
MEDICAL QUALIFICATION DETERMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO COVERED POSITIONS WITHIN MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS

1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes the employment medical examination requirements as listed in the Medical Examination Requirements Charts for appointment to covered positions within Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP): Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS); Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) inclusively.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces AMS Directive 335.1, dated March 15, 1985.

3. AUTHORITIES

This Directive is based on:

- a. 5 U.S. Code 3301, 3302, 7203.
- b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 339.

4. POLICY

It is MRP policy that:

- a. Employees be fully qualified to safely and efficiently perform the essential duties and responsibilities of their positions without undue risk to themselves or others. They need only possess the minimum physical abilities necessary to perform their jobs competently. Certain occupations may extend beyond sedentary but do not have assigned medical standards and physical requirements for appointment.
- b. Equal opportunity and full consideration to the hiring and placement of qualified physically/mentally challenged individuals must be exercised. No otherwise qualified physically/mentally challenged person will be subjected to discrimination based upon his/her disability.

- c. Reasonable accommodation must be made to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified physically and/or mentally challenged applicant or employee unless the agency can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program.
- d. The agency will pay for all ordered or offered medical examinations, procedures, and laboratory tests related to meeting medical standards requirements for employment. If an applicant or employee pays for a medical examination, procedure, and/or laboratory test that is ordered or offered by the employing Program, the applicant or employee will be reimbursed the amount paid.

5. **COVERAGE**

- a. Occupations in MRP which are essentially sedentary or only moderately active in nature **do not** have established medical standards beyond a general requirement that employees be capable of carrying out the essential duties of their positions without harm to themselves or others.
- b. The medical qualifications requirement for appointment **does apply** to all covered positions as listed in the MRP Medical Examination Requirements Charts (Attachments 1 through 3), regardless of the nature of the appointment (e.g., permanent, temporary) or the tour of duty (e.g., full-time, part-time, intermittent, mixed tour).

6. **DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL STANDARDS AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- a. Certain occupations extend beyond sedentary and may require specific medical standards and/or physical requirements. Programs have established medical standards and physical requirements for covered positions in MRP in order to ensure the safety of employees who labor in jobs with strenuous duties and/or severe conditions.
- b. Medical standards assign the minimum level of health status or fitness, which has been determined by the Program, in consultation with Human Resources and approved by the Agriculture Medical Officer, to be necessary for safe and efficient performance (e.g., minimum vision or hearing standards). These standards are justified on the basis that the duties are arduous or hazardous and require a certain level of health status or fitness because the nature of the positions involves a high degree of responsibility toward the public.
- c. Physical requirements differ from medical standards in that they describe the physical abilities that an employee must possess to perform successfully in the job. The physical requirements may be described in terms of the specific physical

abilities necessary to perform the tasks required in the job, e.g., “ability to lift 50 pounds.” These requirements must be clearly supported by the actual duties of the position and documented in the position description.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Program managers and supervisors will:
- (1) Establish medical standards and physical requirements for applicable positions;
 - (2) Ensure that the need for establishing medical standards and physical requirements is clearly supported by the nature of the job and its environment;
 - (3) Obtain prior approval from MRP Human Resources Division (MRPHRD) before initiating a requirement for a physical examination for an entire series or group of new positions or existing positions now covered by self certification;
 - (4) Identify the specific positions covered;
 - (5) Indicate the functional requirements and environmental factors on the Certificate of Medical Examination (SF-78) and the Self Certification Medical Statement (MRP-5). Forms can be accessed through the [APHIS Electronic Forms Library](#).
 - (6) Require the applicant to take a physical examination or medical procedure, at Government expense:
 - (a) If the applicant is applying for an MRP covered position where an SF-78 or specific medical procedure is required, or
 - (b) If the applicant is applying for a position designated in the [MRP Drug Free Work Place Program Handbook](#) as one necessitating drug testing. The applicant must submit to drug and/or alcohol testing prior to being offered a position with the agency.
 - (7) Notify field installations and administrative offices of the current medical procedures;

- (8) Notify field installations, administrative offices, and the appropriate servicing personnel specialist of any changes in medical examination requirements;
- (9) Make any report of medical examination, which is not sent to the applicant or employee, available to the employee upon request under the provisions of 5 CFR Part 297; and
- (10) Ensure personal protective equipment/clothing is provided, when needed.

b. Program managers and supervisors may:

- (1) Change the specified functional requirements and environmental factors as indicated on the SF-78 and MRP-5 without prior approval from Human Resources Service Enhancement (HRSE);
- (2) Eliminate the requirement for an SF-78 procedure for a particular series upon notifying the servicing personnel office (prior approval from HRSE is not required); and
- (3) Waive medical standards or physical requirements when there is sufficient evidence (doctor's certification or independent verification) that an applicant or employee, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential duties of the position without endangering the health and safety of the individual or others.

