

Medical Standards FAQs

For information regarding the changes to the standard, please reference the briefing note and supporting documentation.

Q. What level of engagement has occurred with the trade unions regarding the changes to the new standard?

A. To update this standard and bring it in line with industry best practice, OH Assist, Network Rail's Occupational Health Provider together with the Trade Union Lead Health and Safety Representatives provided evidence-based recommendations for changes and improvements. These recommendations and improvements were endorsed at the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group inclusive of Lead Health and Safety Representatives on 16th June 2016, and the trade unions were written to in October 2016 to advise them of the updates to the standard.

Q. How can I check Sentinel to determine what medical level is assigned to a competence?

A. Contact your Sentinel administrator, who will be able to run a report on the Reports tab called "Competence Definitions". This will produce a report of competences on Sentinel and their Required Medical Level. Please note that not all competences have medical levels associated with them.

Q. Will the revised expiry dates timescales automatically be applied to all existing medical certificates on Sentinel? For example, if someone over 60 has a medical expiring in two years' time, will it be automatically extended to 5 years?

A. The revised expiry dates will only apply to individuals once they are seen for their next medical assessment. Applying and managing retrospective expiry dates will be a very tricky task to complete. See Section 8 of the standard for further information on expiry dates for medical certificates.

Q. Who can carry out the medical assessments?

A. Medical examiners working for an approved occupational health provider are able to carry out competence specific medicals. These health professionals, being an occupational health technician, nurse, advisor, or occupational physician, can carry these out on behalf of the Responsible Occupational Physician, in accordance with Section 13 of the standard.

Q. What should an individual do if there is a change to their health before their next competence specific medical?

A. Individuals have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, to report any health concerns about their fitness for work or changes in health to their employer. A separate medical assessment may be required as a result of them reporting this. In addition, if at any time there is any reason to doubt an individual's fitness for work, the employer sponsor shall refer them to an occupational physician for assessment prior to resuming or continuing to work.

Q. When will Sentinel be updated to reflect the changes to the standard's expiry dates?

A. This will align with the standard's compliance date of 4th March 2017.



Q. How should individuals who may be affected by significant traumatic events be managed?

A. Requirements and guidance on managing individuals can be found in *Traumatic Incident Management* NR/L2/OHS/052.

Q. Occupational health have recommended that I complete a health risk assessment for an individual, how do I complete this?

A. Network Rail line managers are able to find the template and guidance document [here](#). Other sponsors should have their own documentation and make it available to their line managers for undertaking the risk assessments.

Q. How long are sponsors required to maintain records of all medical certificates?

A. The sponsor shall make arrangements to maintain records of all medical certificates for a period of not less than ten years from the testing date or for the period of the individuals' employment. Network Rail's Corporate Retention Schedule, NR/L3/INF/02226, will be updated to reflect this.

Q. If I have a restriction on my current Sentinel card and think that this can be removed due to the change in general health requirements in the standard, what can I do to arrange for the restriction to be reviewed and/or removed?

A. Individuals should get in touch with their occupational health provider, through their sponsor, if they think that their restriction can be lifted. It is more than likely that the occupational health provider will request that they be seen for another competence specific medical, especially if there has been a period of time from their last medical. In some cases, the occupational health provider will need to request further medical evidence from an individual's GP or health specialist, once they have been seen.