

**HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION SERVICE**

PHONE +852 2910 6174	(ISO 9001 CERTIFIED)	AIC
FAX +852 2910 1180	AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DIVISION	14 / 24
AFS VHHHYOYX	CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT	20 June 2024
EMAIL aic@cad.gov.hk	HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	

**MEDICAL CERTIFICATES ISSUED UNDER
THE AIR NAVIGATION (HONG KONG) ORDER 1995**

1. This circular serves to promulgate the policies and procedures adopted by the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (HKCAD) regarding the issue of medical certificates to holders of or applicants for Hong Kong flight crew licences, air traffic controller’s licences or student air traffic controller’s licences. This circular should be read in conjunction with other AICs of aeromedical importance and guidance materials available on the HKCAD website.
2. Medical certificates are issued under the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (AN(HK)O) in accordance with the provisions and medical standards stipulated in “*Annex 1 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*” (referred hereunder as “ICAO Annex 1”).
3. The AN(HK)O states that the holder of a flight crew licence shall not be entitled to perform any of the functions to which his/her licence relates unless it includes a valid medical certificate; and the holder of an air traffic controller’s licence or student air traffic controller’s licence shall not provide any type of air traffic control service or flight information service unless his/her licence includes a valid medical certificate.
4. **Application for Medical Certificates**
 - 4.1 Applicants for the issue (including initial and renewal application) of medical certificate must undergo a DCA 153 medical examination conducted by a HKCAD Approved Medical Examiner (AME), together with the special examinations and other tests as required (refer to paragraph 8 of this AIC). Applications for medical certificate should be made via the Medical Certificate Module of the Personnel Licensing Information System (PLIS) (<https://plis.cad.gov.hk/>). Please note that paper DCA 153 Form will no longer be accepted with effect from 2 July 2024.
 - 4.2 When arranging for medical examination, the applicant shall always inform the AME if any of the special examinations listed on the current medical certificate are due, or if any medical requirements have been imposed by the HKCAD or a HKCAD Approved Medical Assessor (AMA) before renewal application can be considered. Upon completion of the medical

examination and required special examinations and tests, the AME will submit the medical report, the special examination report(s) and other supporting documents as appropriate to the HKCAD or AMA for assessment.

- 4.3 After preliminary assessment, should additional medical information is required before a decision can be made, the applicant will be informed in writing. If the applicant is assessed as fit to perform his/her licence functions, the HKCAD or AMA will issue a medical certificate subject to such conditions as he/she thinks fit. If the applicant is assessed as unfit for the issue of medical certificate, he/she will be notified accordingly in writing by the HKCAD.

5. Review of Medical Certification Decisions

- 5.1 Any person who is not satisfied with the decision made to issue or not to issue a medical certificate under Articles 20(7)(c), 20(7)(d) or 65(9) of AN(HK)O should apply to the Personnel Licensing Office of HKCAD in writing with reasons and new medical evidence, if any, within 14 days from the issue of the written notification from the HKCAD, for a review of the decision. Any review application submitted after 14 days may not be considered.

6. Time Required for the Issue of Medical Certificates

- 6.1 Applicants for the issue (including renewal) of medical certificates are advised to review their own requirements and make timely arrangements with the AME of their own choice. To maintain the validity of medical certificates without a break, applicants for the renewal of medical certificates are advised to undergo medical examination at least three weeks before the expiry date of the current medical certificate.
- 6.2 Prior to applying for medical certificates, applicants are reminded to apply for an individual user account at <https://plis.cad.gov.hk/Account/Register/Applicant> for the HKCAD's approval well in advance to ensure a smooth and timely application process.

7. Validity Periods of Medical Certificates

- 7.1 In compliance with the requirements in ICAO Annex 1, validity periods of Class 1, 2 or 3 medical certificates depend on the holder's age and the type of licence being held. Details of the validity periods of medical certificates can be found in **Attachment A**.
- 7.2 A medical certificate is issued with expiry date(s) clearly indicated on it. The expiry date(s) is normally the last day of calendar months and is determined by adding the applicable validity period to the month in which the DCA 153 medical examination is completed. If the renewal medical examination is undertaken before the month of expiry, the new certificate will have

an expiry date based on the date of the renewal examination but not on the date of expiry of the current certificate.

