



Australian Government  
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

## Marine Orders Part 09 Health - Medical Fitness

# FORMS, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

## *Explanatory Notes for Medical Inspectors of Seamen*

---

### 1. Forms

(Forms are available from AMSA's web site [www.amsa.gov.au](http://www.amsa.gov.au) or from any AMSA office)

#### Medical Examination Request

An applicant may produce a standard Request Form authorized by his/her employer. If so, you should bill the applicant's employer for the cost of the examination and any necessary additional tests.

If the applicant does not produce a Request Form, signed by an authorized person in the employing company, it is expected that the applicant will pay for the examination and testing.

#### Medical Examination Report

The applicant should complete Part A of this before presenting for the examination. However, it is possible that some applicants may not have obtained a copy before presenting for examination, so a few copies can be provided to you for their use.

Items in Part A have been grouped together to assist applicants to fill out the form easily. Please add your comments to any affirmative answer. The applicant must sign the declaration at the foot of the second page in your presence.

If you need to obtain further medical information from the applicant's GP or, in respect of any particular problem, his or her specialist, please get the applicant to sign the "Authority to divulge medical information" immediately below the declaration.

Part B of the Report is to be completed by you before, during and after the examination.

#### Certificate of Medical Fitness

The form of the Certificate of Medical Fitness is prescribed in Appendix 3 to Marine Orders, Part 9. Pads of certificates may be obtained from any AMSA office.

### 2. After the Medical Examination

If you are satisfied that the applicant is fit for duty at sea, please sign and date the *Medical Examination Report* and then complete the *Certificate of Medical Fitness*. All text boxes should be completed, using 'None' or 'Not applicable' as appropriate.

The 'Date of examination' should be the date on which the majority of the physical examination is carried out. In most cases, the 'Expiry date of Certificate' will be the corresponding date two years later.

If the applicant appears generally fit, but is referred for a further test or tests before you wish to make a decision on fitness, it is desirable that you retain the Certificate uncompleted until the results of the tests are known. If the results are then satisfactory the certificate can be completed, and the 'Expiry date of Certificate' is then two years after the date on which you sign the certificate. If you consider that the applicant is unfit or, on the evidence you have seen, is likely to be declared unfit as the result of further testing, the Certificate should be completed and signed accordingly.

Details of the reasons for unfitness are to be included in the box, together with any details of referral or further testing needed. Any time period that you consider should elapse before further examination should

be entered in the 'Describe any restriction' box. The 'Expiry date of Certificate' box should be completed with 'xxxxxx'.

In all cases, please advise the applicant of the contents of the *Medical Examination Report*. If possible, the applicant should be provided with a copy for his/her personal records. The applicant must sign as having been advised of the contents of the Report.

### **Distribution of copies**

The applicant is to receive the original of the Certificate of Medical Fitness and may receive a copy of the Medical Examination Report.

AMSA is to receive the duplicate of the Certificate of Medical Fitness and a copy of the Medical Examination Report.

Either by post to: Manager, Ship Operations and Qualifications  
Australian Maritime Safety Authority  
GPO Box 2181  
CANBERRA 2601

or by fax to: Manager, Ship Operations and Qualifications, on 02 6279 5056.

You must keep the triplicate of the Certificate of Medical Fitness and should keep a copy of the Medical Examination Report.

The employer (if your bill is not paid by the applicant) should get your invoice for the examination and any separate tests (if not charged by the provider directly to the applicant or employer) and should be sent a photocopy of the Certificate of Medical Fitness.

### **Retention of copies**

The Guidelines recommend (at 2.2.2) that you keep all the medical examination forms in a confidential file for a period of at least 30 years. This period is recommended on the basis of medical advice to AMSA. The forms should normally be retained for as long as the medical records of your other patients are retained after their last consultation.

## **2. The Guidelines**

These should be largely self-explanatory. It is emphasized that the assessment of medical fitness for service at sea is a matter for your professional judgement. The Guidelines are to assist you in coming to a decision.

