

FIT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSESSMENT INFORMATION SHEET for PFFs

What is the Fit for Emergency Assessment?

Emergency roles require workers to perform functions that are physically and psychologically very demanding. Furthermore, emergency roles are a safety-critical job (in particular Category A Firefighter- Rappel/Hover exit and Category B Firefighter- Arduous) meaning that the ill health of the emergency worker may pose a significant risk to the health and safety of themselves and others. Safety sensitive work focuses on 3 principles: high physical demand, unpredictability of the work environment and the nature of work and the consequence on the candidate and others working with the candidate. Because of this additional risk, medical guidelines are used to enable the medical practitioner to assess each candidate against.

Safety-critical medical guidelines are stricter than non-safety-critical medical guidelines to protect the health and safety of yourself and others when responding to emergencies. It is important to understand that the medical assessor will take into account the worst-case scenario when it comes to emergencies. For example, planned burning can unpredictably become a wildfire, and this needs to be considered when determining the significance of certain medical conditions. The medical assessment process states that the doctors are to assess you to the highest level based on your medical health.

The medical assessment includes height and weight measurements, spirometry, colour vision, distant and near vision, a urine sample, blood pressure, hearing test and doctors examination. The tests are used to screen for medical conditions, and if an abnormality is identified as part of this screening, further information will generally be requested from the candidate's medical advisors rather than an outright fail for the candidate.

The medical assessments are conducted by the departments contracted medical provider, Corporate Health Management (CHM). The medical assessments will take approximately 60 minutes: 30 minutes with the nurse and 30 minutes with the doctor.

What to Take to the Fit for Emergency Assessment?

Any candidate who has an injury or illness that may be relevant to the medical assessment, or has had a change in medical condition since their previous Fit for Emergency medical assessment, should take a copy of any relevant doctor's/specialist reports, x-rays, etc. to their assessment.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions (i.e. heart conditions, epilepsy, musculoskeletal conditions), it would be beneficial for you to bring any relevant reports from your treating doctor/specialist along to your Fit for Emergency assessment. This may save the need for further information to be followed up after your medical assessment. The information required from your treating doctor includes:

- Diagnosis
- Management plan
- Stability of the condition
- Any restrictions or limitations required
- Suitability for the following activities:
 - Strenuous activity
 - Exposure to respiratory irritants such as inhaled dust, smoke and fumes
 - Extreme environmental conditions (heat/risk of dehydration)

Please note: it may still be necessary for the assessing doctor to request further information despite you bringing a doctor report with you to the assessment.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses please bring them with you to your assessment.

You will have a urine test as part of the medical assessment therefore please drink some fluids prior to attending your assessment.

What's Involved in a Medical Assessment?

The current process for the Fit for Emergency assessment includes the following:

