

JOINT RCAF SURGEON AND RCN SURGEON COMMUNIQUE (DRAFT)

COVID-19 OMICRON IMPACT MITIGATION: 60 DAY EXTENSION TO AIRCREW, DIVER AND SUBMARINER PERIODIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT VALIDITY

1. The exponential rise in COVID-19 cases as a result of the omicron variant poses a significant challenge for already strained healthcare systems, including CFHS. The RCAF and RCN Surgeons are synchronizing efforts to limit the strain on our health care system at a critical time of decreased staff availability and increased demands.
2. In keeping with the CAF approach in early 2020, all aircrew, divers and submariners with a medical category expiring from 1 January to 30 April 2022 are authorized a 60 day blanket extension by the Aerospace Medical Authority/AMA (RCAF Surgeon) and the RCN Surgeon respectively. The Air Division Surgeon and Consultant in Diving and Submarine Medicine (CDSM) may also authorize up to an additional 30 day extension within their respective domains if required by a specific Wing / Base provided there is sufficient justification and oversight.
3. The DND/CAF Airworthiness Program (AWP) Airworthiness Authority/AA (Comd RCAF) has approved this extension for aircrew validity periods and has directed a CANAIRGEN to follow.
4. Of note, the July 2021 CDS Planning Directive for CAF Reconstitution included general changes extending medical category validity, however, this exempted operational aircrew, divers and submariners (i.e., those with a requirement to maintain operational currency) from these extensions.
5. FSG-100-4: Temporary Changes to Trained Aircrew PHA during COVID-19 Crisis is still in effect, and will be reviewed in April 2022.
6. All aircrew and divers/submariners, shall continue to comply with all other regulations related to medical fitness. Aircrew and divers/submariners are reminded that they shall consult with a Basic Aviation Medicine Provider, a Flight Surgeon, or a Dive/Submarine Medicine provider, as applicable, should they believe that they have a medical condition that could prevent them from safely performing their duties.
7. The Division Surgeon website (aerospacemedicine.ca) will be updated with this information as soon as possible for the benefit of clinicians and these extensions will be subsequently promulgated through appropriate means by the RCAF and RCN.
8. These extensions are applicable to all CAF aircrew, divers, and submariners who receive their Periodic Health Assessments (PHA's) from CFHS and does not impact foreign regulations regarding periodicity.
9. Any further questions can be directed to LCol Aaron Minkley, (204-230-7814), 1 Canadian Air Division Surgeon for Aircrew and Maj Dan Landry, (250-713-4408), Consultant in Diving and Submarine Medicine (Pacific) for submariners and divers.