

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE A SERVING REGULAR FIREFIGHTER: ILL-HEALTH

Notes on completion

This certificate should be used for regular firefighters only. The comparable certificate for retained and volunteer firefighters is Medical Certificate G.

A fire and rescue authority would issue this certificate for completion by the independent qualified medical practitioner in circumstances where the authority have decided (on non-medical grounds) that there is no qualifying injury. If they believe that there could be a qualifying injury or are uncertain (because medical questions need to be answered) they should issue Medical Certificate B, instead of this certificate, to the independent qualified medical practitioner.

The certificate should be completed as follows.

Page 1: Personal details

This section should be completed by the fire and rescue authority before issue to the independent qualified medical practitioner.

Page 1: Details of incapacity

If this section is completed by the fire and rescue authority it should be checked by the independent qualified medical practitioner to ensure it correctly matches his/her understanding of the medical condition. It may be better if completed by the independent qualified medical practitioner.

The inclusion of this section should make it clear which areas of disability are considered in order to prevent the situation where a firefighter at appeal presents different ailments to those considered in the opinion.

If the firefighter requests, and is provided with a copy of the medical opinion, the firefighter should check that the details given here are as he/she understands them.

Pages 2 and 3: Opinion

This is for completion by the independent qualified medical practitioner. He/she should tick all appropriate boxes, having regard to the definitions of expressions where they are provided.

If he/she does not examine the firefighter but forms his/her opinion based on written medical evidence only, the words "EXAMINED" to "AND" at the beginning of the opinion should be deleted.

There is no question about injury here. This is because the fire and rescue authority have decided, before issuing the certificate to the independent qualified medical practitioner, that there are no grounds for addressing the question of a qualifying injury in a medical context. If, subsequently, the firefighter believes he/she is entitled to an injury pension and none has been awarded, the right of appeal would be under paragraph 3 of Part 6 of the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme (England) 2006.

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Notes on completion (continued)

Pages 2 and 3: Opinion (continued)

Because the question of injury is not raised in the medical opinion, it cannot be challenged via paragraph 2 of Part 6 of the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme (England) 2006.

It is possible that the person may be disabled for the aspect of his/her role which requires fitness for firefighting but may be fit for other duties. The fire and rescue authority will need an opinion on this in order to decide whether the firefighter could remain in post to perform these other duties. They will have supplied the independent qualified medical practitioner with details of the firefighter's role and in Point 6 the practitioner should give an opinion on the extent to which the firefighter's general state of health and fitness is satisfactory to carry out the duties of that role.

If the person is disabled for performing any of the duties of his/her role he/she may, nevertheless be capable of other regular employment. Point 5 asks this question so that the fire and rescue authority can determine whether or not the person would be eligible for a higher tier ill-health pension.

Point 8 allows the medical practitioner to suggest a date for review. It is for the fire and rescue authority, however, to decide when such a review should take place.

After completion of the certificate

After the independent qualified medical practitioner has completed the certificate it should be passed to the fire and rescue authority who will consider the opinion and take appropriate action. If it is decided that the firefighter should retire on the ground that he/she is permanently disabled, the fire and rescue authority must determine under Rule H1 whether he/she is entitled to any awards under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and if so, which. The firefighter can request a copy of the medical opinion within 14 days of being notified of the authority's decision.

If the firefighter is dissatisfied with the award and believes the problem lies in the medical opinion he/she can appeal against the opinion under Rule H2. If the firefighter is dissatisfied with the award and believes the problem does not lie in the medical opinion but in non-medical aspects of the fire and rescue authority's decision, he/she can appeal under Rule H3. (But note that, as stated above, an appeal against the disallowance of an injury award would have to be made under Part 6 of the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme (England) 2006.)