

Physical Fitness Certificate

Introduction:

In the recent era, many opportunities of jobs are available in many major cities. The organizations satisfy themselves regarding the fitness of their employees at the time of recruitment as well as at regular intervals thereafter. Similarly, many educational institutes offering professional courses require the students to undergo a medical check up and submit the certificate to the effect that they are fit to undergo the strenuous professional course they have applied for.

Physical fitness certificate is one of the important requirements for any employment as it is concerned with the ability of the individual to perform the task delegated to him during the course of employment. Also, different working environments have their own risks and hazards, to which the employees are exposed to. So, this factor also needs consideration while examining a person for certifying his fitness or unfitness for that particular job. The registered medical practitioners have a major role to play in providing these certificates of fitness for employment/ education etc. enabling the individual to obtain employment and admission to various educational institutes.

Registered medical practitioners should adhere strictly to ethics and code of conduct by Medical Council of India and follow rules, regulations and guidelines concerned not only with the physical fitness certificate but also related to other medical certificates and reports.

Objectives:

A physical fitness certificate is provided to an individual by his or her physician.

1. The physical fitness certificate is requested, in general, to satisfy an employer request to verify fitness of the individual person for the said employment.
2. It may be required for by schools, colleges to verify fitness of the students for admission to the said course.
3. It is required by the person for obtaining driving license / pilot license.
4. It is required by a person to be recruited in the army.
5. It may be required by individuals to submit to concerned authorities for extending their government / private services.

These should be drawn up with care and attention, with due sense of responsibility for opinion expressed in them. These will be accepted by court of law when these are issued by qualified registered medical practitioners.

Rules:

- Only registered medical practitioner is authorized to issue physical fitness certificate.
- Physical examination required for physical fitness certificate should be done only after individual's consent.
- A physician must ensure that any statements made are to the best of his or her knowledge, accurate, and based upon current clinical information.
- Before providing an opinion on an individual's physical fitness related to respected work in present state of health, a physician must ensure that he or she has a complete understanding and accurate information about the individual's employment requirements.
- A physician must obtain the individual's permission / consent to disclose information to any third party, whether employer or insurer. Though it is held that when the individual himself comes to the doctor for getting examined for the purpose of obtaining an insurance policy cover, the consent is implied for clinical examination as well as for disclosing the reports to the insurance company. In certain cases, the insurance companies obtain the consent from the patient for getting examined by

their panel doctors and also to disclose the information gathered by him from such examination to the insurers, at the time when the person proposes for such a policy.

- A physician must not disclose more information than is covered by the individual's consent.
- Physicians must further recognize that employers and their insurers will be relying on the information provided to them through the physical fitness certificate in making a number of decisions.
- The certificate is handed over to the individual himself but if required to be handed over to the third party, the authority of the third party should be ascertained with the consent of the patient.
- The practitioner should preserve with him a duplicate copy of the certificate issued, prepared in the same process with the original, at least for **two years**. Otherwise he should maintain a register with details of the certificate issued with serial number and the signature of the patient to whom certificate is issued.
- If more than one copy of certificate is required to be issued, it is to be marked duplicate.
- Medical practitioner can demand fees for issuing certificate, if not issued from free hospitals. In case of some insurance companies, the doctor's fees are paid by the insurers.
- A physician must only sign a physical fitness certificate that he or she feels can be substantiated through a clinical assessment of the patient — to do otherwise would be ethically improper.
- An examination/ certification by a nurse or other person who is not qualified to carry out examination and diagnosis is not acceptable.

Format:

Department of Forensic Medicine

Rural Medical College, Loni (Maharashtra)

No. / F.M./ Med. Cert./ 2010 Loni, Dated . . 2010

--: Certificate :--

(Physical Fitness Certificate)

This is to certify that I have personally examined Shri/ Smt./ Ku. s/ w/ d/ o, aged about years, sex male/ female, caste, occupation , resident of (who signed / signature/ left thumb impression taken below in my presence) who is a candidate for the post ofin the department/ office.....and I could not discover that he/ she has disease

(communicable/ otherwise) constitutional weakness or bodily infirmity, except.....do / do not consider this a disqualification for such an employment.

Reason for disqualification: -----

The age mentioned above is the age as stated by -----
and that his/ her age as nearly as can be ascertained from my examination is -----
years.

Identification marks of patient:

- 1.
- 2.

..... Signature

Verified signature Name

or Qualification

left thumb impression Registration No.

of Designation

the patient Address

Date:

Place: Stamp

Guidelines for completing the format:

The following guidelines are suggested when completing a 'Valid' physical fitness certificate:

- 1. The certificates should be numbered, so as to keep an account of all the certificates issued and also for easy retrieval of the same.
- 2. The certificates should be written in legible handwriting.
- 3. A practitioner shall only grant a certificate of illness on letterhead to give authority to the certificate. Some organizations design their own formats and insist that the registered medical practitioner should examine the person as per the guidelines mentioned in those formats and certify accordingly. In such cases, even if the RMP issues the certificate in the format provided by such an organization, he should retain a copy of the same for the purpose of his record.
- 4. The name of the certifying RMP, name of the patient, his/her age, sex, occupation, caste, address, employment number should be mentioned completely in every case in legible handwriting.
- 5. The post/ job/ course for which the individual is being examined should be enquired and mentioned in detail. Also, the name of the organization. Institution in which the individual is planning to join is also to be mentioned.

