

Your questions answered!

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/certificates-of-medical-fitness-answering-fishermens-questions>



Fishermen

How to apply for an ML5 medical certificate

1 Download the application form for an ML5 certificate (referred to as the ML5 report form) from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ml5-medical-report-form-and-certificate-msf-4112> or by scanning the QR code to the right.



2 Book an appointment with your GP or another doctor who has a licence to practise in the UK for an ML5 medical examination and take the form with you to the appointment.

- If the doctor is unaware of the ML5, refer them to the MCA's document MSN 1883(F).
- The fee will be decided/set by the doctor completing the ML5 form. The fee is at the discretion of the doctor completing the ML5 form.

3 The doctor will complete the form based on your medical history. Some answers may need a referral.

Your ML5 certificate will be valid for up to 5 years (or up to 1 year if you are aged 65 years or above).

If the doctor cannot issue the certificate:

- 4** Complete Part D of the ML5 Medical Report to provide information about where you work and what you do. Include medical evidence from your GP, a specialist consultant or optician as appropriate, if you have it. Medical evidence can be submitted with the ML5 form in an envelope marked "Private and Confidential" for forwarding to the medical assessor (it will then not be seen by the MCA staff).
- 5** Send the form and additional evidence either by email to medical@mcga.gov.uk or by post to MCA Medical Administration Team, Spring Place, 105 Commercial Road, Southampton, SO15 1EG.

Your application will be referred to an MCA medical assessor for a decision.

- There is no additional fee for a referral.
- The medical assessor will make a decision based on your fitness to undertake your role and the Medical Standards in MSN 1886 (M+F).
- The ML5 referral is a paper-based process that does not involve a face to face appointment.


The medical assessor has 10 working days to determine whether or not they can issue an ML5 medical certificate based on the evidence provided. The assessor may contact you for further information about your role.

The assessor may also

- Place restrictions on your area of operation or duties.
- Issue a compliance letter to accompany your medical certificate. This is to emphasise that the certificate is issued on the basis of your current medical status, including any treatment or monitoring to which you are subject under your GP or consultant. Any change to that treatment may require a review of your medical certification.
- Issue your certificate for less than 5 years, if you have a medical condition which requires monitoring.

Certificate of Medical Fitness

All you need to know



Scan the QR code to apply for an ML5 medical certificate



Why do I need a medical certificate?

Ensuring you are medically fit helps to keep you and anyone working with you safe, avoiding a predictable problem at work due to underlying medical conditions.

- Working a long way from medical facilities means you are at risk if you become ill while at sea.
- Even working relatively close to shore, it will take longer to reach emergency medical treatment, compared to someone working ashore.
- Anyone working alone may not be able to call for help or reach medical assistance if they are taken ill.
- Search and rescue services are not there to pick up the pieces when a predictable medical episode occurs.

A medical examination may identify an increased risk of developing a medical condition or of sudden incapacity so that treatment can be obtained before it becomes a problem. Some medical conditions will reduce your ability to undertake the strenuous physical activity involved in fishing.

By the end of November 2023, international law will require all fishermen on UK fishing vessels to have a certificate of medical fitness.

What to do

Start early! If an assessment finds underlying health problems, you may need time to get them under control before your statutory medical examination.

There are two types of medical certificates in the UK:

- An ENG 1 is for those who are on vessels at sea for more than 72 hours or operating more than 200 miles from the coastline of the UK or beyond the Continental shelf, and may be subject to inspection in a foreign port.

To find out more, visit the website below or scan the QR code to the right >

<https://www.gov.uk/seafarer-medical-certificates>



- An ML5 can be used by those on vessels under 24m, to which the above points do not apply.

If you fall into this category, you may use an ENG1 instead if that suits you better.

You can print the ML5 form from the internet and take to your GP or another doctor. See overleaf for guidance on the process to follow.

Serving fishers are entitled to grandfather rights in some circumstances but only until November 2023. This means that the standards may be applied more flexibly, with less demanding medical fitness standards for those operating close to shore (for example). However, there are some medical conditions where the risk may prohibit issue of a medical certificate or require a restriction on working alone. There is guidance on the ML5 report form.

After November 2023, you will be treated as a new entrant to the industry for the purposes of medical fitness.



Maritime &
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Image credit: Geoffrey Lee

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