

Medical fitness STCW, STCW-F

This guideline is for medical practitioners conducting medical examinations for seafarers who have STCW or STCW-F certificates.

Note:

Separate guidance has been created for GPs that are examining seafarers who have National or Ring-fenced maritime certificates.

Guidance is available from: maritimenz.govt.nz/medical

Medical fitness STCW, STCW-F

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1. Overview

This guidance is for medical practitioners conducting medical examinations for seafarers who have STCW or STCW-F certificates. Seafarers who have STCW or STCW-F certificates need to meet the requirements of Maritime Rule Part 34: Medical Standards should use this guidance.

What is Maritime Rule Part 34: Medical Standards?

Maritime rules contain detailed technical standards and procedures and form part of New Zealand's maritime law. The rules are statutory instruments (or secondary legislation) made by the Minister of Transport under the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

Part 34 of the maritime rules relates to medical standards for seafarers and their fitness for duty.

Who can conduct medical examinations for seafarers?

For STCW or STCW-F certificates of competency or proficiency, a **registered medical practitioner** who is approved by Maritime New Zealand may conduct medical examinations and issue certificates of medical fitness.

Note: a **registered medical practitioner** means a person who is, or is deemed to be, registered under the Health Practitioner's Competence Assurance Act 2003 with the Medical Council of New Zealand and who is practising medicine in accordance with his or her scope of practice.

2. Medical examination of seafarers

How do I become an approved medical practitioner?

You will need to be approved by the Director of Maritime New Zealand in accordance with Maritime Rule Part 34.3. An applicant for approval will need to provide evidence that they:

- are a registered medical practitioner
- have experience to determine whether a seafarer:
 - meets the required medical standard
 - is fit for the duties to which the seafarer's certificate relates, or which the seafarer is to perform. The medical practitioner's experience should include familiarity with the maritime environment and personnel, particularly with regard to seafarer fitness and medical requirements. A description of any relevant experience should be included in an application
- are professionally independent from employers, seafarers, and employer and seafarer representatives
- satisfy the requirements specified in Maritime Rule Part 34 and section 41 of the Maritime Transport Act in respect of the approval
- are a 'fit and proper' person.

Approved medical practitioners will be expected to become familiar with Maritime Rule Part 34 and any related advisory circular or guidance.

If you wish to apply to become an approved medical practitioner, you should refer to the Maritime New Zealand website for instructions on how to proceed. A fee is charged for applications.

maritimenz.govt.nz/medical

What is the process for a seafarer's medical examination?

A seafarer's medical examination should be conducted in accordance with the appropriate medical examination form. Refer to the Maritime New Zealand website for information about how to obtain the correct form (maritimenz.govt.nz).

Before beginning the examination, you must see photographic proof of the examinee's identity (such as such as a driver licence, maritime certificate or passport). The type and number of this identification must be entered on the medical examination form.

The medical examination form has three sections:

1. Seafarer's declaration
2. Medical examination
3. Assessment of fitness for service at sea.

There must be two copies of this form, one for your records and one for the seafarer.

On completion of the medical examination, you will need to complete the "Certificate of medical fitness for seafarers", which will then receive your stamp and be signed by both you and the examinee. There must be three copies of this certificate: one for your records; one for the seafarer; and one that must be sent to Maritime New Zealand (Seafarer Certification, PO Box 25620 Wellington 6146).

Categories of medical certificates

Medical certificates are issued in six categories as described in the table below:

Table 3 Eyesight and colour vision standards

Category	Category name	Conditions
A ¹	Unrestricted sea service	None
A(T) ²	Unrestricted sea service (Temporary)	Medical surveillance required at intervals Certificate is valid until the time that such surveillance is required
B ³	Restricted sea service only	Restrictions endorsed on the medical certificate
C	Temporarily unfit for sea service	Endorsed with number of weeks before the seafarer can be re-examined
D	Indefinitely unfit for sea service	Endorsed with number of months before the seafarer can be re-examined
E	Permanently unfit for sea service	May not work at sea

1. An unrestricted certificate of medical fitness is valid for **two years** from the date of examination, unless the person is under 18 years of age, in which case a certificate of medical fitness is valid for **one year**.
2. The expected duration of the seafarer's tour of duty should be taken into account when considering surveillance intervals. The expiry date of the certificate should correspond with the date of the required medical surveillance.
3. For this category, you may stipulate that the seafarer's employment is restricted by certain conditions. These conditions could include shipping trades, geographical areas, types of vessels or the nature of the seafarer's duties. **Any restrictions should be described in the section provided on the certificate**, and if appropriate the expiry date of the certificate may be adjusted to allow a shorter period of validity than is standard (two years).

