



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency

## Medical examination policy during COVID-19 pandemic information for ML5 Medical Certificate holders

The MCA has put in place contingency plans to mitigate disruption to essential delivered services as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. We understand that in some areas, due to Coronavirus pressures, some GP surgeries are still not offering non-core services, including the ML5 Medical Reports. It must be accepted that new ML5 certificates may not be available during the pandemic.

The regulations provide exceptions for 3 months where it's not possible to obtain a medical fitness certificate, however given the current situation these have now been revised.

### **NEW Revised Exceptions**

- **If your ML5 certificate is valid for the full 5-year period (or 1 year because you are 65 years old or over):** The above exception will be extended to **6 months**. There is no need to involve your doctor or MCA in the exception process. You or the Master/Skipper should print a copy of this guidance to present with your (expired) ML5 certificate which is then acceptable for the stipulated period.
- **If your ML5 certificate is time limited (valid for less than 5 years due to medical reasons):** The exception for 3 months after a time limited certificate expires, as above is retained. If you are still unable to obtain a new ML5 at the end of that three-month exception you will require a Telephone Review to assess whether a further 3 month exception can be approved or not with your ML5 Assessor, please contact MCA at [seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk) to arrange this.

If the demand for ML5 telephone reviews becomes overwhelming ML5 Assessors will prioritise, focussing on seafarers who are providing essential key services. This can be confirmed by a letter from your company confirming that you are a key worker or are providing a key service. ML5s for those on pleasure vessels, private yachts and other shipping that does not have a clear national priority, as well as those who have non-essential roles may need to be deferred.

### **Reporting of Medical Conditions**

It is your personal responsibility not to work when you are temporarily unfit to do so because of illness or injury. You must therefore tell the issuing authority (MCA or RYA), if during the validity of your ML5 certificate, you suffer from or develop any of the following:

- a) a serious health problem or injury where you do not fully recover;
  - b) any of the conditions listed below:
- epileptic seizures or sudden disturbances of consciousness
  - coronary thrombosis (heart attack) or heart surgery

- problems with heart rhythm
- disease of the heart or arteries
- uncontrolled blood pressure
- diabetes requiring insulin treatment
- stroke or unexplained loss of consciousness
- head injury with continuing loss of consciousness
- Parkinson's Disease or Multiple Sclerosis
- mental or nervous problems
- alcohol or drug dependency problems
- profound deafness
- serious deterioration in vision or long term eye disease

c) any other disability or illness (mental or physical) which affects your fitness to work, in particular to navigate safely and to be able to undertake emergency duties. For instance if you have diabetes and your treatment changes from diet or tablets to insulin.

Your BML/RYA endorsement will not be valid during your illness and you will need to contact the Medical Administration Team at [seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk) for further advice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a period at the end.

Dr Sally Bell  
MCA Chief Medical Advisor