8. Special Examinations and Other Medical Requirements

- 8.1 In addition to the DCA 153 medical examination, applicants for initial and renewal of medical certificates are required to undergo special examinations, i.e. pure-tone audiometry and heart examination including electrocardiography (ECG), at specific intervals, and may be subject to other medical requirements e.g. undergo other tests, if deemed necessary on medical grounds.
- 8.2 An AME or AMA may require an applicant to undergo an ophthalmic review conducted by a registered ophthalmologist. The DCA 153(Oph) Form should be used to record the findings and the form can be found on the HKCAD website:
[https://www.cad.gov.hk/application/DCA153\(Oph\).pdf](https://www.cad.gov.hk/application/DCA153(Oph).pdf).
- 8.3 All initial applicants for the issue of medical certificates must undergo the screening test for psychoactive substances, which constitutes part of the medical examination conducted by an AME.
- 8.4 Applicants of medical certificates may refer to **Attachment B** to this AIC for detailed requirements on the aforementioned special examinations and other medical requirements regarding the issue of medical certificate.

9. Extension of Medical Certificate Validity by 14 Days

- 9.1 Under special circumstances, AMEs may extend the validity of current medical certificates by up to 14 days, with the following conditions:
- (i) A medical certificate endorsed with the limitation of “as or with qualified co-pilot only” or “valid only when another qualified air traffic controller is immediately available to assume your duty” shall NOT be eligible for an extension of validity granted by an AME;
 - (ii) The applicant has completed the DCA 153 medical examination including all the applicable special examinations and tests required for the renewal of a medical certificate;
 - (iii) The AME is satisfied that there has been no significant change in the medical condition of the applicant since the last medical examination and that he/she is medically fit to perform the functions to which his/her licence relates;
 - (iv) The AME must ensure the medical report(s) is/are submitted to the HKCAD as soon as practicable; and
 - (v) The current medical certificate must be stamped and signed by the AME stipulating the

specific extension of validity.

10. Unfitness of Medical Certificate Holders

- 10.1 Holder of a flight crew licence who suffers any personal injury involving incapacity to undertake licence functions, or illness (including surgery) involving incapacity to undertake licence functions throughout a period of 20 days or more; or in the case of a woman, has reason to believe that she is pregnant, shall inform the HKCAD in writing of such injury, illness or pregnancy, as soon as possible for injury or pregnancy, and as soon as the period of 20 days has elapsed in the case of illness. The medical certificate shall be deemed to be suspended upon the occurrence of such injury or the elapse of such period of illness or the confirmation of pregnancy. Holders are advised to read the respective AIC on the HKCAD website regarding the procedures to be followed.
- 10.2 Holder of an air traffic controller's licence who suffers any personal injury or illness (including surgery) involving incapacity to undertake licence functions throughout a period of 20 consecutive days; or in the case of a woman, has reason to believe that she is pregnant, shall inform HKCAD in writing of such injury, illness or pregnancy, as soon as possible. The air traffic controller's licence shall be deemed to be suspended upon the elapse of such period of injury or illness. In the case of pregnancy, the holder shall not be entitled to exercise the privileges of her licence and ratings unless the specific conditions stated in the AN(HK)O 1995 are met. Holders are advised to read the respective AIC on the HKCAD website regarding the procedures to be followed.
- 10.3 Furthermore, any holder of a medical certificate shall consult an AME following any hospital treatment or the commencement of continued treatment with prescribed medication. If the AME believes that the medical certificate holder is no longer medically fit to perform the functions to which his/her licence relates, the AME must advise the medical certificate holder to contact the HKCAD without delay regarding the suspension of his/her medical certificate and should inform the HKCAD in writing of the case details. It is also a good practice for the AME to inform the HKCAD whenever there is any significant change in the applicant's medical condition which is of aeromedical concern.