Re-examination

If a seafarer has a category B, C, D or E certificate issued, you must immediately inform him or her in writing that they are entitled to apply for another examination, and the procedure for doing so. If appropriate, you should also issue the seafarer with a report outlining the conditions that should be fulfilled before he or she applies for re-examination, including medical or other submissions to be provided in support of the application.

A seafarer must be re-examined by an appropriate medical examiner before starting work if he or she has been:

- has been unable to work for 30 days or more due to illness or injury
- has been discharged or evacuated from a ship for health reasons.

The Director of Maritime New Zealand can also ask for a re-examination if he or she has doubts about a seafarer's medical fitness.

Validity of certificates of medical fitness

Certificates of medical fitness are valid for **two years**, unless the certificate's expiry date indicates a shorter period or the seafarer is aged under 18 (in which case a certificate of medical fitness is valid for **one year**).

Right to information

As outlined in the process for a seafarer's medical examination, you should provide the examinee with a copy of their medical examination form.

Right to privacy

All persons concerned with the conduct of medical examinations, including those who come in contact with medical examination forms, laboratory results and other medical information, should ensure the right of privacy of the examinee. Maritime New Zealand notes that these requirements are covered by the privacy principles stated in the Privacy Act 1993. These can be downloaded from www.privacy.org.nz.

Medical examination reports should be treated as confidential and all medical data collected from a seafarer should be protected.

Medical records should only be used for determining the fitness of the seafarer for work and enhancing health care. Use and disclosure of medical records is addressed in the Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994.

The seafarer has the right to access and to receive a copy of his/her medical data.

Charges

Maritime New Zealand is not involved in setting examination charges. If you are asked to re-examine a seafarer who has not been able to work at sea due to illness or injury, please exercise judgment in determining the extent of the re-examination necessary, and therefore the charge made for this.

What medical standards are required?

When assessing a seafarer's medical condition and level of fitness, consideration can be given to the type of maritime certificate the seafarer wishes to hold (Appendix 1, Maritime certificates) and the associated duties, and also to the type of vessel aboard which the seafarer intends to work and the vessel's areas of operation. For more detailed guidance on various medical and fitness requirements see **Appendix 2**.

Eyesight and colour vision testing

The medical examination for seafarers includes eyesight and colour vision testing as detailed in **Appendix 3**.

Hearing

The seafarer's hearing should be tested and recorded. See **Appendix 2** for where to find the relevant guidance.

Vaccinations

Where the seafarer is to be engaged on a voyage in the unlimited area, vaccination requirements should be taken into account. If a seafarer has a vaccination record and is intending to use their medical certificate in the unlimited area, this record must be presented to you.

Seafarers should be vaccinated according to the requirements indicated by one of the following:

- the World Health Organization publication International Travel and Health (see the vaccination requirements and advice section)
- the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers
- a recognised source similar to the two listed above.

Further medical advice

If you require further guidance about a seafarer's fitness for duties, Maritime New Zealand may put you in touch with a Principal Medical Officer. To request this, email seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz.

APPENDIX 1: Maritime certificates

The maritime certificates listed in this appendix are provided for under Maritime Rule Part 32, available on the Maritime New Zealand website. They fall into two broad categories:

- STCW certificates
- STCW-F certificates.

See Maritime Rule Part 32: Seafarer Certification for full certificate titles.

STCW certificates

For the purpose of this guidance, the term STCW certificates refer to STCW certificates issued under subpart C of Maritime Rule Part 32.

Seafarers with STCW certificates often operate for extended periods at sea, and in many cases on ships that trade worldwide without immediate access to medical facilities. (Refer also to “Seafarer access to medical facilities” in Appendix 2.)

