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MANUAL ON THE PROCEDURE OF THE MEDICAL BOARD



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL PERMANENT SECRETARY
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

MANUAL ON THE
PROCEDURE OF THE MEDICAL BOARD

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THE MEDICAL BOARD

Aim

These guidelines are designed to assist Directors and Heads of Department in the procedure to be followed when referring public officers for Medical Board reviews.

1. THE MEDICAL BOARD

1.1 Aim and Function of the Medical Board

The People & Standards Division (P&SD) values people and constantly seeks to provide support to employees with a view to safeguard employee wellbeing and ensure employee satisfaction and motivation. To this effect, the P&SD continues to reach out to employees through the service offered by the Medical Board.

The Medical Board, which falls under the remit of the P&SD, aims to encourage public employees to remain in employment. Its primary role is to provide professional guidance and support to employees in terms of occupational health.

The Medical Board is composed of a multidisciplinary team of professionals which provide recommendations on issues related to the impact of the employee's health issues on performance at work. Following a professional review of the case, the Medical Board will then make any necessary recommendations with a view to support the employee whilst at the same time assist management as necessary.

1.2 Board Members

The Board is appointed by the Permanent Secretary (People & Standards) and is composed of a multidisciplinary team to ensure a holistic approach in its recommendations, including an Employee Support Programme (ESP) representative as Chairperson, a Psychiatrist, a General Practitioner, an Occupational Therapist and a Coordinator to the Board. Other professionals may be appointed according to the exigencies which may arise.

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REFERRALS TO THE MEDICAL BOARD

2. REFERRALS TO THE MEDICAL BOARD

2.1 Referral by Heads of Department/Directors

Heads of Department/Directors, through their Director responsible for People Management, may request a review by the medical board in the following cases:

- An officer's behaviour needs attention and is considered to be related to medical issues
- There is doubt about a medical report submitted by an employee
- The officer concerned is about to start their unpaid sick leave entitlement
- The officer has disclosed a health condition and professional advice is required

Public employees may be referred by their respective entity, and certain provisions apply.

2.2 Referral by People Support and Wellbeing (PSW) Directorate

In cases of repeated requests for Donation of Vacation Leave, the People Support and Wellbeing (PSW) Directorate, in collaboration with the People Relations Directorate which administers such donations, within the P&SD, may inform the respective Department to consider a referral to the medical board to evaluate such requests.

2.3 Referral Procedure

Referrals for medical board reviews are to be submitted through this [link](#). All applications shall be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Employees who, for health reasons, are finding it difficult to cope with their current duties are requested to make a formal request to their Director, together with documentation to support their claim.

In line with the retention policy for Human Resource documents as required by the Data Protection Act, the medical board file is to be retained for ten (10) years from date of termination of employment.

Directors responsible for People Management are to inform PSW of any officers who have been referred to the medical board but have since terminated their employment.

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MEDICAL BOARD REVIEWS

3. MEDICAL BOARD REVIEWS

3.1 Medical Board Appointments

The Medical Board will issue an acknowledgement of receipt of referral to the referred officer upon receiving a complete application from the department. An appointment for the first review will be provided within five (5) working days. Medical Board reviews are held at the People & Standards Division, 3, Castille Place, Valletta. Referred officers are expected to attend the review and may choose to be accompanied by an adult relative such as spouse, partner or family member. In cases of employees with a disability or decreased mobility, they may wish to enter from the side entrance of the People & Standards Division from St. Ursula Street.

On the day of the review, officers are requested to arrive ten (10) minutes before their scheduled appointment. During their first review, officers will be asked to read and sign the information and consent form of the Medical Board.

The review is not a medical assessment and officers will not undergo a medical examination. For each Medical Board appointment, officers will be asked to explain their current work situation and medical condition, backed with recent medical certificates and/or reports from their medical doctor or specialist. Public officers do not need to avail themselves of vacation leave or take time off in lieu to attend for a Medical Board review during their working hours, and, upon request, they will be issued a confirmation of their attendance.