1. Completion of an online health questionnaire (electronic assessment form) by the candidate.
2. Nurse assessment (30 minutes) via the electronic assessment form:
 - Review of candidates medical questionnaire answers and request elaboration of 'Yes' answers where applicable and clarify any clarification of 'Unsure' responses.
 - Height, Weight, BMI and Hip to Waist Ratio - standard assessment.
 - **Vision Screening:**
 - **Colour Vision:** tests for colour blindness, typically red/green colour blindness. The Ishihara test is used. This involves pictures - red and green spotted circles with red or green numbers in the centre of the circle. Colour vision deficiencies are important to determine, especially for candidates who read topographic maps or may need to locate coloured markers out in the field.
 - **Distant Vision:** involves standing 3 metres away from an eye chart on a wall, covering one eye at a time and reading certain lines from the eye chart, as indicated by the nurse. If you wear glasses, you will be given an opportunity to view the charts with and without glasses.
 - **Near Vision:** involves reading a short passage from a card held at arm's length, whilst covering one eye at a time. If you wear glasses, you will be given an opportunity to view the charts with and without glasses.
 - **Blood Pressure:** measured using a medical instrument called a sphygmomanometer (rubber cuff wrapped around the upper arm). Provides an indication as to whether someone has high or low blood pressure. A typical blood pressure reading for a healthy adult is 120/80 mm Hg.
 - **Spirometry Screening** (lung function test): used to assess lung function. This involves taking a deep breath and exhaling into a device as hard and as long as possible. This provides an indication if you should avoid dusts and irritants that are found on the fire line, especially for people with asthma. The nurse will provide an explanation regarding the spirometry technique required. You will be provided with up to three opportunities to provide a spirometry sample.
 - **Audio Screening:** involves using a set of head phones to listen to a range of tones at varying pitches and then pressing a button to indicate when you have first heard the sound. The test indicates the volume at which the sound is first heard, referred to as the threshold level, and if this varies from normal, it indicates where the problem might be located in the hearing pathway.
 - **Urinalysis:** involves urinating into a small jar. This test looks for any abnormal levels in sugar counts (potential indicator of pre diabetes) and any blood found in the urine. This test also looks for any leukocytes in the urine, which can be an early indicator for a urinary tract infection (UTI). This is not an alcohol or drug test. The nurse will provide you with an outcome of the test during your assessment.
3. Doctors Assessment (30 minutes) via the electronic medical assessment form:
 - Review of candidates medical questionnaire.
 - Review of all examination tests undertaken by the nurse.
 - Undertake a medical examination including:
 - Physical, cardiovascular and respiratory examination
 - Abdominal examination, including hernia screen
 - Neurological examination, including:
 - Peripheral vision
 - Balance (Romberg test, feet together and eyes closed for 30 seconds)
 - Quick skin check
 - Musculoskeletal examination, including: - Range of motion - spine, upper limbs, lower limbs - Functional / specific tests, e.g. Duck walk (Chidress Test) - Screening for hip, knee and ankle disorder - Walk on toes and heels, looking for strength of ankle flexion and extension - Shoulder impingement tests, assessing for rotator cuff disorders, bursitis etc. - Carpal Tunnel Syndrome screening - Subjective grip strength test, assessing for disorders such as golfer's/tennis elbow, wrist injuries etc.
 - If needed, seek further information via a treating doctor referral letter.
 - Allocation of a Fit for Emergency Classification - following the completion of your medical assessment, the doctor will give you an emergency role category and a medical classification (e.g. 1B) that they believe you are medically able to participate in. This will be used by your supervisor to help determine the emergency role you will undertake.
 - Each candidate will be provided with a results card with their Fit for Emergency Classification on completion of their assessment.

Medical Classifications

The medical assessment process states that the doctor's are to assess you to the highest level based on your medical health. For example, if you are given a 1B - Firefighter Arduous, this just means that you are medically healthy enough to perform roles in this category.

Emergency Medical Classification

Classification 1	You have been medically cleared and are considered healthy enough to safely participate in the emergency role category determined by the doctor. You have no medical restrictions
Classification 2	You have been medically cleared and are considered healthy enough to safely participate in the emergency role category determined by the doctor. However, you have medical restrictions that you must adhere to
Classification 3	Final classification pending further information
Classification 4	You are not medically cleared and cannot participate in any emergency role

Fire Role Categories

Category A	Firefighter – Rappel/Hover Exit
Category B	Firefighter – Arduous

Understanding Your Medical Assessment

It is important that before you leave your medical assessment, you are really clear on the result you have been given. It is important that the doctor has clearly explained your result (e.g. 2B) and you are clear on what this means and any restrictions you may have been given.

If you are not clear do not hesitate to ASK as this may save difficulties later on.

Typical Restrictions

If you are given a medical Classification 2 (Fit for Emergency with restrictions), the restrictions you will be given will typically fall into one of the following categories:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Environment
- Medication
- Musculoskeletal
- Dietary
- Respiratory
- Cardiovascular
- Neurological
- Other

Medical Classification 3 (Class 3)

A medical Classification 3 is given to a candidate that is believed or identified to have a condition or injury where the doctor requires further information from the candidates treating GP or specialist prior to giving a medical result.

If this occurs, the doctor will give the candidate a form called '**Doctor Referral Letter**'. This form will clearly outline exactly what information is required from your GP or specialist. It is the candidate's responsibility to make sure they are clear on what information is being sought before leaving the medical assessment.

It is the candidate's responsibility to seek this information from their medical practitioner (GP, specialist or otherwise) within six months. Until this occurs the candidate's medical result cannot be reclassified, and will remain a Class 3, which means you cannot be deployed in any emergency role, including prescribed burning.

Costs associated with the follow up testing are not reimbursable.

DELWP's Contracted Medical Provider Information

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