6. The RMP should get himself fully acquainted with the nature of the assignment of the individual in order to enable himself to opine on the issue of his fitness for the said assignment.
7. Before opining that, "I could not discover that he/ she has disease (communicable/ otherwise) constitutional weakness or bodily infirmity, except.....do / do not consider this a disqualification for such an employment." , the RMP should obtain a thorough personal, family, past history of any illness, occupational history, perform a thorough clinical examination and advise necessary investigations as he deems fit before issuing the certificate.
8. If the RMP is of the opinion that the individual is not fit for the said assignment, he should clearly state the reason for his such opinion in unambiguous terms.
9. The age stated by the individual should be mentioned. However, the RMP should also make a clinical assessment of the age of the individual and mention his/ her opinion about the age of the individual, stating therein whether his/ her opinion corroborates with the stated age of the individual or not. If the RMP finds gross discrepancy in the age stated by the individual and that assessed by him clinically then he can with the consent of the individual carry out the detail 'examination for age'. If the RMP does not have the requisite experience of estimating the age, he may refer the case to suitably qualified person for such examinations.
10. Two permanent identification marks should be mentioned in great detail, so as to enable himself/ herself to establish the positive identity of the person at any later date.
11. He should get the signature or left hand thumb impression of the patient affixed on the certificate in his presence, before he delivers it, after giving date of issue, his full signature and registration number.
12. The date and time of the examination;
13. While forming his opinion, the RMP should clarify whether the certificate is being issued as a result of personal observations by the practitioner during an examination, or as the result of information received from the patient and which is based on acceptable medical grounds;
14. Physical fitness certificate should include description of the fitness related to concerned work. If any disease is revealed during examination of the individual it should be described in detail whether it will affect the ability of the individual to perform the said job/ task or not with the informed consent of the patient, provided that if the patient is not prepared to give such consent, the medical practitioner or dentist shall merely specify that, in his or her opinion based on an examination of the patient, the patient is unfit to work;
15. The Doctor should give an exact nature of illness. The scope of certificate should be limited to the purpose for which it is sought. If the doctor comes across any other information regarding the individual which does not have any concern with the fitness of the individual to perform the assignment, then an express written consent of the individual should be obtained before disclosing the same in the certificate. In case, the doctor comes to know about any such fact during the examination, regarding which he is of the opinion that if not disclosed to proper authorities, it might be harmful to the society at large, then the rules regarding professional secrecy and privileged communication should be followed.
16. Physical fitness certificate should include the information whether the patient is totally indisposed for duty or whether the patient is able to perform less strenuous duties in the work situation.
17. The medical practitioner is required to print his name and initials, qualification and registration number on the medical certificate in addition to his usual signature.

18. A certificate signed by a person other than a qualified medical practitioner who is not authorized to make such examination and diagnosis is equally unacceptable. This means that any certificate bearing an illegible signature and a rubber stamp is unacceptable.
19. If preprinted stationery is used, a practitioner shall delete words which are irrelevant and such certificates should be numbered for proper maintenance, preservation and easy retrieval.

Liabilities:

The certificate of physical fitness that is required before any employment or educational course etc. is different from the 'fitness certificate' that is issued after a person falls sick and is cured by the treatment given by the RMPs. Hence, great care should be taken while certifying the person for his 'fitness' for a particular assignment.

While certifying a person for his fitness for a particular assignment the overall fitness of that person is to be examined, whereas while issuing the 'fitness certificate' that is issued after some illness, the RMP concentrates only on whether the disease from which the person was suffering is cured or not. Thus, the physical fitness certificate includes a detail mentioning of the personal, family, past history of any illness, accidents etc, detail and thorough clinical examination of all systems of the body and relevant and necessary investigations that may be required to be carried out in the opinion of the RMP.

The certificate of physical fitness shall be valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue, if the person remains healthy throughout the course of that one year. It should lapse, even before completion of 12 months if such a person suffers from a major disease or a serious accident etc within a period of 12 months from issuance of such a certificate. In that case, after the person is cured of such disease/ accidental injuries etc, he will again have to submit himself/ herself for the physical fitness certificate. In such cases, the RMP can revoke the certificate granted if in his opinion the holder of it is no longer fit to work in the capacity stated therein.

Even when the person remains healthy throughout the duration of 12 months from the date of issue of this certificate, after completion of this duration, the certificate shall lapse automatically and the person should be asked to resubmit himself/ herself for a fresh renewed certificate for next 12 more months if required by his organization/ institution etc.

As this certificate of physical fitness pertains to the physical ability of the individual to sustain the burden of his specific assignments of the strenuous studies during his particular educational course, it should be issued subject to conditions in regard to the nature of the work in which the young person may be employed.

A physician may be required to testify in proceedings involving disputes between an employer and the employee (i.e. the physician's patient) based on the physical fitness certificate provided. Physicians can be subpoenaed to participate in legal proceedings under oath, providing their clinical notes on a patient, in such proceedings where they may be examined and cross-examined by legal counsel.

The RMPs can be summoned before any judicial or quasi-judicial forums or the courts of trial to depose before it about the findings mentioned and opinion expressed by him in such a certificate. He may be subjected to cross examination by the lawyer of the opposite party. Thus, carelessness in completion of these forms can have serious medico-legal implications for a physician.

Issuing or signing any certificate relating to any fact knowing or believing that such certificate is false in any material point, shall be punished in the same manner as if, he gave false evidence- vide sec. 197 IPC.

Any registered medical practitioner who is shown to have signed or given under his name and authority any such certificate, notification, report or document of a similar

character which is untrue, misleading or improper, is liable to have his name deleted from the Register.

It should be noted that the acts of misinformation, or erroneous or unfounded opinions, could open the writer of the note to claims for damages by the employer or insurer.