STCW deck certificates

Deck watch rating (DWR)
Able seafarer deck (AB Deck)
Integrated rating (IR)
Watchkeeper deck on ships less than 500GT in the near-coastal area
Master on ships less than 500GT in the near-coastal area
Master on ships less than 500GT
Watchkeeper deck
Chief mate on ships less than 3000GT
Master on ships less than 3000GT
Chief mate
Master
Chief mate yacht
Master yacht on ships less than 500GT
Master yacht
Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio operator

STCW engineering certificates

Engine room watch rating (EWR)
Electro-technical rating (ETR)
Able seafarer engine (AB engine)
Electro-technical officer (ETO)
Marine engineer class 3 (MEC 3)
Marine engineer class 2 on ships less than 3000kW (MEC 2 <3000kW)
Marine engineer class 2 endorsed chief engineer (MEC 2 ECE)
Marine engineer class 2 (MEC 2)
Marine engineer class 1 (MEC 1)

STCW-F certificates

For the purpose of this guidance, the term STCW-F certificates refers to STCW-F aligned certificates issued under subpart D of Maritime Rule Part 32.

Seafarers with STCW-F certificates often operate for extended periods at sea, and in many cases on ships that trade worldwide without immediate access to medical facilities. (Refer also to “Seafarer access to medical facilities” in Appendix 2.)

STCW-F certificates

Advanced deck-hand – fishing (ADH-F)
Mate fishing vessel – limited (MFV)
Skipper fishing vessel – limited (SFV)
Mate fishing vessel – unlimited (MFV-U)
Skipper fishing vessel – unlimited (SFV-U)

APPENDIX 2: Medical standards

This appendix gives guidance on the medical standards required of seafarers and considers some aspects of the related working conditions, vessels and areas of operation. These are areas that need to be taken into account when considering a seafarer's fitness for duties and category of medical certificate, including any required restrictions or limited validity periods.

Medical standards for both STCW certificate holders are based on the "Guidelines on the medical examination of seafarers" (International Labour Organisation/International Maritime Organisation (ILO/IMO), www.ilo.org (the guidelines). These guidelines:

- apply in full in relation to medical examinations for STCW certificates. Part 3 of the guidelines is designed to assist practitioners carrying out seafarer medical assessments. The introductory explanation headed seafarer medical fitness examinations is also useful.

Practitioners should refer to the guideline material described above but bear in mind the purpose of medical examination is not to provide a general bill of health but rather to confirm the seafarer will be able to perform routine and emergency duties.

The seafarer's working environment

The working conditions on board a seagoing vessel present an environment much different to that experienced by shore-based personnel, and medical practitioners who examine seafarers should bear in mind some of the conditions to be expected on board. This will help when determining fitness for duties, particularly if there are concerns about a seafarer's ongoing medical condition.

Vessels at sea are not predictable and stable working platforms. They are prone to sudden and often violent motions due to weather conditions or even manoeuvring procedures. Although smaller vessels can be more vulnerable to weather than larger ones, even the biggest foreign-going ships can undergo significant and rapid unexpected movement.

For many seafarers, normal duties also involve physical exertion and the need to access difficult spaces. For example, Table B-I/9 of the STCW Code (see below) gives the related physical ability requirements for routine movement around the vessel. These include the ability to maintain balance and move with agility, to climb up and down vertical ladders and stairways, and to step over coamings and sills. (Where the load line convention is in force, for example, coamings are required to be 600mm high.)

Table B-I/9 also includes requirements (related to the seafarer's tasks on board) for strength and dexterity, as well as ability to lift, pull and carry a load (eg 18kg). Working in constricted spaces and moving through restricted openings is included, for example SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) regulations require some openings to have minimum dimensions of 600mm x 600mm.

Table B-I/9

Assessment of minimum entry level and in-service physical abilities for seafarers

