

GUIDELINES ON PRE- EMPLOYMENT MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Introduction :

Pre-employment medical examination is a part of the recruitment process of candidates for jobs and is conducted in the final stage of this process. Job applicants are required to fulfil requirements in terms of qualification and experience as well as passing the pre-employment medical examination. The qualification and experience, as well as the selection process, are normally well defined. However, the medical fitness assessment and the interpretation of "Fitness" is left largely to the discretion of the medical officer.

The primary purpose of pre-employment medical examination is determination of the medical fitness of individuals to carry out essential functions of their occupations safely with minimal risk to themselves, fellow workers, and the public, including the ability to work while wearing protective equipment, and to identify small number of individuals who do not meet these requirements and prevent them entering into a career unsuitable to them.

Pre-employment medical examination has the following major objectives

1. Ability

- To determine whether the applicant has the physical requirements required to be able to perform the inherent requirements of the job
- To ensure that the applicant has no pre-existing medical condition that would prevent him or her from performing essential tasks involved in a given job.

2. Safety - To ensure that the applicant has no pre-existing medical conditions that could result in sudden incapacitation that can lead to an accident, especially, for safety positions.

Safety position is a job in which incorrect decision and/or action by the incumbent would result in an incident with high potential of injury, plant and environmental damage, harm to company reputation and financial loss. Examples of such a position are driving, piloting, climbing, working at height or over a body of water, etc. In these positions, sudden incapacitation would expose the worker himself and his colleagues to great danger.

3. Health status :

a) **Job related** - Pre-employment medical examination is a means to

- Establish baseline health data against which future health status of the worker be compared to detect the effects of harmful working conditions and advise corrective measures
- Identify existing medical conditions which could be adversely affected by occupational exposures.

b) **General** - The results of the examination are useful

- To advice individuals in the maintenance or improvement of their health
- To establish a baseline record of the general health condition of the individual
- To take measures to correct or mitigate medical conditions which could adversely affect the health of candidates
- To take measures of a preventive character e.g. tetanus prophylaxis

THE CONDUCT OF MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

The following procedures are suggested in order to bring about uniformity, effectiveness and efficiency in the conduct of pre-appointment medical examinations. A pre-employment medical examination provides an opportunity to prevent a person from embarking on a career unsuitable for his health condition as apparent at that time, and it is very important that the medical examiner conducts it thoroughly.

1. Prior instruction to the candidates

All individuals who are required to undergo pre-employment medical examination should be informed invariably in the appointment letter about the pre-employment medical examination. They should be advised to bring their past medical records including investigation reports. They should also be advised to bring at least six recent passport size photos for the purpose of medical examination.

2. Investigations

a) Appropriate equipment (such as PEFM meters, Ishihara's chart etc.) should be used in the assessment of hearing capacity and visual acuity, colour vision etc

particularly regarding those candidates whose job requires specific standards in this regard.

b) Delegation of technical work to unauthorised persons must be avoided.

c) The medical officer should ensure that the blood and urine specimens collected, tested and reported upon belong to the person examined.

d) The following tests are recommended for applicants for all type of jobs:

- Haemoglobin.
- Urine – albumin, sugar.
- Random blood sugar
- PEFr
- Chest X-ray - should be done as a routine in all cases for detecting any abnormality of the heart and lungs which may not be apparent by ordinary physical examination.
- Pregnancy diagnostic test (all the female candidates).

e) Additional tests are to be conducted if clinically indicated and if work exposures require certain tests to be done to establish baseline data based on the exposures at work. The following are examples of tests related to work exposures:

- ECG
 - for those who have abnormal cardiovascular findings such as hyper-tension, tachycardia and bradycardia.
 - For certain jobs involving public safety like drivers
 - If age > 35
- Pregnancy test for female applicants.
- HbsAg – for nursing and paramedical staff
- Complete blood count – chemical exposure
- Liver function tests– chemical exposure
- Renal function tests - chemical exposure
- Audiometry - if the workers are exposed to noise level of more than 90dB, hearing impairment
- Spirometry – dusty or fummy work environment, suspected lung disease

4. Immunization requirements for candidates

- a) The candidate's vaccination record should be examined.
- b) All candidates should be enquired about their vaccination status against Tetanus and those who are not immunised or whose immunisation status is doubtful should be immunised against tetanus.
- c) Health care personnel who are HbsAg negative will be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

3. Result

Result categories for pre-employment medical examinations are:

- a. Medically fit for the job
- b. Medically temporarily unfit for the job
- c. Medically unfit for the job

If the candidate is found fit for the job, this opinion may take any of the following forms:

- a. Unconditional acceptance of the applicant
- b. Fitness despite the presence of limitations not entirely incompatible with the job, accompanied by a description of these limitations
- c. Fitness conditional upon aids such as glasses for refractory errors, hearing aid, callipers because of incompatible limitations.