

THE GLIDING FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

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Medical FAQs for Pilots

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The GFA Medical Requirements are more fully explained in the GFA Operational Regulations, Section 3.2 and Manual of Standard Procedures (Part 2), Section 10.1.

Please find below a selection of frequently asked questions and answers on the GFA pilot medical.

1 Australian Pilots

What are the GFA's Medical Standards?

The GFA uses the 'Austroads Standards' for the issue of a private motor vehicle driver's licence medical certificate, as contained in the Austroads Inc. publication 'Assessing fitness to drive for commercial and private vehicle drivers: medical standards for licensing and clinical management guidelines, March 2012', or a later version as in force from time to time.

When can I self-declare my medical status and when must I have a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

If you do not suffer from one of the prescribed medical conditions and you are not an Instructor or Charter pilot, you may make a self-declaration of your medical fitness. In all other cases you must obtain a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness. See the following Flow Chart:

Do I need to specifically use the GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness form or can I use the driver licence medical certificate provided by Austroads or my state based transport authority?

You must use the GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness form and have your doctor certify you are "not suffering from a medical condition which would preclude (you) from flying a sailplane as pilot in command".

How long is my Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness Valid?

A Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness shall be valid for two years in respect of a pilot aged 40 or over at the time of examination, or four years in respect of a pilot aged under 40 at the time of examination.

I have a CASA Class 1/Class 2/Class 2 (Basic)/Class 3 Medical Certificate. Does this meet GFA requirements?

Yes. Please provide a copy of your CASA Medical Certificate to your CFI.

I have a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness obtained for my employment. Can I use this to meet GFA's medical requirements?

No. If you are ineligible to make a self-declaration, then you will need to have your Doctor sign the form specifically provided by the GFA (OPS_F006(b) - Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness), which can be downloaded from the Docs/Forms tab above.

I have a Heavy Vehicle/Commercial Driver's Licence that proves I meet the Austroads standards. Can I use this to meet GFA's medical requirements?

No. If you are ineligible to make a self-declaration, then you will need to have your Doctor sign the form specifically provided by the GFA.

I am an Australian Citizen but hold a Class 1/Class 2 Medical Certificate issued overseas. Can I use this to meet GFA's medical requirements?

No. You must hold a Medical Certificate issued by an Australian Registered Doctor or Designated Aviation Medical Examiner (DAME).

Can any registered doctor issue my GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

The driver licence medical certificate can be issued by any Australian Registered Medical Practitioner to any person meeting the required standard, however GFA recognises the value of the doctor/patient relationship. Pilots with a history of heart failure or cancer can only be assessed for a driver licence medical by their treating GP (or a GP with access to the patient's medical history) and must be under case management.

If I do not have a driver licence, can I still apply for a GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

Yes. There is no requirement for you to hold a driver licence; only to be assessed to the standard.

I have a 'conditional' driver licence. Am I eligible for a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

Yes, providing your Medical Practitioner believes you are capable of flying a sailplane as pilot in command.

I'm pregnant. Am I eligible to apply for a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

Yes, however it is your responsibility to cease flying when the safety of flight could be compromised.

I failed my Class 2 medical. Can I still apply for a GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

Yes, if you meet the Austroads standards.

What happens if my doctor does not issue me with a GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

You cannot fly as pilot in command but your CFI may allow you to continue to fly with a suitably qualified 'safety' pilot under the mutual flying provisions as described in subparagraph 8.1.5 of the GFA Manual of Standard Procedures Part 2 – Operations, providing the medical condition is such that it does not present an unacceptable risk. You can also visit a Designated Aviation Medical Examiner (DAME) to discuss your medical condition further. The DAME is qualified to determine whether you are eligible for a Class 2 medical with conditions (for example, you may need to do additional medical tests).

What must I do if I become medically unfit to fly?

A pilot flying under the provisions of the self-declaration of physical fitness who suffers from a condition described in Operational Regulations, Section 3.2.2(d) must obtain a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness' before recommencing flying.

A pilot flying under the provisions of a 'Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness' in terms of Operational Regulations, Section 3.2.2(d) who suffers a condition which renders him/her unfit for flying is required to undergo another medical examination by his/her GP or medical specialist before resuming flying as PIC. A fresh 'Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness' will be required confirming the problem has been treated and the person is again fit to fly.