3.2 Recommendations by the Medical Board

Following each appointment, the Medical Board will send a written report within five (5) working days to both the Head of Department/Director and the officer with the necessary recommendations, including any support required at work and other professional help until further reviews, if any, are made. The recommendations are to be administratively implemented by the respective department, in accordance with PSMC provisions and depending on the nature of the officer's assigned duties.

In certain situations the written report will be issued within ten (10) working days due to any additional clarifications required on the case. Employees may be referred to the Employee Support Programme (ESP) for the necessary support.

Officers who are recommended to remain on sick leave by the Medical Board are not to be allowed to resume duty before they are reviewed by the Board and confirmed fit for duty.

In cases where the Medical Board recommends that the officer remains on sick leave resulting in the officer utilising their full pay and half-pay sick leave entitlement, the Board will recommend the respective department to consider applying for Donation of Vacation Leave until the case is processed.

3.3 Follow-up Appointments

An officer who is reviewed by the Medical Board may be given follow-up appointments. Timeframes between follow-ups vary depending on the individual's situation. Before a follow-up review, all relevant feedback is requested from all stakeholders involved and presented to the Board for the officer's review. The officer is then given a follow-up appointment to review their progress.

3.4 Failure to attend scheduled appointments

If for a justified reason, and on good cause being shown, the officer is unable to attend for the scheduled appointment, they are requested to inform the Medical Board prior to their appointment so they will be issued with another appointment. Documentation justifying the absence is to be sent to the Medical Board within one (1) week from the date of communication.

Officers who fail to show up for three (3) consecutive appointments without a valid justification and supporting evidence or who refuse to attend Medical Board appointments, will have their case referred back to their department for any necessary action from their end. Disciplinary action may be taken against officers who do not turn up for their appointments without providing documentary evidence justifying their absence.

In cases where employees are unable to attend for their Medical Board reviews due to being hospitalised, proof of such hospitalisation is to be provided. In highly justified cases, the Medical Board may reach a decision based on the medical information presented in the absence of the officer.

3.5 Independent Inquiry

In cases where the Medical Board is not in agreement with the medical certificate presented by the employee, the officer will be referred for an independent review for a final decision to be made. The professionals of the independent inquiry are autonomous from the People and Standards Division Medical Board to ensure good practice.

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MEDICALLY BOARDED OUT

4. MEDICALLY BOARDED OUT

After a thorough evaluation, the Medical Board may recommend that an officer is medically boarded out if there is sufficient medical evidence demonstrating that the officer is unfit to carry out their duties. Public officers are not to submit requests with the Department of Social Security for invalidity pension prior to being reviewed by the Medical Board within the People & Standards Division. Officers may wish to refer to Section 3.4 of the [Manual on Social Security Contributions, Benefits and Pensions](#) for more information.

In such cases, the Board will forward the recommendation to the respective department, the officer concerned and the Department of Social Security. Retirement shall be with effect from the date of the last Medical Board review.

Upon receiving the recommendation stating that the officer should be medically boarded out, the respective Director responsible for People Management shall proceed with the termination of employment following which the officer can proceed with applying for any benefits they may be eligible for through the Department of Social Security. The Medical Board recommendations need to be sent, with all relevant termination documents, to the relevant authorities.

Officers who are found unfit for duty by the Medical Board, shall be asked to apply for permission to retire and are considered to have retired from the Service with effect from the date they are certified by the Medical Board to be unfit for further service. In cases where officers decline to apply for permission, PSW shall proceed to have the officers concerned retire from the Public Service on grounds of public interest in accordance with Regulation 32A of the Public Service Commission Appointments Regulations.

4.1 Right of Appeal

The report of the Medical Board prevails over that of the officer's medical practitioner. However, if an officer does not agree with the Medical Board's ruling, they need to submit their appeal in writing to the Director, People Support and Wellbeing by sending an e-mail to psw.opm@gov.mt or by post to People Support and Wellbeing Directorate, 3, Castille Place, Valletta, attaching medical evidence, within ten (10) working days from receipt of notification that s/he is Medically Boarded Out. A separate medical review will then be initiated, which decision will be final.

For more information regarding the Medical Board, please phone 2200 1236 or email medicalboard.opm@gov.mt.



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