c. Applicants and employees will:

- (1) Comply with the instructions and medical examination requirements within the allotted timeframe;
- (2) Provide medical information, as necessary, relevant to their ability to perform the duties of the position safely and efficiently;
- (3) Demonstrate the ability to meet the medical and physical requirements of the position for which applying; and
- (4) Use any protective equipment, clothing, and devices provided or notify the supervisor when not available.

d. Field offices will:

- (1) Distribute appropriate medical examination requirement forms to applicants and employees for covered positions;

- (2) Instruct and ensure that covered applicants and employees complete the medical examination requirements within the allotted time;
- (3) Forward medical examination result forms to MRP Business Services, Human Resources Operations, Minneapolis, MN, for filing in employee medical files.

e. Servicing personnel offices will:

- (1) Complete the SF-78, Part E and/or the MRP-5, Section F (as appropriate);
- (2) File the completed medical examination requirement forms in the employee's medical file; and
- (3) In accordance with provisions of the Privacy Act, confer with and forward to the USDA Medical Officer or APHIS Medical Officer, as appropriate, the medical documentation and report of examination for individuals who receive questionable medical report results.
- (4) Notify the applicant, in writing, that the job offer is being withdrawn when questionable medical results are received prior to appointment, and, after reviewing the results, the USDA Medical Officer or APHIS Medical Officer, as appropriate, agrees with the findings that the applicant cannot meet the physical requirements of the job. The Servicing Personnel Office will advise the selecting official about filing an objection when it is necessary to eliminate the applicant from the certificate in order to make an alternative selection.
- (5) Contact the servicing employee relations specialist for further assistance if questionable medical results are received on a newly appointed employee, and, if after reviewing the results, the USDA Medical Officer or APHIS Medical Officer, as appropriate, agrees with the findings that the employee cannot meet the physical requirements of the job. Upon the request of the employee, the agency should make attempts to provide reasonable accommodations.

NOTE: The USDA Medical Officer or APHIS Medical Officer, as appropriate, will review the medical reports and test results which have been referred due to questionable or unfavorable results; immediately notify the employee, through the supervisor, if any abnormalities are uncovered during the review of the medical examination or test report; and recommend appropriate retesting and followup.

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- f. MRPHRD,HRSE, will:
- (1) Develop policy relevant to the medical qualification requirements;
 - (2) Provide management advisory services;
 - (3) Provide guidance to the servicing personnel office on statutory and regulatory requirements; and
 - (4) Evaluate and approve/disapprove MRP agencies' requests for initiating a physical examination requirement.

8. DISPOSITION OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION DOCUMENTATION

- a. Employee medical files will be maintained by:
USDA, MRP Business Services, HRD
Human Resources Operations
Minneapolis Business Site
250 Marquette Ave STE 410
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2329
- b. Employee medical records and reports obtained for medical qualification determinations will be maintained in accordance with Title 5 CFR, Part 293, Subpart E. In accordance with the Privacy Act, medical information received for this purpose must be made available to the applicant or employee under the provisions of Title 5 CFR, Part 297.

9. INQUIRIES

- a. Contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist for operational aspects of medical qualification requirements.
- b. Contact HRSE for policy-related issues regarding medical qualification requirements.
- c. This Directive is available on the [APHIS](#) and [AMS](#) Issuances homepage.

/s/

William J. Hudnall
Deputy Administrator
MRP Business Services

Attachment 1 - AMS Chart
Attachment 2 - APHIS Chart
Attachment 3 - GIPSA Chart

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS) MEDICAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Program	Series	Position Title	Vision & Color Acuity ²		Baseline Audiogram ²		Tine Test Chest x-ray (Tuberculosis) ^{2,3}		Self-Certification Medical Statement (SCMS) ⁴ Attachment #1 Examination (MRP-5) ^{2,4}		Certificate of Medical Examination (SF-78) Physical Examination ²					
			Yes ²		No ¹	Yes ²		No ¹	Yes ²		No ¹	Pre appointment	Post appointment	Pre appointment	Post appointment	
			P	P		P	P		P	P						
Poultry (PY)	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader (ACG)			X			X			X	X				
	GS-1981,	Agricultural Commodity Aid			X			X			X	X				
Tobacco (TB)	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader (ACG)	X					X			X	X				
Livestock & Seed (L&S)	GS-0099,	Student Trainee (Meat Grading)	X			X			X						X	
	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader (Meat)	X			X			X						X	
	GS-1981,	Meat Acceptance Specialist	X			X			X						X	
Cotton (CN)	GS-1980,	Classers	X			X			X						X	
Dairy (DA)	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader										X				