11. Reference

- 11.1 All medical certificate-related applications should be made via the Medical Certificate Module of PLIS at <https://plis.cad.gov.hk/>.
- 11.2 The list of current AMEs, further guidance and reference materials on aeromedical matters can be found on the HKCAD website at <https://www.cad.gov.hk/english/aeromedical.html>.

11.3 For further enquiries, please contact HKCAD Personnel Licensing Office at plo@cad.gov.hk.

12. AIC 16/16, AIC 26/17, AIC 16/18, AIC 30/18 and AIC 19/19 are hereby superseded.

This Circular is issued for information, guidance and necessary action
by direction of the Director-General of Civil Aviation
Victor LIU

Validity Periods of Medical Certificates issued under AN(HK)O

Licence	Holder's Age	Class of Medical Certificate	Validity Period in Months	
Commercial Pilot's Licence (CPL) / Multi-Crew Pilot's Licence (Aeroplanes) [MPL(A)] / Airline Transport Pilot's Licence (ATPL)	Under 40	1	12	
	40-59	1	(i) Single-crew commercial air transport operations carrying passengers <i>Note: Not applicable to MPL(A) holders</i>	6
		1	(ii) Commercial air transport operations other than (i) above	12
	60 or over	1	6	
Private Pilot's Licence with Instrument Rating (PPL/IR)	Under 60	1	12	
	60 or over	1	6	
Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) / Student Pilot	Under 40	2	60	
	40-49	2	24	
	50 or over	2	12	
Air Traffic Controller's Licence (ATCL)	Under 40	3	48	
	40-49	3	24	
	50 or over	3	12	

Notes:

- i) The age of the holder/applicant is his/her age on the day of undergoing the DCA 153 medical examination.
- ii) An AMA may issue a medical certificate with a period of validity more restrictive than normal if deemed necessary on medical grounds.
- iii) Unless otherwise restricted by an AMA, a Class 1 medical certificate shall be valid for Class 2 purposes for the period appropriate to age and privileges.
- iv) The expiry of any special examination listed on page 1 of the medical certificate does not affect the validity of the certificate. However, the medical certificate will not be renewed until the special examination requirements have been met.

Special Examinations and Other Medical Requirements
for Issue of Medical Certificate

1. Audiometry and ECG Special Examinations for Issue of Medical Certificates

1.1 An applicant for the initial issue or renewal of medical certificate shall be tested by pure-tone audiometry as follows:

Licence	Class of Medical Certificate	Audiometry Examination Requirements
PPL/IR / CPL / MPL(A) / ATPL	1	- At initial issue - Aged under 40 – every 5 years - Aged 40 or over – every 2 years
PPL / Student Pilot	2	- At initial issue - Aged 50 or over – every 2 years
ATCL	3	- At initial issue - Aged under 40 – every 4 years - Aged 40 or over – every 2 years

1.2 In addition, electrocardiography (ECG) shall form part of the heart examination for the initial issue or renewal of medical certificate as follows:

Licence	Class of Medical Certificate	ECG Examination Requirements
PPL/IR / CPL / MPL(A) / ATPL	1	- At initial issue - Aged 30 and up to just under 50 – every 2 years - Aged 50 or over – every year
PPL / Student Pilot	2	- At initial issue - At the first examination after the age of 40 - Aged 50 or over – every 2 years
ATCL	3	- At initial issue - Aged 50 or over – every 2 years

2. Visual Correction of Medical Certificate Holders

2.1 Good vision is essential for flying and air traffic control work. However, some medical certificate holders need appropriate correcting lenses to achieve the required visual standard. Some need correction for distant vision and some need correction for vision at the instrument panel range. Most people over the age of 40 need corrective lenses for reading. Whenever new lenses are required, the medical certificate holder should advise the refractionist of the distances involved for visual flight deck tasks.

2.2 Medical certificate holders should always consult an AME before using visual correction spectacles/lenses during operational duties or undergoing any refractive surgery.

2.3 Visual Correction

2.3.1 Distant vision correction: Distant vision correction can be achieved by the use of spectacles or contact lenses.

2.3.2 Near vision correction: Where the only correction needed is for reading, this should be achieved by using look-over spectacles or lower segment correcting lenses with a neutral upper segment. Full lens correcting reading spectacles degrade distant vision and must never be used on the flight deck.

