



MARINE NOTICE No. 34 of 2020

Updated 26/07/2021

Amended 07/11/2023

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**This Marine Notice supersedes Marine Notices
No. 32 of 2005 and No. 38 of 2014**

*Notice to Ship Owners, Fishing Vessel Owners, Managers, Agents, Masters, Seafarers,
Fishers, Approved Doctors, Medical Referees and Training Establishments*

Seafarer/Fisher Medical Examinations Scheme Medical and Eyesight Standards

Introduction

1. Under national legislation seafarers and fishers are legally required to hold a valid certificate attesting to their medical fitness for the work for which they are employed.
2. This came into effect in July 2014 for seafarers under the Merchant Shipping (Medical Examinations) Regulations 2014 ([SI 246/2014](#)) and for fishers in July 2020 through the European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Medical Examination) Regulations 2020 ([SI 266/2020](#)).
3. Any medical fitness certificate issued to fishers under the Merchant Shipping (Medical Examinations) Regulations 2014 remain valid until their expiry date.
4. A list of Approved Doctors available to carry out medical examinations and issue medical fitness certificates to seafarers and fishers is available here - <https://www.seafarers.ie/Seafarer/Training-Courses-and-Medical-Fitness-Certificates/Medical-Fitness>

2014 Regulations - Seafarer Medical Examination Scheme

These regulations apply to:

- Any person aged 16 and over employed to work aboard an Irish seagoing ship.
- Any crew member listed on the safe manning document for an Irish registered sail-training vessel.

These regulations do not apply to

- Seafarers employed or engaged on fishing vessels, pleasure vessels, dredgers and barges employed in harbours or offshore installations whilst on their working stations.
- State-owned ships.
- Trainees and volunteers on sail-training vessels.

2020 Regulations - Fisher's Medical Examination Scheme:

These Regulations apply to:

- Fishers aged 16 or over employed aboard an Irish sea-going commercial fishing vessel.
- Fishers aged 15 employed aboard an Irish sea-going commercial fishing vessel during school holidays.

These Regulations do not apply to:

- Fishers working aboard a Category C fishing vessel which remains at sea for 72 hours or less or which is less than 15 metres in length overall.
- Sharefishers working aboard a vessel made up exclusively of sharefishers.

Medical Examination System

5. When attending a medical examination, the seafarer/fisher should:

- provide their Seafarer ID number,
- provide appropriate photographic identification,
- provide any previous medical fitness certificate, and
- notify the Approved Doctor if they have previously failed a medical fitness examination.

Note, an Approved Doctor will be unable to issue a medical fitness certificate if the person does not have a valid Seafarer ID number. If you do not know or do not have a Seafarer ID, you should contact the Department by email at admin@seafarers.ie and you will be issued with a self-registration link or your Seafarer ID number.

6. An approved Doctor may issue a medical fitness certificate to **any person**, once they have a valid Seafarer ID number and **meet the medical standards required**.
7. The cost of the examination should be met by the seafarer/fisher or seafarer's/fisher's employer or company. The fees are set out in Appendix 1.
8. In view of the importance of meeting the eyesight standards, anyone considering a seagoing career is strongly advised to have a full eyesight test before beginning training to ensure that they meet the standards.
9. Approved Doctors are required to determine a seafarer/fisher's fitness by reference to the established medical and eyesight standards as summarised in

Appendix 2. The standards seek to provide flexibility to reflect relative risk while at the same time recognising the particular hazards of working at sea.

10. As a general principle the Approved Doctor will ensure that no disease or defect is present which could either be aggravated by working at sea or represent an unacceptable health risk to the individual seafarer/fisher, other crew members or the safety of the ship. Particular factors which will be taken into account are:
- the potentially hazardous nature of seafaring.
 - the restricted medical facilities likely to be available on-board ship.
 - the possible difficulty of providing or replacing required medication.
 - the confined nature of life on board ship.
 - the crew complement whereby the illness of one crew member may place a burden on others or impair the safe and efficient working of the ship.
 - the potential need for crew members to play a role in an emergency which may involve strenuous activity in adverse conditions.
 - the requirement to join and leave ships by air means that they should be free from any condition which precludes air travel or could seriously be affected by it.

