

# RCN SURGEON COMMUNICATION 01-25

## **UNDERSEA (U) FACTOR ADDITION TO THE CAF MEDICAL CATEGORY**

### References:

- A. Canadian Armed Forces Medical Standards (CFP 154) A-MD-154-000/FP-000
- B. CF H Svcs Instr 4000-04 Diver Periodic Health Assessment and Medical Administration
- C. UMG 100-01 Diver Periodic Health Assessments
- D. CF H Svcs Instr 4030-71 Periodic Health Assessment - Submariners
- E. CF H Svcs Instr 5020-81 Compliance with Undersea Medicine Guidelines

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND .....	1
U FACTOR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	2
UPDATE TO MINIMUM MEDICAL STANDARDS .....	3
RESOURCES .....	3

### BACKGROUND

1. The CAF medical category system is a numeric profile that represents the medical / operational fitness of individuals and is assigned to each CAF member. It currently consists of the Visual Acuity (V), Colour Vision (CV), Hearing (H), Geographical (G), Occupational (O) and Air (A) Factors (ref A).
2. An Undersea (U) factor will be added to the medical category to communicate the employability of undersea operators (divers, submariners, and diving medical support trades) in the same manner as the Air Factor for aircrew.
3. As undersea fitness will now be captured under the U Factor, the addition of a U factor will allow for intentional, timely, and efficient management of undersea operators by both Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS) and Chain of Command (CoC) through:
  - a. a readily available manner to track all CAF undersea operators for both CoC and CFHS;
  - b. improved communication of medical fitness for training and employment in an undersea environment; and
  - c. alignment with bone fide medical fitness standards and support of force generation through the update to the minimum medical standards for Submariners and consideration for G3 and/or O3 initial applicants for Diver Trades (excluding SAR) IAW updated minimum medical standards below.

4. There is no change to the actual medical fitness standards for employment in an undersea or hyperbaric environment. *This is simply a change in the way the medical category is communicated.*

## U FACTOR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5. U factor assignment is as follows:

<b>Undersea Factor</b>	<b>Is Assigned to a Member...</b>
<b>U1</b>	who is a Deep Water Diver including <b>Clearance Diver</b> (00342), <b>Clearance Diving Officer</b> (00207), or <b>Port Inspection Diver</b> (00226), medically fit for unrestricted duties
<b>U2</b>	who is a <b>Submariner</b> (various MOSIDs), medically fit for unrestricted duties
<b>U3</b>	who is an undersea operator with an undersea environment restriction
<b>U4</b>	who is a Shallow Water Diver including <b>Ship Diver</b> (various MOSIDs), <b>Search and Rescue Technician</b> (00101), <b>Combat Diver</b> (00339), or <b>Special Operations Forces Diver</b> (various MOSIDs), or other MOSIDs requiring shallow water diver qualification, medically fit for unrestricted duties
<b>U5</b>	who is a CAF member not medically assessed for CAF training or employment in an undersea environment
<b>U6</b>	who is a diving support trade including <b>Diving Medical Officer</b> (00393), <b>Diving Medical Specialist</b> (00390), <b>Diving Physician Assistant</b> (00374), <b>Diving Nurse Practitioner</b> (00195), <b>Diving Medical Technician</b> (00334), <b>Diving BioScience Officer</b> (00197) or other MOSIDS who require qualification as inside attendant, medically fit for unrestricted duties.
<b>U7</b>	who is an undersea operator, medically unfit for employment in an undersea environment.

6. Transitional plan:

- a. these changes are anticipated to come into effect by the end of June 2025. On the initial implementation date, all CAF members (including divers, submariners, and diving medical support trades) will automatically be assigned a U5;
- b. divers, submariners, and diving medical support trades will be assigned their appropriate U factor at their next routinely scheduled periodic health assessment (PHA); and
- c. approval authorities for the assignment of the U factor are outlined in UMG 100-01.

7. It is anticipated that the majority of undersea operators' medical categories will be updated with the U Factor within 12 – 24 months. An early PHA outside of routine procedure (ref B-D) for the sole purpose of assigning a U Factor is not required.

8. To avoid delays, high priority policy and direction will be updated to reflect the addition of the U Factor. Remainder will be updated in due course.

- a. The DND 2939 (Pre-Screening Form CAF Diver) and Annex A to CF H Svcs Gp Instr 4030-71 (Medical Screening Form for Service in Submarines) have been updated to incorporate the U factor and trade requirements and should be used. Any 2024 version initiated prior to 20 June 2025 will be accepted as per routine 12-month validity. Forms initiated during the transition period should utilize the updated versions, but will accept the 2024 version up to 31 December 2025.

## **UPDATE TO MINIMUM MEDICAL STANDARDS**

9. The minimum medical standards for Submariners will be updated to G3\*O3\* (not associated with a MOSID):

- a. not all G3 and/or O3 initial applicants will meet the requirements for CAF submarine duty. A G3 and/or O3 initial applicant may be considered on a case-by-case basis if the assigned MELs are not contrary to CAF submarine duty. Final determination will be made by a Consultant in Diving and Submarine Medicine and CANSUBFOR; and
- b. submariners will still be required to meet their individual MOSID requirements or complete the AR/MEL process as per ref E.

10. There will be no update to the minimum medical standard for diver trades, however G3 and/or O3 initial applicants can be considered for initial applicants for Diver trades (**excluding SAR**):

- a. some G3 and/or O3 initial applicants may meet the requirements for CAF diving duty. A G3 and/or O3 initial applicant may be considered on a case-by-case basis if the assigned MELs are not contrary to CAF diving duty; and
- b. final determination will be made by a Consultant in Diving and Submarine Medicine in conjunction with D Dive S.

## **RESOURCES**

11. Additional resources have been created and will be available to support CoC and Health Services once released:

- a. CANFORGEN (number TBC) CAF Medical Category - Addition of Undersea Factor;
- b. educational PowerPoint for CAF Members including example scenarios (will be available on the [CMP-DGHS-Undersea Medicine Microsoft Team](#));
- c. educational PowerPoint for H Svcs Undersea Medicine Clinicians (will be available on the [CMP-DGHS-Undersea Medicine Microsoft Team](#)); and

d. DGM 2025-08-A Undersea (U) Factor Addition to the CAF Medical Category.

12. Any questions or clarification on this policy can be discussed with regional Consultants in Diving and Submarine Medicine (Pacific)/(Central)/(Atlantic).