2.3.3 Near and distant vision correction: Where correction for both near and distant vision is required, bifocal or multifocal lenses are essential. Pilots are advised to discuss with their AME the shape and size most suitable for each segment.

2.3.4 Intermediate vision correction: When specific corrective lenses are needed to achieve the standard for intermediate vision, trifocal or multifocal lenses should be used.

2.4 Spectacles and Contact Lenses

2.4.1 Spectacles: When correcting lenses are essential, whether by spectacles or contact lenses, a spare pair of spectacles must be available to the medical certificate holder. Medical certificate holders with a large refractive error should use contact lenses or high index spectacle lenses. Spectacles with large diameter lenses and thin frames provide the best peripheral vision. Photo-sensitive lenses are not acceptable for pilots or air traffic controllers in general due to the tint changes too slowly for safe use in aviation.

- 2.4.2 Contact lenses: Contact lenses offer advantages over spectacles for correcting distant vision. They should be mono-focal and non-tinted. The wearer should be able to use the lenses for a prolonged period of at least 14 hours before seeking approval from his AME to use them when flying. The wearer will need to carry a pair of correcting spectacles when wearing his contact lenses and flying.
- 2.4.3 Sunglasses: Ideally sunglasses protect the eye from glare whilst not adversely affecting visual acuity. They should be of a neutral grey tint that does not distort colour perception and should transmit at least 15% of incident light. UVB has harmful effects on the eye. Good quality sunglasses absorb at least 95% of the UVB. Polarising sunglasses are not acceptable whilst flying, since they can interact with the cockpit transparency and cause distortion of vision.

2.5 Refractive surgery

- 2.5.1 Surgery to correct refractive error and enable the subject to stop wearing correcting lenses has increased dramatically in recent years. With low to moderate refractive errors it is successful in achieving uncorrected visual acuity of 6/12 or better in 95% of subjects. This means that 5% cannot reach the standard of uncorrected visual acuity required by a pilot. In some cases, it will not be possible to achieve the required standard even with correction.
- 2.5.2 Stability of vision is not achieved immediately after surgery. For this reason, a period of grounding of 3 to 6 months will be required before consideration can be given to returning the medical certificate holder to operational duty. Furthermore, fluctuating vision, glare, 'halo' formation, loss of contrast sensitivity and regression of correction are well recognised complications. An applicant who has undergone surgery affecting the refractive status shall be assessed as unfit. The applicant should have obtained medical clearance from AMA before resuming flying duties.
- 2.5.3 For medical certificate holder of any class who received refractive surgery, an annual full ophthalmic report (using DCA 153(Oph) Form) is required for four more years post-surgery to assess stability. Subsequent ophthalmic evaluation will be subject to clinical indications (e.g. deterioration in visual acuity).
- 2.5.4 If the applicant's pre-operative visual acuity was $\geq 6/60$ or ≥ -5.00 diopters spherical equivalent, ophthalmic surveillance once every five years is required to assess retinal abnormalities. Please note that refractive surgery is always elective and there is never a medical indication for such surgery. It is strongly recommended that an applicant considering refractive eye surgery should first consult the AME.

3. Screening Test for Psychoactive Substances on Initial Applicants for Medical Certificate

- 3.1 All initial applicants of medical certificate are subject to screening test for psychoactive substances which constitutes part of the medical examination conducted by an AME. The requirements for the screening test can be found in Annex A to CAD 373 – “*Screening Programme for Air Crew in Hong Kong on Psychoactive Substances*” (<https://www.cad.gov.hk/english/pdf/CAD373.pdf>).
- 3.2 HKCAD’s medical certification policy on problematic use of psychoactive substances can be found on HKCAD website (<https://www.cad.gov.hk/english/aeromedical.html>).
- 3.3 A list of AMEs of which their AME premises have obtained HKCAD’s acceptance on conducting the screening test can be found on the HKCAD website (<https://www.cad.gov.hk/english/pdf/List%20of%20AMEs.pdf>).