

PRE-SERVICE FISHERIES OFFICER MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT FACT SHEET

FISHERIES OFFICER AND COMPLIANCE SUPPORT OFFICER

This document applies to Fisheries Officer and Compliance Support Officer (Fisheries) roles.

A fisheries officer must be physically fit to carry out the demanding nature of the job. Tasks may include:

Physical activities

- Hiking long distances into remote areas with backpacks
- Launching and retrieving vessels from boat ramps and from the shore
- Lifting heavy equipment such as patrol gear or commercial fishing equipment
- Snorkelling
- Paddling kayaks or canoes
- Operating vessels in adverse weather conditions or at night
- Four-wheel driving over rough terrain
- Sitting or lying in a static position for extended periods during surveillance operations.
- Climbing eg. steep riverbanks, coastal cliffs, rocky shores

Training (to teach the skills required in a real-life threatening situation)

- Use of operational safety defensive equipment (batons, handcuffs and OC Spray)
- Simple restraints and self-defence techniques

Pre-service Medical and Physical Capability Assessment

To ensure that candidates are capable of undertaking the inherent requirements of a Fisheries Officer role, without risk of injury to themselves or others, it is a requirement of our recruitment process that all shortlisted candidates must

successfully pass a pre-service medical and physical capability assessment prior to employment.

These assessments occur towards the end of the recruitment process and consist of the following components:

Medical assessment

This assessment is conducted by a VFA preferred medical practitioner and includes:

- Completion of a health questionnaire
- Functional capacity assessment
- Height, weight and blood pressure assessment
- Vision screening – near, distant and colour vision testing. Colour vision testing is required to ensure that potential employees meet marine safety qualification requirements for operation of vessels
- Audio screening
- Urinalysis – test for protein, blood and glucose
- Doctors examination and consultation

Note that employment as a Fisheries Officer is not recommended for people with a serious cardiovascular, neurological or respiratory condition, or who are obese.

Physical capability assessment (swim test)

As a large proportion of a Fisheries officer's working day may be based on or next to the water, swimming ability is a key requirement of this position. The swimming ability assessment includes completion of a 100 metre (un-aided) swim in less than 4 minutes and completion of a number of water safety and survival exercises in a swimming pool.

Physical capability assessment (field hike test)

This assessment involves completing a hike of 3.22km carrying an 11.3kg pack in no more than 30:00 minutes.

Preparing for the pre-service physical assessment

Candidates who perform exercise regularly and maintain a base level of fitness should not find the assessments difficult.

Candidates who do not exercise regularly should commence some fitness training (including swimming) for a few weeks prior to assessment.

Information about chronic health conditions

Individuals who have been diagnosed with a chronic medical condition will be asked to provide this information at the time of medical assessment. It is imperative that candidates disclose all diagnosed medical conditions at the time of the medical assessment.

The term chronic is often applied to a medical condition when it lasts for a long period of time, generally more than 3 months. If you have been diagnosed with a medical condition and it has persisted) or is likely to persist for more than 3 months, further information from your treating practitioner may be sought.

Examples of chronic medical conditions include (but are not limited to):

- Asthma
- Cancer
- Epilepsy
- Depression or anxiety
- Arthritis
- Hepatitis (B or C)
- Kidney disease
- Heart disease
- Diabetes

Chronic medical conditions are assessed on a case by case basis by our medical practitioner, taking into account medical reports and individual history.

Frequently asked questions

I have asthma, and I take medication for asthma, can I still apply?

Yes. If your asthma is well controlled on medication you can still clear your medical.

I have diabetes, can I apply?

Yes. However, you will need a report from your treating Endocrinologist. As a Fisheries officer there

may be situations where you may not have access to food or water for extended periods, therefore you will need to demonstrate that your condition is stable and medically well managed.

I have a mental health issue. Can I still apply?

Yes. You will need to provide reports from your GP, Psychiatrist or Psychologist. You may be required to undergo further assessment. Mental health issues are assessed on an individual basis and clearance of your medical is not guaranteed.

I am over 40 years of age, and I take medication for my cholesterol. Can I apply?

Yes. But all applicants who are over 40 years of age or have a history of heart troubles will need to have tests done to assess heart disease risk. These include blood tests and possibly an ECG which can be organised by your family doctor.

I wear glasses. Can I apply?

Yes. However, your vision must meet certain standards to ensure that you can pass the medical requirements for the Eyesight test for a near coastal Qualification for operation of domestic commercial vessels (Australian Maritime Safety Authority). This certificate is commonly referred to as the Coxswains. More information can be found on the AMSA website – www.amsa.gov.au

I am colourblind. Can I apply?

Yes. However, the inherent requirements of the fisheries officer role require officers to undertake the Near Coastal Domestic Commercial vessel qualification after their first 12 months on the job (Coxswains certificate). There are different types of colour blindness, so each case will be evaluated individually based upon the type of colour deficiency. A pass is required in either of the following colour blindness tests:

- The Ishihara test with or without aids to vision, or
- The Holmes-Wright Lantern test Type B with or without aids to vision.

If I don't meet the medical or physical pre-service standards, can I apply again?

Yes. However, you will be required to undergo the medical and physical assessments again.

If you have any specific questions regarding the pre-service medical or physical assessments, please contact fisheries.recruitment@vfa.vic.gov.au