Shipboard task, function, event or condition ³	Related physical ability:	A medical examiner should be satisfied that the candidate: ⁴
<p>Routine movement around vessel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on moving deck • between levels • between compartments <p><i>Note 1 applies to this row</i></p>	<p>Related physical ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain balance and move with agility • climb up and down vertical ladders and stairways • step over coamings (eg load line convention requires coamings to be 600 mm high) • open and close watertight doors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has no disturbance in sense of balance • does not have any impairment or disease that prevents relevant movements and physical activities • is able to without assistance:⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ climb vertical ladders and stairways ○ step over high sills ○ manipulate door closing systems
<p>Routine tasks on board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of hand tools • movement of ship's stores • overhead work • valve operation • standing a four-hour watch • working in confined spaces • responding to alarms, warnings and instructions • verbal communication <p><i>Note 1 applies to this row</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strength, dexterity and stamina to manipulate mechanical devices • lift, pull and carry a load (eg 18kg) • reach upwards • stand, walk and remain alert for an extended period • work in constricted spaces and move through restricted openings (eg SOLAS regulation 11-I/3-6.5.1 requires openings in cargo spaces and emergency escapes to have the minimum dimensions of 600mm x 600mm) • visually distinguish objects, shapes and signals • hear warnings and instructions • give a clear spoken description • don a lifejacket or immersion suit • escape from smoke-filled spaces • take part in fire-fighting duties, including use of breathing apparatus • take part in vessel evacuation procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not have a defined impairment or diagnosed medical condition that reduces ability to perform routine duties essential to the safe operation of the vessel • has ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ work with arms raised ○ stand and walk for an extended period ○ enter confined space ○ fulfil eyesight standards (table A-I/9) ○ fulfil hearing standards set by competent authority or take account of international guidelines ○ hold normal conversation
<p>Emergency duties⁶ on board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • escape • fire-fighting • evacuation <p><i>Note 2 applies to this row</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don a lifejacket or immersion suit • escape from smoke-filled spaces • take part in fire-fighting duties, including use of breathing apparatus • take part in vessel evacuation procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not have a defined impairment or diagnosed medical condition that reduces ability to perform emergency duties essential to the safe operation of the vessel • has ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ don lifejacket or immersion suit ○ crawl ○ feel for differences in temperature ○ handle fire-fighting equipment ○ wear breathing apparatus (where required as part of duties)

See notes on page 11

Notes for Table B-I/9 minimum physical abilities

Number	Notes
1	Rows 1 and 2 of the above table describe: (a) ordinary shipboard tasks, functions, events and conditions; (b) the corresponding physical abilities which may be considered necessary for the safety of a seafarer, other crew members and the ship; and (c) high-level criteria for use by medical practitioners assessing medical fitness, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers and the nature of shipboard work for which they will be employed.
2	Row 3 of the above table describes: (a) emergency shipboard tasks, functions, events and conditions; (b) the corresponding physical abilities which should be considered necessary for the safety of a seafarer, other crew members and the ship; and (c) high-level criteria for use by medical practitioners assessing medical fitness, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers and the nature of shipboard work for which they will be employed.
3	This table is not intended to address all possible shipboard conditions or potentially disqualifying medical conditions. Parties should specify physical abilities applicable to the category of seafarers (such as “deck officer” and “engine rating”). The special circumstances of individuals and for those who have specialized or limited duties should receive due consideration.
4	If in doubt, the medical practitioner should quantify the degree or severity of any relevant impairment by means of objective tests, whenever appropriate tests are available, or by referring the candidate for further assessment.
5	The term “assistance” means the use of another person to accomplish the task.
6	The term “emergency duties” is used to cover all standard emergency response situations such as abandon ship or fire-fighting as well as the procedures to be followed by each seafarer to secure personal survival.

Seafarer access to medical facilities

Especially with regard to seafarers who have known medical conditions or who require ongoing medication, the ability to reach medical personnel or supplies must be considered.

Medical equipment on board a vessel can be very limited, and there may not be much medical expertise at hand amongst the crew besides some first aid training. Medication may be lost or become expended during the course of a voyage. In some cases it may take a long time for a sick or injured seafarer to receive appropriate medical attention or supplies. Some vessels operate with very few people or even only one person on board, in which case the development of a medical condition can have even more serious implications than for vessels with larger crews, although vessel manning requirements are usually related to a vessel’s operating area.

To give some examples of the time required for different vessels to get back to port in a medical emergency, some possible scenarios to consider are given below. It should be noted that there are many variable factors to take into account, including vessel speed, weather conditions and the ability of the vessel to be released from operational duties. It must not be assumed that rescue by emergency services will always be possible.

Example 1: A small fishing trawler is operating within inshore limits (say within 12 nautical miles from shore) and is capable of 8 knots speed. The vessel leaves its home port with the intention of fishing and returning within three days. If a crew member were to need medical attention after one day travelling along the coast, the skipper would have to assess the available options. It may be that the vessel could

return to the home port within 20 hours, but there might be closer points ashore at which the crew member could be dropped off. Although it is desirable that full speed to shore is maintained, mechanical considerations may mean that a slower speed is necessary over a longer distance.

Example 2: A supply vessel is working within coastal limits at an oil field 40 nautical miles from port and is capable of 14 knots speed. The vessel is due to return to port in one week but a seafarer loses his medication. Although it might theoretically be possible for the vessel to reach port in a few hours, the operations being carried out might prevent a quick release from duties. For example if the vessel is connected to an offshore installation for cargo transfer purposes, or is involved in a towing operation, it could take much longer before the voyage back can begin.