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			Yes ²		No ¹	Yes ²		No ¹	Yes ²		No ¹	Pre appointment	Post appointment	Pre appointment	Post appointment	
			P	P		P	P		P	P						
			re	ost		re	ost		re	ost						
Fruit & Vegetable (F&V)	GS-1146,	Agricultural Marketing Specialist (Fresh) -Fresh Products Branch (FPB)									X					
	GS-1146,	Agricultural Marketing Specialist (Processed), Eastern and Western Regions, Processed Products Branch		X			X			X		X				X (within 90- calendar days after entrance on duty)
	GS-1147,	Fruit and Vegetable Market Reporter		X			X			X		X				X (within 90- calendar days after entrance on duty)
	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader (Fresh)		X			X			X		X				X (within 30- calendar days after entrance on duty)
	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader (Processed) ⁶	X	X				X			X	X ⁵	X ⁵			X (within 90- calendar days after entrance on duty)
	GS-1981,	Agricultural Commodity Aid (Fresh)		X			X			X		X				X (within 30- calendar days after entrance on duty)
	GS-1981,	Agricultural Commodity Aid (Processed)			X			X			X	X ⁵	X ⁵			

*Medical Surveillance Program for covered positions in Science and Technology Programs

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS) MEDICAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Program	Series	Position Title	Vision & Color Acuity ²		Baseline Audiogram ²		Electro-cardiogram ²		Tine Test Chest x-ray (Tuberculosis) ^{2,3}		Blood/Urine Monitoring ²		Respiratory Function Test #1 ²		Self-Certification Medical Examination (MRP-5) ⁴
			P r e	Annual	P r e	Annual	P r e	Annual	P r e	Post	P r e	Semi Annual	P r e	Annual	P r e
Science and Technology (S&T) *	GS-303,	Laboratory Aid		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	GS-403,	Microbiologist		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	GS-404,	Biological Science Laboratory Techncn		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	GS-1301,	Physical Scientist/ Aflatoxin Specialist		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	GS-1311,	Physical Science Technician/Aid		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	GS-1320,	Chemist		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	GS-1980,	Agricultural Commodity Grader		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	WG-3511,	Laboratory Worker		X		X		X		X		X		X	X
	WG-3515,	Laboratory Support Worker		X		X		X		X		X		X	X

*In S&T, the comprehensive Medical Surveillance Program services include vision and color acuity tests, audiological tests, electrocardiogram, chest x-ray, tuberculosis test, respiratory function test, and blood and urine analyses every six months. If a pre-appointment vision & color acuity, blood/urine evaluation and medical examination cannot be accomplished prior to appointment, a post appointment vision & color acuity, blood/urine assessment and medical examination should be completed within 90-calendar days after entrance on duty. Blood/urine monitoring will be required thereafter on a **semiannual** basis. Medical examinations will be required on an **annual** basis.

- 1 An applicant can be required to take a physical examination at Government expense if the applicant's responses on the MRP-5 reveal the existence of a medical condition which impedes a physical or mental ability to efficiently perform the essential functions of the position without hazard to themselves or others. Based upon a response on the MRP-5 and at the discretion of the appointing officer, further medical evaluation, at government expense, may be required.
- 2 At Government Expense
- 3 Tine Test Chest x-rays are conducted at a frequency deemed acceptable by an individual's physician.
- 4 Derivation of the former SF-177, Statement of Physical Ability for Light Duty Work and AMS-5. The SF-177 and the AMS-5 have been eliminated.
- 5 Timing dependent upon appointment
- 6 SF-78 form is only required in Processed Products Branch (PPB) for GS-5/7 Graders. Physical examinations are waived in PPB for Temporary, GS-1980-5/7 Raisin Graders.

**ANIMAL & PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)
MEDICAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS CHART**

The following positions require specific medical certification:

Series	Position	Medical Certificate (FAA-8500-9) [Current first or second class]	Certificate of Medical Examination (SF-78) Physical Examination ²
		Pre-appointment	Post appointment
GS-2181	Pilot ¹	X	
WS-5001, WG-5001	Tree Climber		X (within 10 working days of the EOD)

If the applicant is applying for a position designated in the [MRP Drug Free Work Place Program Handbook](#) as one necessitating drug testing, the applicant must submit to drug and/or alcohol testing prior to being offered a position with the Agency.

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- ¹ (A) Minimum eligibility requirements for pilot positions are based on possession of the appropriate Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot certificates and/or military ratings.
 (B) **Prior to initial appointment**, applicants for pilot positions in APHIS must possess a current first or second-class medical certificate (FAA Form 8500-9) in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations. (Both meet the intent of the requirement.)
 (C) If a decision is made not to accept the second-class medical certificate, the rationale for the decision should be based upon the requirements of the position, and should be thoroughly described in the operating materials.
 (D) Meet the medical requirements prescribed for the possession of the necessary pilot's license.

² At Government Expense.

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GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION (GIPSA)
MEDICAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS CHART

(Reserved)