

MEDICAL STANDARDS

Applicants are assessed against medical standards that have been structured in line with the inherent requirements of operational policing within the NZ context. When undertaking the assessment of health status in the context of medical work fitness for Police work, it is important to consider several specific issues.

- Firstly, whether the health condition affects capacity to perform any of the inherent tasks of the job of Police Officer.
- Secondly, whether the condition predisposes to sudden incapacity that impacts upon the safety of self, co-workers, or public.
- Thirdly whether the nature of the role or the work environment is likely to adversely affect or worsen the health condition.

The medical assessment(s) is part of a health risk assessment process to ensure that an applicant is not only able to safely undertake the physical, medical and psychological demands of NZ Police recruit training, but are also considered able to undertake the role of an operational police officer. Each applicant is considered on a case to case basis taking into consideration the unique circumstances of an individual's health history.

Applicants must declare all current medical conditions, past medical history, use of medications and the need for medical aids at the time of the medical assessment. **Failure to disclose may result in a medical decline or stand down period.**

Assessing Medical compatibility for Police work:

A candidate's suitability to undergo NZ Police recruit training will be solely determined by NZ Police by utilising the medical standards to assist with an individual health risk assessment process for medical work fitness as a NZ Police Recruit and NZ Police Officer.

There are a wide range of potential conditions which may cause symptoms and affect capacity for Police work. Conditions considered medically incompatible for Police work can include, but are not limited to:

Hearing: "Adequate hearing is a crucial requirement for Police work and has an integral role in the successful execution of many safety critical situations... sound localisation, sound detection, and sound recognition is critical to safe performance of Police work."

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Significant hearing deficit in one or both ears
Nb. Hearing aids can be used to meet the hearing standard. The stability of the aids in terms of fit will need to be assessed as to likely risk of dislodgment in a struggle.
- A current history of tinnitus

Vision: "Satisfactory visual performance is critical to safe and effective Police work. Vision orientated Police work analysis in overseas studies has identified visual performance as being crucial in almost all critical situations within Police work. Various factors including object identification, visual pursuit, motion detection, dynamic far acuity, dark adaptation, peripheral vision, and colour vision are rated as most important."

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Colour vision deficiencies affecting functional capacity for the role
- Altered vision fields e.g. Monocularity
- Visual acuity WITH vision aides unable to reach 6/6 and vision acuity WITHOUT vision aides not able to meet 6/24 in their worst eye.
- Near vision unable to correct to N10 or better
- Any condition with a potential for progressive visual impairment

Heart health (Cardiovascular): “Certain aspects of Police work involve intense physical exertion. This may include the demands of running whilst under the load of equipment or the more demanding isometric loads involved in lifting and control and restraint activity during a struggle or resisted arrest. Psychological load can also contribute to the risk of an acute adverse cardiac event.”

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Organic disease of the heart or arteries resulting in functional impairment for inherent duties or with a heightened risk of sudden incapacity.
- Untreated or uncontrolled Hypertension (elevated blood pressure)
- Heart murmurs with significant valvular disease.

NB. An abnormal ECG or any history of cardiac conditions will require referral and review by a Cardiologist

Lung health (Respiratory): “Good pulmonary function is essential for the extreme workloads of Police work. An adequate intake of oxygen and rapid exchange of O₂ and CO₂ is required to meet the potential physical demands of Police duties.”

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Un-controlled or unstable asthma
- Asthma requiring long term ongoing oral steroid treatment
- A history of chronic obstructive airways disease, chronic bronchitis, or, bronchiectasis
- A history of recurrent pneumothorax (collapsed lung)
- Cystic fibrosis or a history of tuberculosis (respiratory - lung diseases) without acceptable respiratory function
- Conditions that in the COVID pandemic are incompatible with front-line Police duties

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- A history of sleep apnoea (temporary inability to breathe)

Bones, Joints & Muscles (Musculoskeletal): “Applicants must have a full or near full range-of-movement, normal tone, normal coordination and normal power to be able to be cleared”

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Recent corrective surgery without suitable period to establish joint stability and to regain functional range of movement and strength
- A history of chronic/ongoing neck or back pain
- Amputation of limb
- Condition that is incompatible with the NZ Police PAT (Physical appraisal test) or PCT (Physical Competency Test)
- Inflammatory arthritis with functionally impacting joint damage and/or incompatible medication use and/or immunosuppressant risk

- Conditions that in the COVID pandemic are incompatible with front-line Police duties
- Poor muscular development, abnormal gait (walking style), or limitation of movement in any joint

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- A history of recent musculoskeletal injuries or conditions

Mental Health (Psychological): “Police Officers must make critical decisions that can affect others under emergency conditions, often when they are tired or under pressure. The cognitive and decision-making demands are high... an applicant must be able to cope with the psychological stressors of operational duties.”

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- A history where symptoms of depression having persisted for 2 years or more
- A history of 2 or more episodes of correctly diagnosed depression
- A current history of psychological disorders where sustained full functional recovery and stability cannot be demonstrated
- Current use of some classes/types of psychotropic medication such as stimulants and benzodiazepines
- A history of debilitating phobia which would adversely affect your safety and ability to undertake all aspects of the role such as; claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces), narcolepsy (sleep disorder), hemophobia (fear of blood) or, nyctophobia (fear of the dark).

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- Alcoholism (fully recovered)
- Drug/substance abuse or dependence (fully recovered)
- Stable and long-term use of some Psychotropic medications

Ear, Nose, and Throat Conditions: “Many tasks undertaken by Police Officers require good balance. In addition, a lack of balance may lead to serious injury during the course of duty. Situations include working at heights, working in awkward spaces and in awkward positions, stooping, looking overhead, and negotiating uneven and slippery surfaces, and stability during defensive tactics.”

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- An applicant who suffers unheralded attacks of vertigo
- Meniere’s disease resulting in recurrent vertigo despite treatment and/or resulting in increasing hearing loss
- Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) without significant symptom-free period (Nb. A specialist report addressing low risk of reoccurrence will also be required)

Brain & Head health (Neurological): “The ability to effectively and safely undertake the inherent requirements of Police duties relies on a number of intact neurological functions. Police officers are required to have an awareness of what is happening in their environment and understand what that information means (situational awareness). They make decisions and act under circumstances of time pressure where the consequences of the decisions can impact on personal and public safety and property.”

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Current or past treatment within the last 5 years for epilepsy
- Seizure activity within the last 5 years
- Severe head injury without full resolution and long-term stability
- History of frequent or severe migraine with functional impact on capacity for Police duties

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- Well controlled, infrequent Migraines and cluster headaches

General Health:

Conditions most likely medically incompatible for NZ Police:

- Bleeding disorders and clotting disorders
- Current pregnancy (Incompatible with mandatory police training)
- Malignant disease
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus requiring insulin
- Unrepaired Hernia

For any medical condition / health history not listed above questions can be sent to:

recruitment.medicals@police.govt.nz

The full “Medical Standards for applicants to enter recruit training” can be [accessed here](#).