Example 3: A large foreign-going container ship is transiting between New Zealand and Europe. At the point furthest from land the Captain becomes ill and it is apparent he will need specialist medical attention. It is many days before the ship could reach an appropriate place to land. The captain and his condition is worsening. In this situation, it may only be possible for the crew to call for external assistance and make for a rendezvous point at the fastest possible speed.

As can be seen from the above examples, there are no certain times within which medical assistance can be reached, with situations changing daily even on the same vessel. For this reason, it is important that the medical practitioner examining a seafarer gains as much information as possible about the seafarer's medical condition and intended employment. This will include work duties, the nature of operations for the vessel they will be working on, the area in which the vessel will be working, and the expected length of voyage.

It should be borne in mind that a medical condition that might prevent a seafarer being fit for duties in unlimited waters may not always prevent him or her being fit for duties on vessels within operating areas closer to shore.

Maritime Rule Part 20: Operating Limits may be referred to for further information on New Zealand areas of operation.

Seafarer information

For the purposes of an examination, a seafarer should be able to supply the medical practitioner with information regarding the nature of his or her duties on board a vessel. This should include the normal physical requirements, as well as the expected vessel operating areas and length of voyage.

Such information should be used when considering any medical concerns related to the seafarer. It will help determine the category of medical certificate to be issued and any restrictions that need to be included on the certificate, including a reduced validity period if required.

Medication

Beside the concerns described previously, there are other aspects of medication that need to be considered before a medical examiner issues a seafarer's medical certificate.

Medication can play an important part in a seafarer's ability to work at sea. Some medications have side effects that can affect safe and effective performance of duties and some have other complications that will increase the likelihood of illness at sea.

The use of oral medication at sea may be prevented by nausea and vomiting, and illness may arise if an oral medication is used to suppress the harmful effects of a condition (eg epilepsy) or if it is used to replace essential body chemicals (eg hormones).

The examining medical practitioner will need to assess the known adverse effects of each medication used and the individual's reaction to it.

References for medical standards

The publication “Guidelines on the medical examinations of seafarers” (International Labour Organization / International Maritime Organization (ILO/IMO), www.ilo.org) is the primary reference for medical practitioners conducting examinations of seafarers. These guidelines have appendixes relating to various aspects of medical examinations, which are summarised below:

Appendix A: Vision standards

This contains guidance on eyesight and colour vision testing, including Table A-I/9 of the STCW Code. Note: for colour vision testing, the “International Recommendations for Colour Vision Requirements for Transport” by the Commission Internationale de l’Eclairage (CIE-143-2001) should also be used. This is the publication referred to in the Table A-I/9 footnotes.

Appendix B: Hearing standards

Guidance on hearing tests and the use of hearing aids.

Appendix C: Physical capability requirements

This offers guidance on the physical capability requirements of a seafarer and the physical conditions that may be encountered on board a vessel. It includes Table B-I/9 of the STCW Code, which has three columns listing shipboard tasks and functions related physical activity, and the relevant abilities of the candidate.

Appendix D: Fitness criteria for medication use

Guidance on the use of prescribed medication that is identified at the medical examination. This appendix covers impairment of routine or emergency duties, adverse consequences of medication for the user at sea, and medications that require limitations of periods at sea.

Appendix E: Fitness criteria for common medical conditions

This appendix contains a table giving examples of medical conditions that may render seafarers unfit for duties on the vessels aboard which they serve, however it is not possible to develop a comprehensive list of fitness criteria covering all possible conditions and the variations in their presentation and prognosis.

The table refers to temporary and permanent conditions, the waters worked in, and the seafarer’s ability to perform duties. The conditions listed are:

Infections

- Gastrointestinal infection
- Pulmonary TB
- Sexually transmissible infections
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B, C etc
- HIV+
- Other infections

Cancers

- Malignant neoplasms

Blood disorders

- Anaemia/haemoglobinopathies
- Splenectomy
- Other diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs

Endocrine and metabolic

Diabetes – insulin using
Diabetes – non-insulin treated, on other medication
Diabetes – non-insulin treated, treated by diet alone
Obesity/abnormal body mass
Other endocrine and metabolic disease