Visual acuity and colour vision standards

11. The medical examination will also include testing to ensure the seafarer/fisher meets the visual acuity and colour vision standards. The screening for colour vision will involve the use of Ishihara Plates (24 plate printed edition). It is essential that applicants for certificates of competency as deck or dual career officers have full colour vision. A deck applicant who fails the Ishihara test may arrange for their colour vision to be retested using the Holmes Wright B Lantern or Fletcher-Evans Lantern or CAD computerized test at a designated centre. Failure in this test will mean that a medical fitness certificate may only be issued with a restriction excluding navigational watch/lookout duties. Details of eye testing centres can be found in Appendix 3.
12. Applicants intending to work as engineer, electro-technical or radio officers must also meet the colour vision requirements and those who fail the Ishihara test may be retested at a designated centre using the HRR Test (4th or later printed edition). Failure in these tests will mean that a medical fitness certificate will only be issued with a restriction excluding work with coloured cables and equipment.
13. The following categories are applied in assessing whether or not a seafarer/fisher is fit in terms of medical and eyesight standards.
- Fit without restrictions or conditions.
 - Fit with restrictions and/or conditions.
 - Temporarily unfit for seafaring duties.
 - Permanently unfit for seafaring duties.
14. It is important to note that if an Approved Doctor has reasonable grounds to believe that:

- there has been a significant change in the medical fitness of a seafarer/fisher while holding a valid certificate.
- full details of the applicant's condition were not provided at the time of the examination and therefore he/she could not reasonably have considered that the applicant met the required standards; or
- the medical fitness certificate was not issued in accordance with the regulations.

then the Approved Doctor may:

- suspend the certificate until the seafarer/fisher has undergone a further medical examination; or
- suspend the certificate for such period as he/she considers the seafarer/fisher will remain unfit to go to sea; or
- revoke the certificate if he/she considers that the seafarer/fisher will remain permanently unfit to go to sea.

15. In any of the above cases the Approved Doctor is obliged to notify the seafarer/fisher accordingly and require the surrender of the medical fitness certificate. If the certificate is not returned, the Approved Doctor will inform the Marine Survey Office who will take the appropriate action.

16. If a seafarer/fisher suffers a condition, has been incapacitated by injury or illness or has been discharged or evacuated from a ship for health reasons, the seafarer/fisher should not use his or her medical fitness certificate until an Approved Doctor has re-examined the seafarer/fisher and is satisfied that they meet the standards for the category of certificate held.

17. An employer, owner or master of a ship may require a seafarer/fisher to obtain a new certificate where they have reason to believe that the seafarer/fisher no longer meets the minimum medical standards as a result of illness or injury. Reassessments will also be allowed within 3 months of the expiry of the current certificate.

18. Any seafarer/fisher found permanently unfit, has restrictions or conditions recorded or whose medical fitness certificate is revoked or suspended by an Approved Doctor, has a right of review by an independent medical referee appointed by the Department of Transport and details for medical referees are outlined in Appendix 3. Where a medical referee has undertaken an examination in their capacity as an Approved Doctor, the appeal to the outcome for that examination can only be made to the other medical referee. The appeals process is outlined further below.

Validity of medical fitness certificates and exemptions:

19. The medical fitness certificate under the regulations is valid up to a maximum period of 2 years or 1 year for seafarers/fishers under the age of 18. If the seafarer/fisher's health demands it, an Approved Doctor may issue a certificate valid for a period of less than 2 years.

