

New Zealand Police Medical Standards overview

Being a Police Officer is physically demanding. You've got to be physically fit and be in excellent health. The expectation is you have already established good health and fitness routines prior to your application.

A candidate's suitability to undergo New Zealand Police recruit training will be solely determined by New Zealand Police by utilising the medical standards to assist with an individual health risk assessment process.

Medical clearance

All applicants are assessed against medical standards that have been structured in line with the inherent requirements of operational policing in New Zealand. The New Zealand Police Medical Services team consider several specific issues in their assessment:

1. Whether the health condition affects capacity to perform any of the inherent tasks of the job of Police Officer.
2. Whether the condition predisposes to sudden incapacity that impacts upon the safety of self, co-workers, or public.
3. Whether the nature of the role or the work environment is likely to adversely affect or worsen the health condition.

The medical assessment(s) ensure that an applicant is not only able to safely undertake the physical, medical, and psychological demands of New Zealand Police recruit training but are also considered able to undertake the role of an operational police officer.

Each applicant is considered on a case-to-case basis taking into consideration the unique circumstances of an individual's health history.

Process

The Medical Services Team is made up of registered health professionals who will assess your medical suitability in a two-stage process.

An **initial medical review** involves a self-completed online health questionnaire. Additional assessments may be requested as determined by the Medical Services Team (Costs covered by applicant).

- New Zealand Police Asthma form
- New Zealand Police Vision form
- Medical report(s) from GP, Physio or other health provider such as specialist in relevant field of medicine
- Laboratory report(s) & Imaging report(s) such as X-ray, U/S, CT scan, MRI

A **Final Medical Clearance** will take place in the latter stages of the recruitment process and includes a physical examination with your medical practitioner and a visual assessment with a New Zealand Police accredited Optometrist (Cost covered by New Zealand Police).

Important info

Applicants must declare all current medical (including psychological) conditions, past medical history, use of medications and the need for medical aids at the time of the medical assessment.

Failure to disclose may result in a medical decline or stand down period.

If you're receiving medical treatment for an injury or illness or are awaiting specialist review or surgery, you are ineligible to apply until you have fully recovered, have been discharged from health care services and are back to full fitness.

Right through your recruitment process, you'll need to maintain good health so that you continue to meet our medical and health standards.

Medical Conditions

There are a wide range of potential conditions which may cause symptoms and affect capacity for Police work. Conditions considered medically incompatible for Police work can include, but are not limited to:

Vision

Satisfactory visual performance is critical to safe and effective Police work. Vision orientated Police work analysis in overseas studies has identified visual performance as being crucial in almost all critical situations within Police work. Various factors including object identification, visual pursuit, motion detection, dynamic far acuity, dark adaptation, peripheral vision, and colour vision are rated as most important.

An applicant must have visual acuity (eyesight) that will ensure they can safely and effectively perform an operational policing role. Yes, you can wear glasses or contact lenses, provided your eyesight still meets the uncorrected standard 6/24 i.e. when you're not wearing them, or if they were to be dislodged for any reason.

A visual examination with a New Zealand Police approved Optometrist is to be conducted for all applicants who have answered yes to any of the visual questions in the Health Questionnaire at the initial medical clearance stage and is required for all applicants at final medical clearance.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Colour vision deficiencies affecting functional capacity for the role
- Altered vision fields e.g. Monocularity
- Visual acuity WITH vision aides unable to reach 6/6 and vision acuity WITHOUT vision aides not able to meet 6/24 in their worst eye.
- Near vision unable to correct to N10 or better
- Any condition with a potential for progressive visual impairment

We accept visual correction surgery (refractive or laser eye surgery), e.g. LASIX, PRK, SMILE or ICLs, provided there are no residual side effects and all other vision standards have been met. Orthokeratology (Ortho-K) is not currently approved.

*If you do not meet the visual entry standards at Initial Medical review, you may consider an assessment with an Eye Surgeon to confirm that you are a good candidate for corrective eye surgery (all at your own cost). Once confirmation has been received, you will then be allowed to proceed with the rest of the recruitment process on the understanding surgery will be booked after successfully completing all recruitment steps (if successful). A final vision review will then be completed at the Final medical review stage.

Lung Health (Respiratory)

Good pulmonary function is essential for the extreme workloads of Police work. An adequate intake of oxygen and rapid exchange of O₂ and CO₂ is required to meet the potential physical demands of Police duties.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Un-controlled or unstable asthma
- Asthma requiring long term ongoing oral steroid treatment
- A history of chronic obstructive airways disease, chronic bronchitis, or, bronchiectasis
- A history of recurrent pneumothorax (collapsed lung)
- Cystic fibrosis or a history of tuberculosis (respiratory - lung diseases) without acceptable
- respiratory function

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- A history of sleep apnoea (temporary inability to breathe)

A history of asthma will not necessarily prevent you from joining. Asthma must be well controlled with minimal impact on day to day living or fully resolved (i.e. childhood occurrence only). Supporting documentation and assessment will be required at the initial medical clearance stage via the New Zealand Police Asthma form. We will request evidence of regular preventative inhaler use (if prescribed) and a normal Spirometry result (lung function test).