Mental, cognitive and behavioral disorders

Alcohol abuse
Drug dependence/persistent substance abuse
Psychosis
Mood/affective disorders – severe anxiety state, depression, or any other mental disorder likely to impair performance
Mood/affective disorders – minor or reactive symptoms of anxiety/depression
Other disorders

Diseases of the nervous system

Single seizure
Epilepsy – no provoking factors
Epilepsy – provoked by alcohol, medication, head injury (multiple seizures)
Migraine (frequent attacks causing incapacity)
Sleep apnoea
Narcolepsy
Other organic nervous disease, eg multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease
Syncope and other disturbances of consciousness
Intracranial surgery/injury, including treatment of vascular anomalies or serious head injury with brain damage

Diseases of the eyes and ears

Eye disorders: progressive or recurrent (eg glaucoma, maculopathy, diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentosa, keratoconus, diplopia, blepharospasm, uveitis, corneal ulceration and retinal detachment)
Otitis – external or media
Ear disorders: progressive (eg otosclerosis)
Ménière's disease and other forms of chronic or recurrent disabling vertigo, and inability to balance, causing loss of mobility and nausea

Cardiovascular system

Congenital and valve disease of heart (including surgery for these conditions)
Heart murmurs not previously investigated
Hypertension
Cardiac event, ie myocardial infarction, ECG evidence of past myocardial infarction or newly recognised left bundle-branch block, angina, cardiac arrest, coronary artery bypass grafting, coronary angioplasty
Cardiac arrhythmias and conduction defects (including those with pacemakers and implanted cardioverter defibrillators (ICD))
Ischaemic cerebrovascular disease
Arterial-claudication
Varicose veins
Deep vein thrombosis/pulmonary embolus
Other heart disease, eg cardio-myopathy, pericarditis, heart failure

Respiratory system

Nose, throat and sinus conditions
Chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema
Asthma (detailed assessment with information from specialist in all new entrants)
Pneumothorax (spontaneous or traumatic)

Digestive system

Oral health
Peptic ulcer
Hemias – inguinal and femoral
Hemias – umbilical, ventral
Hemias – diaphragmatic (hiatus)
Non-infectious enteritis, colitis, Crohn's disease, diverticulitis, etc
Anal conditions: piles (haemorrhoids), fissures, fistulae
Cirrhosis of liver
Biliary tract disease
Pancreatitis
Stoma (ileostomy, colostomy)

Genito-urinary conditions

Acute nephritis
Sub-acute or chronic nephritis or nephrosis
Renal or ureteric calculus
Prostatic enlargement/urinary obstruction
Gynaecological conditions – heavy vaginal bleeding, severe menstrual pain, endometriosis, prolapse of genital organs or other
Proteinuria, haematuria, glycosuria or other urinary abnormality
Removal of kidney or one non-functioning kidney

Pregnancy

Pregnancy

Skin

Skin infections
Other skin diseases, eg eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis

Musculoskeletal

Osteoarthritis, other joint diseases and subsequent joint replacement
Recurrent instability of shoulder or knee joints
Back pain
Limb prosthesis

General

Speech disorders
Allergies (other than allergic dermatitis and asthma)
Transplants – kidney, heart, lung, liver (for prosthetics, ie joints, limbs, lenses, hearing aids, heart valves, etc (see condition-specific sections))
Progressive conditions, which are currently within criteria, eg Huntington's chorea (including family history) and keratoconus
Conditions not specifically listed

APPENDIX 3: Eyesight and colour vision standards

Eyesight related to seafaring duties

Seafarers are required to pass eyesight and colour vision tests, the standards of which are related to their duties on board a ship. Those seafarers who are required to keep bridge lookout duties need to meet more stringent requirements than those who don't. However, for shipboard duties such as engineering or electro-technical work, it is still important that specific standards are met.

For deck certificate holders, bridge lookout duties require good visual acuity and colour vision. Distant ships, markers and navigational hazards need to be seen and recognised, and charts and electronic displays need to be read precisely. Many navigational markers and lights are colour coded, including lights fitted to vessels, and it is vital that the bridge watchkeeper can differentiate between the colours used. Colour coding is also used for displays on navigational equipment, such as radars and electronic charts.

Non-deck personnel wishing to gain STCW certificates must also meet colour vision requirements. Seafarers with engineering or electro-technical duties work with colour coded items, including electrical wiring, monitors displaying information, warning lights, pipe systems and other equipment. With regard to general eyesight, particularly near vision, gauges and instruments and other displays have to be read and monitored.

