

CORONAVIRUS (Covid-19): Availability of Approved Doctors for ENG1/ML5 examinations

We understand that in some areas, due to Coronavirus pressures, GP surgeries where Approved Doctors (ADs) are based are withdrawing non-core services to those who are not their patients, including the ENG1 medical examination. Some surgeries are also stopping providing ML5 reports.

For the time being, seafarers should apply to ADs/doctors in other areas. Those based in occupational health practices are less likely to be affected by the current situation.

However, we will keep the situation under review. Please let MCA know if you or your crew members are unable to obtain an appointment.

During this time our normal number may not be available, if you need to contact us please email us at seafarer.sh@mca.gov.uk or use the numbers below instead:

0203 908 5138, 0203 817 2742, 0203 817 2376 or 0203 817 2502

There is provision in the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Maritime Labour Convention) (Medical Certification) Regulations 2010 exceptions to the requirement to hold a valid ENG1 in the following circumstances:

- A seafarer whose certificate has expired during the course of a voyage may continue to work until the next port of call at which a replacement certificate can be obtained, or for up to three months from the date of expiry of the certificate – whichever is the sooner. The validity of the certificate cannot be extended. A replacement medical fitness certificate must be obtained at the next port at which it is possible to do so.

During the current episode, the MCA accepts that some seafarers may be unable to obtain an ENG1 in ports of call in countries with travel restrictions in place due to Coronavirus, and this provision may be used in such cases.

- In urgent cases, with MCA's approval, a seafarer who has no valid medical fitness certificate because their medical certificate has expired within the last month, may exceptionally be employed for a period not exceeding three months without a valid medical certificate, provided that their last medical fitness certificate was valid for a full 24 months (or 12 months if the seafarer is under 18 years of age). The seafarer must obtain a replacement medical fitness certificate at the next port at which it is possible to

do so. Any case requiring approval should be referred to MCA's Medical Administration Team at the address at seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk or on any of the numbers below

It should not yet be necessary to rely on this provision when joining a ship from the UK, but please contact the MCA if you are unable to find appointments.

Advice after self-isolation

If you have been self-isolating either for 7 or 14 days you will not be able to attend an ENG examination during this time.

Once your self-isolation period has ended, whether you had symptoms or not, as long as you feel fit and well you will not need to reattend for an ENG examination. You can return to work as normal as long as you do not still have a fever (cough is allowed, as it can persist for weeks from whatever cause).

However, if you had severe symptoms which required hospital admission this would be considered a significant change in your medical history and a new ENG examination would be necessary, once you are symptom free.