

Fit for Fire Medical Assessment Information Sheet

What is the Fit for Fire Assessment?

Fire roles perform functions that are physically and psychologically very demanding. Furthermore, firefighting is a safety-critical job, meaning that the ill health of the firefighter 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 individual and others working with the individual. Because of this additional risk, medical guidelines have been developed that the medical practitioner is required to assess each participant against.

Safety-critical medical guidelines are stricter than non-safety-critical medical guidelines to protect the health and safety of yourself and others when fighting fires. It is important to understand that the medical assessor has to take into account the worst-case scenario when it comes to firefighting. 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 doctor's 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, blood pressure, hearing test and doctors examination. Generally speaking, there is no pass/fail when performing these tests within the medical assessment. 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 participant's medical advisors (Classification 3) rather than an outright fail for the participant.

The medical assessments are conducted by DELWP's contracted medical provider, Unified Healthcare Group (UHG). The medical assessments will take approximately 40 minutes, 20 minutes with the nurse and 20 minutes with the doctor.

What to take to the Fit for Fire Assessment?

- Please ensure that you have pre-filled your online Fit for Fire questionnaire prior to attending your assessment - <http://pf1.novera.net.au/PerfectForms/player.htm?f=gTgAgAsC>
- Any individual 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 Fire 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 Fire assessment. This may save the need for further information to be followed up after your medical. 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)

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 Fire assessment includes the following:

1. Completion of an online health questionnaire (electronic assessment form) by the participant
2. Nurse assessment (20 minutes) via the electronic assessment form:
 - Review of participants medical questionnaire answers and ask for elaboration of 'Yes' answers where applicable and clarify any "unsure" questions
 - Height, Weight, BMI & 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 individuals 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 fireline, 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, called the threshold level, and if this varies from normal, this 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. 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 (20 minutes) via the electronic assessment form:
 - Review of participants medical questionnaire
 - Review of all examination testings undertaken by the nurse
 - Undertake an Occupational Health physician examination including:
 - Physical, cardiovascular and respiratory examination
 - Abdominal examination, including hernia screen
 - Neurological examination, also 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 disorders
 - 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 Fire Classification - following the completion of your medical assessment, the doctor will give you a fire 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 what fire role you undertake.
 - Each participant will be provided with a results card their Fit for Fire 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.

Therefore, if you are given a 1B – Firefighter Arduous, this just means that you are medically healthy enough to perform roles in this category, It does not mean that you will be expected to perform the role of an arduous firefighter. What role you undertake is a discussion you need to have with your supervisor.

Classification 1	You have been medically cleared and are considered healthy enough to safely participate in the fire 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 fire 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 fire role

Fire Role Categories

Category A	Firefighter – Rappel / Hover Exit
Category B	Firefighter – Arduous
Category C	Firefighter – General
Category E	Field Support
Category F	Plant Operator
Category G	Airborne
Category H	Office Support

Understanding your medical assessment

It is really important that before you leave your medical assessment, you are really clear on what result you have been given. It is important that the doctor has clearly explained your result (eg 2B) and you are clear on what this means and any restrictions you may have been given. *If you are not clear please do not hesitate to ASK as this may save difficulties later on.*

Typical Restrictions

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

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

Medical Classification 3 (Class 3)

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

If this occurs, the doctor will give the individual a form called ‘Request for further information’. This form will clearly outline exactly what information is required from your GP or Specialist. It is the individual’s responsibility to make sure they are clear on what information is being sought before leaving the medical assessment.

*It is the individual’s responsibility to seek this information from their medical practitioner (GP, Specialist or otherwise) **within three months**.* Until this occurs the individual’s medical result cannot be reclassified, and will remain a Class 3, which means you cannot be deployed in any fire role, including prescribed burning. After this time, if further information is not received, a Class 4 will be issued.

Costs associated with the follow up testing will be borne by the individual.

Medical Assessment Result Clarification

If you feel that the result you were given following your medical assessment is not a true reflection of your current health, then you can request to have the result reviewed. To do this you need to raise your concerns with your Fit for Fire Co-ordinator, detailing the reasons why you would like the result reviewed. You’re Fit for Fire Co-ordinator will in turn inform the Regional Health and Fitness contact, who will contact the Senior Project Officer. UHG will be notified to undertake a review of your file and provide an outcome back to the Senior Project Officer.

To reduce the possibility of needing to go through this process, it is important to make sure you understand your medical assessment result and **ask any questions, prior to leaving your medical assessment.**

Participant Medical Assessment Survey

As a way for the department to monitor the performance of our provider, each individual will be asked to complete a survey following their assessment. The survey will be emailed to all participants who have provided their email address as part of their online health assessment form.

Fire for Fire Co-ordinator Information

Region	Name	Phone	Email Address
Barwon South West	Kevin Wilson - Far South West	Kevin - 03 5527 0412 M: 0427 305 186	kevin.wilson@delwp.vic.gov.au
	Paul McCoughtry - Otway	Paul - 03 5220 2007 M: 0418 512 573	paul.mccoughtry@delwp.vic.gov.au
Grampians	Graeme Saunder	Graeme - 03 5336 6674 or 0407 884 408	Graeme.saunder@delwp.vic.gov.au
	Mark Corr	Mark – 03 5336 6744 (Thurs, Fri)	mark.corr@delwp.vic.gov.au
Gippsland	Mary Smith	(03) 5152 0414	Mary.Smith@delwp.vic.gov.au
Hume	Jayne Ames	0418 686 617	jayne.ames@delwp.vic.gov.au
Loddon Mallee	Samuel Poynton	03 5430 4557	Samuel.poynton@delwp.vic.gov.au
Port Phillip	Anthony Brain - East metro	(03) 9210 9319	Anthony.Brain@delwp.vic.gov.au
	Denise Holland- Yarra (Powelltown)	(03) 5965 9901	denise.holland@delwp.vic.gov.au
SCC (State Control Centre) and Resource Support Unit (RSU)	Leigh Murray	(03) 9412 4781 or 0417419930	leigh.b.murray@delwp.vic.gov.au

DELWP’s Contracted Medical Provider Information

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 Level 2, 139 High Street,
 Prahran, VIC, 3181 Ph.: 03 - 9692 7777
 Or further information: Refer to Fireweb, Safety and Wellbeing pages