

The Coast Guard's National Maritime Center (NMC) Medical Evaluations Division is responsible for evaluating fitness for certification of all merchant mariners in order to minimize safety risk to the Mariner Transportation System.

The Division is comprised of Medical Screening, Medical Evaluation, and Designated Medical Examiner Teams. The teams perform medical evaluations and administrative functions to support the medical evaluation of the Merchant Mariner Medical Certificate application packages. This evaluation is essential to the success of the Coast Guard's mission of ensuring the safe operation of commercial vessels by determining and mitigating mariner risk to maritime safety.



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The National Maritime Center

**Medical
Evaluations
Division**

Fitness for Certification Determinations

The determination of whether or not a mariner is fit for full certification is based on a medical evaluation of the physical examination and supporting documents submitted by the applicant. The medical evaluation is a two-step process; however, not all applicants are subject to both evaluations:

- 1) **Medical Screening:** Entry level medical professionals (Certified Medical Assistants) review every 719K or 719K/E that arrives in the medical division. Although they have limited ability to grant waivers, they are able to process over 70% of the daily mariner files received so that they will not require further review.
- 2) **Initial Medical Review:**
 - Any medical condition that is outside of the capability of screening staff is reviewed by a medical evaluator (licensed physician's assistant).
 - Medical evaluators review the 719Ks that require a more comprehensive review (medications, injuries, illness, significant medical histories, etc.).
 - Medical evaluators have the ability to grant waivers. They can also request amplifying information (AI) if not enough documentation has been provided to allow them to make a fitness for certification determination.
 - Nearly 90% of initial medical reviews will not require further scrutiny.
 - When a physical examination has been evaluated and the medical evaluator has determined that the mariner may NOT be fit for certification, the file is submitted to an Occupational Medicine Physician

for final determination. Less than 2% of all 719Ks sent for final review are found not fit for certification.

- All 719K applications recommended for denial are submitted to the Division Chief for final approval.

Medical Waivers

Medical screeners and medical evaluators will grant a medical waiver for conditions documented on the 719K when the condition has been identified as not posing a significant risk to maritime safety. The waiver is an acknowledgement by the Coast Guard that the condition was identified and places a responsibility on the mariner to immediately report any significant change in this identified condition.

Amplifying Information (AI)

Frequently, a mariner's medical examination report will indicate treatment for an illness, injury, or prescription for a medication that requires further documentation to elaborate and explain significant medical history necessary for a medical screener or evaluator to make a fitness for certification determination. Amplifying Information (AI) refers to information (medical history, current status report, diagnostic testing, etc.) requested by medical evaluation staff to obtain a more precise picture of the mariner's health and fitness. A significant number of Merchant Mariner Physical Examination Forms (719K) received at the NMC are deficient of critical information explaining noted diagnoses, conditions, or medications, thus resulting in a request for AI. (For more information on the most common deficiencies regarding physicals, visit the NMC website.)

Top 5 Medical Conditions That Might Delay Mariner Application

There are medical conditions that can delay the processing of a mariner's application if the appropriate information isn't submitted. Mariners with any of the following conditions should print out the associated evaluation guideline from the NMC website and take it to their doctor so the condition can be addressed appropriately.

1. Cardiovascular Conditions
2. Seizure Disorders
3. Psychiatric Disorders
4. Sleep Disorders
5. Chronic Use of Impairing Medications

It is extremely important that mariners provide medical documentation from their doctor if they have one or more of these medical conditions. The guidelines on the NMC website will instruct the mariner and the mariner's doctor on what they should send to the NMC.

Submission of Medical Certificate Applications

Email D05-SMB-MEDAIP-Team@uscg.mil

Include full mariner name in subject line of email