20. The owner or master of a ship shall not employ or continue to employ a seafarer unless they are the holder of a valid medical fitness certificate.
21. The master of a fishing vessel shall not permit a fisher on board the fishing vessel unless the fisher is in possession of a valid medical fitness certificate.
22. A seafarer whose medical fitness certificate has expired during the course of a voyage, may continue to work until the next port of call at which a replacement certificate can be obtained, or for up to three months from the date of expiry of the certificate – whichever is the sooner. The validity of the certificate cannot be extended. A replacement medical fitness certificate must be obtained at the next port at which it is possible to do so.
23. This provision is intended to be used only where a medical fitness certificate expires while in a location where medical examination in accordance with the Regulations is impracticable, e.g., in a country from which Ireland does not accept the national medical fitness certificate or where this is not available to foreign nationals.
24. A fisher whose medical fitness certificate has expired during the course of a voyage may continue to work until the end of that voyage.
25. In urgent cases, with the Department's approval, a seafarer/fisher who has no valid medical fitness certificate because their medical fitness certificate has expired within the last month, may exceptionally be employed for a period not exceeding three months without a valid medical fitness certificate, provided that their last medical fitness certificate was valid for a full 24 months (or 12 months if the seafarer is under 18 years of age). The seafarer/fisher must obtain a replacement medical fitness certificate at the next port at which it is possible to do so. Any case requiring approval should be referred to the Marine Survey Office at the following address, Marine Survey Office, Irish Maritime Administration, Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, email: mso@transport.gov.ie.
26. In the case of fishers, this provision shall only apply to fishers on a fishing vessel of 24 metres in length and over or which normally remains at sea for more than 3 days.

Summary of Appeals Process:

27. A seafarer may make an appeal to the Department for referral to a medical referee, where a medical fitness certificate:
 - has been issued stating that the applicant is not fit, either temporarily or permanently, to carry out the duties as a seafarer.
 - has had restrictions or conditions recorded.
 - has been revoked.
 - has been suspended for a period of more than 3 months.
28. A fisher may make an appeal to the Department for referral to a medical referee, where a medical fitness certificate:

- has been issued stating that the applicant is not fit, either temporarily or permanently, to carry out the duties as a fisher.
- has had restrictions or conditions recorded.
- has been revoked.
- has been suspended.
- has been issued, including with restrictions or conditions recorded, stating that the applicant is fit to carry out the duties of a fisher, where the applicant during the course of the medical examination indicated to the Approved Doctor that they were unfit.
- has been issued stating that the applicant is not fit, either temporarily or permanently, to carry out their duties as a fisher or had restrictions or conditions recorded and the medical reason for the certification has disappeared.

29. Further information in relation to the appeals process, including timelines and how to make an appeal can be found here <https://www.seafarers.ie/General-Information/Medical-Fitness-Certificates#597133-summary-of-appeals-process>

Marine Notices are issued purely for maritime safety and navigation reasons and should not be construed as conferring rights or granting permissions.

Irish Maritime Administration,
Department of Transport
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland
Email: MedicalRegulations@transport.gov.ie

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Encl: Appendix 1 – Fees
Appendix 2 – Summary of Medical Standards
Appendix 3 – List of Medical Referees & Designated Centres for Confirmatory Colour Vision Testing
Appendix 4 – List of countries whose medical certificates are recognised.

<p>For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact: The Marine Survey Office, MSO@transport.gov.ie For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to: Dept. of Transport, Maritime Safety Policy Division, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland. email: MarineNotices@transport.gov.ie or visit us at: www.gov.ie/transport/</p>

Appendix 1

Fees

The maximum fee that may be charged for a full seafarer/fisher medical examination and issue of a medical fitness certificate is €150.00. The seafarer/fisher and/or employer should meet all fees. Tests which do not form part of the medical examination are not covered by the fee and may be charged for separately. The charges for confirmatory colour vision testing at the designated centres will be the responsibility of the seafarer/fisher. The maximum costs for all the services will be as follows:

- Seafarer Medical Examination & issue of Medical Fitness Certificate – Maximum of €150.00.
- Confirmatory Colour Vision testing which includes Holmes Wright B Lantern, Fletcher-Evans, Cad computerized test or HRR Test (4th or later printed edition) – Maximum of €150.00.
- Drugs/Alcohol testing – Maximum of €50.00 for initial test plus additional charge if chain of custody confirmatory testing is required.
- Medical Appeal - the costs of the medical appeal (€200.00) will be the responsibility of the applicant. In addition, if reports are required from the applicant's GP and/or specialist, these will be charged at additional cost.

The costs will include a report, which will be sent to the referring Approved Doctor.