Only in one instance is there a rigid line between fitness and unfitness. A person who is red/green/white colour blind cannot serve as a ship's Master, a watchkeeping deck officer, or a seaman required to carry out lookout duties. Paragraphs 3.4, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.10 of the Guidelines refer to this, together with Annex 2 to the Guidelines.

Marine Orders Part 09 requires that you, in addition to applying normal medical fitness guidelines, have regard to the Guidelines for the Medical Examination of Seafarers and the relevant job task analyses. This means that you should take the comments and procedures suggested into account, using your normal professional judgement, in deciding what is required in your examination of the applicant.

A section on "How to use these guidelines" is next to the contents listing in the Guidelines.

The Guidelines, Part B Medical Standards, suggest certain tests as being either desirable or essential to carry out, or areas where it may be appropriate to refer a person for further testing. These are shown on the following page.

Condition or test	Para	Test or Comment
Obesity	2.1	A practical demonstration of ability to climb ladders and fit through hatches may be needed for persons with a BMI of more than 30 kg/m <sup>2</sup> . The applicant's height, weight and BMI are to be recorded in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .
Visual acuity	3.1 to 3.4	All applicants should be tested against distant and near vision, and visual field. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .
Colour vision	3.4 to 3.7 Annex 2	All deck and engine room personnel should be screened for colour vision impairment, using the Ishihara colour plates. The screening is only required at six year intervals. In the absence of evidence of a colour vision test within this period, the applicant's colour vision should be examined. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> . Serving Engine Room personnel may produce a letter from the employer exempting them from this requirement.  The date of the last colour vision test is to be endorsed on the <i>Certificate of Medical Fitness</i> for the information of subsequent Medical Examiners.  If an applicant from the deck department presents a letter from his/her employer stating that the applicant is only employed in areas where colour vision is not required (see Table 1 in the Guidelines) this fact must be stated on the <i>Certificate of Medical Fitness</i> in the 'Restrictions' box.
Hearing	4.1	You should be able to assess, during normal conversation with the applicant, if there is, or may be, any problem with hearing. If there does not appear to be any indication of possible problems, an audiometer test is not required. If you consider, or suspect, that hearing problems exist, you should carry out an audiometer test, or refer the applicant to a specialist for testing. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .  We have been advised since printing the Marine Order that assessing hearing loss of a person wearing a hearing aid is impractical. The relevant line in Table 2 of the Marine Order should therefore be ignored. Table 2 in the separate copy of the Guidelines has been updated. It may be appropriate to substitute a conversation test for a person wearing a hearing aid.
ECG	5.2, 5.4, 5.5	This is a mandatory test for all seafarers 55 and over, and those with a history of cardiovascular disease. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .
Blood pressure	5.16	Should normally be measured, together with pulse. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .
Lung function	6.7 to 6.9	You should be able to assess, during normal conversation with the applicant, if there is, or may be, any problem with lung function. If there does not appear to be any indication of possible problems, a lung function test is not required. If you consider, or suspect, that lung function problems exist, you should carry out a lung function test, or refer the applicant to a specialist for testing. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .  However, certain positions may require use of a respirator (see 6.8). If the applicant is in such a position, or is likely to need to wear a respirator in an emergency, such as personnel likely to wear Self Contained Air Breathing Apparatus or emergency air masks (possible on a gas or chemical tanker) a lung function test should be carried out.
X ray	6.11	A chest X-ray is required for pre-sea medicals. Other conditions (see 6.11) may indicate a need for a chest X-ray. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> . If a chest X-ray is not done, please put a cross through "Chest X-ray report".
Faecal test	7.9, 16.2	This is mandatory for all catering crew. Particular diseases concerned are cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .
Urine testing	8.1, 13.1	Urine testing is not mandatory. However, in view of the ease of screening using urine testing sticks for blood, glucose and protein, it is recommended that this be carried out at each examination. Record results in Part B of the <i>Medical Examination Report</i> .
Other testing		Other testing should be carried out only where there is evidence for a condition in respect of which the seafarer, his or her shipmates, the ship, or other ships, may be put at risk, or where you have reason to suspect that such a condition may exist, and the test is necessary to confirm or disprove the possibility.