Hearing

Adequate hearing is a crucial requirement for Police work and has an integral role in the successful execution of many safety critical situations... sound localisation, sound detection, and sound recognition is critical to safe performance of Police work.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Significant hearing deficit in one or both ears.
 - Hearing aids can be used to meet the hearing standard. The stability of the aids in terms of fit will need to be assessed as to likely risk of dislodgment in a struggle.
- A current history of tinnitus

Heart health (Cardiovascular)

Certain aspects of Police work involve intense physical exertion. This may include the demands of running whilst under the load of equipment or the more demanding isometric loads involved in lifting and control and restraint activity during a struggle or resisted arrest. Psychological load can also contribute to the risk of an acute adverse cardiac event.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Organic disease of the heart or arteries resulting in functional impairment for inherent duties or with a heightened risk of sudden incapacity.
- Untreated or uncontrolled Hypertension (elevated blood pressure)
- Heart murmurs with significant valvular disease.
 - An abnormal ECG or any history of cardiac conditions will require referral and review by a Cardiologist

Ear, Nose, and Throat Conditions

Many tasks undertaken by Police Officers require good balance. In addition, a lack of balance may lead to serious injury during the course of duty. Situations include working at heights, working in awkward spaces and in awkward positions, stooping, looking overhead, and negotiating uneven and slippery surfaces, and stability during defensive tactics.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- An applicant who suffers unheralded attacks of vertigo
- Meniere's disease resulting in recurrent vertigo despite treatment and/or resulting in increasing hearing loss
- Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) without significant symptom-free period
 - A specialist report addressing low risk of reoccurrence will also be required.

Bones, Joints & Muscles (Musculoskeletal)

Applicants must have a full or near full range of movement, normal tone, normal coordination and normal power to be able to be cleared.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Recent corrective surgery without suitable period to establish joint stability and to regain functional range of movement and strength
- A history of chronic/ongoing neck or back pain
- Amputation of limb
- Condition that is incompatible with the New Zealand Police PAT (Physical appraisal test) or PCT (Physical Competency Test)
- Inflammatory arthritis with functionally impacting joint damage and/or incompatible medication use and/or immunosuppressant risk
- Poor muscular development, abnormal gait (walking style), or limitation of movement in any joint

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- A history of recent musculoskeletal injuries or conditions

Mental health / psychological wellbeing

Police Officers must make critical decisions that can affect others under emergency conditions, often when they are tired or under pressure. The cognitive and decision making demands are high... an applicant must be able to cope with the psychological stressors of operational duties.

We acknowledge everyone feels worried, anxious, sad or stressed at various times in their lives; this is perfectly normal. However, sometimes these thoughts and feelings do not go away, and are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

All mental health conditions are individual and different for everyone. Mental wellbeing is not only a crucial aspect of individual health, but also fundamental for Police work. Operational policing is mentally challenging and can be stressful. A history of a mental health disorder does not automatically exclude you from employment with New Zealand Police and we will consider each applicant on an individual basis.

Initially regarding your mental health history, you will be asked to provide a report from your GP. In some cases, depending on your history, you will then be required to be assessed by a New Zealand Police approved clinical Psychologist and/or a New Zealand vocational registered psychiatrist (at your expense).

Your application is unlikely to be successful if you are currently or recently symptomatic or if your medical records show a long history of recurrent & persistent symptoms. Any recent adjustment to your medication regime is also likely to result in a decline (e.g. starting a new medication, changing dosage or if you have newly come off medication).

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- A history where symptoms of depression having persisted for 2 years or more
- A history of 2 or more episodes of correctly diagnosed depression
- A current history of psychological disorders where sustained full functional recovery and stability cannot be demonstrated
- Current use of some classes/types of psychotropic medication such as stimulants and benzodiazepines
- A history of debilitating phobia which would adversely affect your safety and ability to undertake all aspects of the role such as; claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces), narcolepsy (sleep disorder), hemophobia (fear of blood) or, nyctophobia (fear of the dark).

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- Alcoholism (fully recovered)
- Drug/substance abuse or dependence (fully recovered)
- Stable and long-term use of some Psychotropic medications

Brain & Head health (Neurological)

The ability to effectively and safely undertake the inherent requirements of Police duties relies on a number of intact neurological functions. Police officers are required to have an awareness of what is happening in their environment and understand what that information means (situational awareness). They make decisions and act under circumstances of time pressure where the consequences of the decisions can impact on personal and public safety and property.

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Current or past treatment within the last 5 years for epilepsy
- Seizure activity within the last 5 years
- Severe head injury without full resolution and long-term stability
- History of frequent or severe migraine with functional impact on capacity for Police duties

Conditions will be considered dependent on severity and individual history:

- Well controlled, infrequent Migraines and cluster headaches

General Health

Conditions considered medically incompatible for New Zealand Police:

- Bleeding disorders and clotting disorders
- Current pregnancy (Incompatible with mandatory police training)
- Malignant disease
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus requiring insulin
- Unrepaired Hernia

Weight and body mass index (BMI)

We consider weight when assessing your medical and physical fitness, but, as there is no cut-off, an elevated or low BMI may not result in a decline. Individuals who apply and have a high BMI may be asked to provide a report from their GP for a full heart health overview. We use the National Heart Foundation of New Zealand BMI calculator to work out a candidate's BMI.

Want to know more?

The full medical standards can be [accessed here](#).

If you have any questions regarding your medical suitability for New Zealand Police constabulary recruitment please contact the Safer People Medical Services Team at: recruitment.medicals@police.govt.nz.

We'll handle your query with strict confidence.