Appendix 2

Summary of Medical Standards

Section 1 - Cardiovascular Diseases

- A. Congenital
- B. Valvular
- C. Hypertension
- D. Ischaemia
- E. Arrhythmia
- F. Peripheral Cardiovascular Disease
- G. Pulmonary Embolism
- H. Cerebrovascular Disease
- I. Other

Section 2 – Respiratory Disease

- A. Upper Respiratory Tract (nose, throat)
- B. Lower Respiratory Tract

Section 3 - Gastrointestinal Disease

- A. Oral/Dental
- B. Peptic Ulcer
- C. Gastritis / Oesophagitis
- D. Inflammatory Bowel Disease (Ulcerative Colitis/Crohn's Disease)
- E. Other Large Bowel Conditions
- F. Hernia
- G. Stoma
- H. Liver and Biliary Tract Disease

Section 4 - Genitourinary System

- A. Sub-Clinical Abnormalities
- B. Renal Calculi
- C. Infections (acute/chronic)
- D. Renal Failure
- E. Renal Transplant
- F. Enuresis
- G. Prostatic Disease
- H. Gynaecological Conditions
- I. Testicular Conditions
- J. Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- K. HIV and Aids

Section 5 - Musculo-skeletal System

- A. Arthritis

- B. Other Joint Conditions
- C. Limb Protheses
- D. Back Conditions

Section 6 - Endocrine / Metabolic Diseases

- A. Diabetes
- B. Other Endocrine Disorders
- C. Other Metabolic Diseases
- D. Obesity

Section 7 - Skin Disorders

- A. Infection
- B. Psoriasis
- C. Eczema

Section 8 - Blood Diseases

- A. Anaemia
- B. Inherited blood conditions (e.g. Sickle Cell Anaemia)
- C. Splenectomy
- D. Polycythaemia
- E. Coagulation Disorders
- F. Malignancy of the Haemopoietic System
- G. Immunosuppression

Section 9 - Diseases of the Nervous System

- A. Organic Disease
- B. Epilepsy
- C. Head Injury or Surgery
- D. Migraine
- E. Syncope
- F. Meniere's Disease / Balance Disorders / Motion Sickness
- G. Ear Infections
- H. Deafness
- I. Speech Defects
- J. Sleep Disorders

Section 10 - Eyesight Standards and Eye Conditions

- A. General
- B. Visual Acuity
- C. Monocular Vision
- D. Visual Fields
- E. Colour Vision
- F. Eye Diseases

Section 11 – Psychiatric / Mental Illness

- A. Neurosis
- B. Psychosis
- C. Addiction Disorders
- D. Other Psychological Disorders

Section 12 – Pregnancy

Section 13 - Miscellaneous Conditions

- A. Infections
- B. Neoplasms
- C. Medication
- D. Dyslexia

Appendix 3

List of Medical Referees

Name	Address	Phone/Fax
Dr Martin Hogan	Corporate Health Ireland., Heritage Business Park, Mahon Industrial Estate, Blackrock, Cork	Tel: 021 4350360 Fax: 021 4536016
Dr Dominick P Natin	Aeromedical Centre Mater Private Day Hospital Newenham House Northern Cross Malahide Road Dublin 17 D17 AY61	Tel: 01-8858615 Fax: 01 8032909 Email: dnatin@mater.ie

The designated centres for confirmatory colour vision testing:

Name	Address	Phone/Fax
Dr Dominick P Natin	Aeromedical Centre Mater Private Day Hospital Newenham House Northern Cross Malahide Road Dublin 17 D17 AY61	Tel: 01-8858615 Email: dnatin@mater.ie
Dr Peter Davison BSc (Optom)MSc, PhD	The NOC Colour Vision Assessment Unit, Technological University Dublin, Lower Grangegorm, Dublin, D07 ADY7	Tel: 086 3017139 or 01 220 5900 Email: peter.davison@tudublin.ie

Appendix 4

Note: This Appendix does not apply to fishers.

List of countries whose Medical Fitness Certificates are accepted as equivalent to the Irish Medical Fitness Certificate.

Australia
Hong Kong
Iceland
Malaysia
New Zealand
Norway
Philippines
Russia
Singapore
Ukraine
United Kingdom

All above named countries are in addition to European Union Member States.