If possible, avoid periods of repetitive motion lasting longer than 10 minutes.</p> <p>Stay or become more physically active and aim for a healthy weight. Being overweight puts extra strain on weight-bearing joints like hips and knees.</p> <p>Contact your primary care doctor to create a treatment plan and discuss assistive devices to help with daily tasks.</p>

For more information, go to [kp.org](http://kp.org) and search “musculoskeletal system” or “arthritis.”

### Additional resources

- Medical examination of vehicle operators and medications that can affect driving: [fmcsa.dot.gov](http://fmcsa.dot.gov)
- High blood pressure: [cdc.gov/bloodpressure](http://cdc.gov/bloodpressure)

Information may have changed since publication.