The above requirements do not apply to minor injury or temporary illness (such as the flu, head cold, etc.).

I am a CFI and have become medically unfit to fly? Must I stand down from that position?

A CFI who suffers from a condition that renders him/her unfit for flying will not be required to stand down from their position if:

- a) the problem does not prevent him/her from continuing to manage their Club's operations; and

- b) there is an expectation that a 'Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness' will be provided within 6 months to allow resumption of in-flight duties.

If the condition is likely to be of a long-term nature, a suitable replacement should be found.

The GFA Medical Self-Declaration has a disqualifying condition "Cancer in the last 5 years". Is this not a little broad? Surely pilots who have had minor skin cancers, such as basal or squamous cell carcinomas, removed recently should not be included in this catchall.

The prescribed conditions on the self-declaration form and in our Regulations were set by CASA in line with the 'disqualifying conditions' in the CASA Drivers Licence Medical standards. Under the CASA standards, basal cell skin cancers are not disqualifying if they have been successfully excised and other treatment conditions are met. This concession is only available to a person who has been under focused, active and continuous treatment by the same or professionally-related medical practitioners who have full access to the person's medical history. Consequently, CASA requires a GP to certify this.

If I hold a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness, do I also need to make a declaration when I renew my membership?

No.

If I am well, and know I am well, why must I make a declaration each and every year when the person who has to have the GP certify their fitness only does it every two or four years?

Regulations require the self-declaration to be made annually. As it is a 'self-declaration', this should not be an impost.

The Medical Certificate of Fitness lasts two or four years from the date of GPs signature. Am I legally allowed to fly after the renewal date?

NO. A person cannot fly in command of a sailplane if they do not meet GFA Medical Requirements.

NOTE: A Person who is eligible to self-declare their medical status but is otherwise required to hold a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness because they are an Instructor or Charter Pilot, may fly under a self-declaration providing they do not exercise the privileges of their charter/instructor ratings.

I am an Air Experience Instructor, so for the purposes of the medical requirement definition, am I an Instructor?

Yes, and a person holding an AEI rating actually does provide in-flight instruction in the important aspects of lookout and, if the student is to 'have a go', the primary effects of the controls.

I am a Ground Supervisory Instructor and cannot undertake any in-flight instruction. Am I required to hold a GFA Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness?

If you do not suffer from one of the prescribed medical conditions, you may make a self-declaration of your medical fitness.

2 Example Medical Certificates

http://www.doc.glidingaustralia.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=1224-ops-f006-c-examples-of-unacceptable-medical-certificates&category_slug=operations-forms&Itemid=101

3 Foreign Pilots

GFA Medical Requirements are detailed at paragraph 3.2 of the GFA Operational Regulations. In most cases, foreign glider pilots will be able to self-declare their medical status. In the event that a foreign pilot is unable to make a self-declaration because they:

- a. suffer from a medical condition described in Operational Regulations, paragraph 3.2.2(d); or
- b. intend to instruct or fly charter while in Australia, then they must hold a valid Medical Certificate before commencing flying.

Foreign pilots who hold a valid:

- a. (a) ICAO Class 2 or higher Medical Certificate issued by their licencing State, or
- b. (b) Medical Certificate that has been assessed to a medical standard equivalent to (or higher than) the 'Austroads' Standard issued by their licencing State, may fly gliders in command while that Medical Certificate remains current.

Foreign pilots with a non-ICAO Medical Certificate as per (b) above will need to provide the GFA's Executive Manager, Operations with a copy of their Medical Certificate together with a copy (in English) of their State's medical requirements for glider flying so that an assessment can be made as to acceptability.

For foreign pilots with an ICAO Class 1 or 2 Medical Certificate, the Club CFI can accept these but a copy must be retained for onforwarding to the GFA office.

Foreign pilots who do not hold an overseas issued Medical Certificate that is acceptable to GFA and who are ineligible to make a self-declaration will need to obtain a Medical Practitioner's Certificate of Fitness from an Australian Registered GP using the **GFA Form** designed for this purpose.