Eyesight and colour vision standards

The eyesight and colour vision standards that a seafarer is required to meet will depend upon the certificate of competency or proficiency being applied for. The tests conducted are relevant to the duties associated with the certificate.

Standards that need to be met are outlined in the table below. If you have any concerns about whether an examinee meets the required eyesight or colour vision standards, you are able to refer them to a registered optometrist for further testing.

Who can carry out the eyesight and colour vision tests?

In the case of seafarers who undergo a medical examination for the purpose of obtaining or renewing an STCW-F or STCW deck certificate, medical practitioners are required to determine if they meet the eyesight and colour vision standards in accordance with an eyesight test completed by registered optometrist. The general eyesight test must be less than 12 months old and the colour vision test must be less than 6 years old.

In the case of seafarers who undergo a medical examination for the purpose of obtaining or renewing an STCW engineering or GMDSS certificate, medical practitioners do not need to see an eyesight test completed by registered optometrist and are able to conduct their own assessment.

Eyesight and colour vision standards

Table 3 Eyesight and colour vision standards

<u>Vision to be tested</u> (with methodology notes)	New STCW deck and STCW-F certificates	Renewal of STCW deck and STCW-F certificates or renewal of medical	New and renewal of STCW engineering certificates and GMDSS or renewal of medical
Optometrist report required	Yes	No	No
Distance vision – can be aided or unaided [Note: metre notation is provided as that is most common in New Zealand. The Snellen test with decimal notation is an alternative]	6/12 ¹ in each eye	6/12 in each eye	6/15 ² combined
Near/intermediate vision Near vision should be tested with reading test type	Vision required for ship's navigation (e.g. reading charts and navigational instruments)	Vision required for ship's navigation (e.g. reading charts and navigational instruments)	Vision require to read instruments in close proximity, to operate equipment, and to identify systems/components as necessary
Colour vision	24 or 38 plate Ishihara test with two errors allowed If three errors or more in the Ishihara, a Farnsworth lantern test result with 0 to 2 errors can satisfy the colour vision standard	24 or 38 plate Ishihara test with two errors allowed If three errors or more in the Ishihara, a Farnsworth lantern test result with 0 to 2 errors can satisfy the colour vision standard	24 or 38 plate Ishihara test with two errors allowed If three errors or more, a Farnsworth D15 test result with 0 to 1 diametrical crossings can satisfy the colour vision standard
Visual fields	Normal visual fields	Normal visual fields	Sufficient visual fields
Night blindness	Vision required to perform all necessary functions in darkness without compromise	Vision required to perform all necessary functions in darkness without compromise	Vision required to perform all necessary functions in darkness without compromise

¹ 0.5 in Snellen Test

² 0.4 in Snellen Test

Diplopia (double vision)	No significant condition evident	No significant condition evident	No significant condition evident
Eye disease	In addition, to above standards the seafarer must be examined for evidence of serious or progressive eye disease		

Note

An examinee must not use colour vision aids, including red-tinted, chromas lenses, and chromagen lenses. The use of colour-correcting lenses will invalidate test results.

Validity of colour vision tests

A colour vision test is valid for 6 years for the purposes of the medical certificate. If the seafarer has had a colour blindness condition recorded, the colour blindness does not need to be confirmed every six years.

What happens if a seafarer doesn't meet the standards specified?

If a seafarer has a STCW deck or STCW-F deck certificate or is applying for any new certificate and cannot meet the eyesight standards they cannot be considered fit for sea service. This means that you would need to issue them with a medical with the appropriate category (C, D or E) depending on the circumstances.

We suggest that if this happens you advise the seafarer to call Maritime NZ on 0508732237 to discuss their situation further.

If a seafarer who already has a STCW engineering certificate fails the colour vision test, a category B certificate of medical fitness can be issued, where the Director considers it appropriate. The seafarer would need to provide you with evidence from their employer that impaired colour vision has not affected their work within the last two years. If the evidence is acceptable, the applicant's certificate will be issued with a restriction stating that they are "not fit for work with colour-coded cables or equipment". New applicants for an STCW engineering certificate must meet colour vision standards.

5. Contact us for help

The template certificate of medical fitness is available on the Maritime NZ website:

maritimenz.govt.nz/medical

If you can't find the information you need, send us an email. Tell us what you need help with and remember to include your contact details

seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz

Or you can phone us toll free.

0508 732 237