

## Hearing

### The standard: §391.41(b)(11)

A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person:

- First perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear from at least 5 feet away, with or without the use of a hearing aid; or
- If tested with an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1,000 Hz, and 2,000 Hz, with or without a hearing aid.



The frequency range of hearing for a healthy young person is about 20 - 20,000 Hz.



### Key points:

- Two tests are used to screen hearing: a forced-whisper test and/or an audiometric test.
- The required tests screen for hearing loss in the range of normal conversational tones.
- Either test may be administered first. If the driver meets the hearing standard on the first test, the second test can be skipped.
- Both ears must be tested, but drivers must only pass one test in one ear to be considered qualified.
- When a hearing aid is used to pass the hearing test, the hearing aid must be used while driving.
- A driver is disqualified if he/she fails both the forced-whisper test AND the audiometric test.

### Public safety considerations:

- Hearing plays a role in safe driving. Hearing warning sounds, such as horns, train signals, and sirens may allow the driver to react to a potential hazard before it