

What a DAME should know about the Air Traffic Controller medical assessment:

It is important for you to know that flight safety and a long, healthy and fulfilling career are the number one and two top priorities for a professional air traffic controller.

Air traffic controllers can work in en-route, tower or approach/terminal roles. It is very important to enquire about the detail of their role and be aware of the different stresses and other health risks that might arise.

Up to date knowledge of the current issues in aviation, for example (but not only) different employment contract agreements and fatigue limitations are likely to enhance your understanding of the air traffic controller's work environment.

You should understand the social context of the air traffic controller's job. For example, family commitments, life stresses, distance from base and frequency of base changes, career status/level of seniority. Anything that does not directly impact the air traffic controller's fitness to operate shall remain confidential between you and the air traffic controller.

Be attentive to these matters and encourage the air traffic controller to be open about them, particularly as it can easily be perceived by the air traffic controller as 'not being a relevant part of the medical'.

As a DAME and before starting the assessment:

- you should know: is the air traffic controller at ease about the medical assessment?
- you have made a positive identification of the air traffic controller from photographic ID (e.g. passport), and have seen the air traffic controller's licence and last medical certificate.
- you know whether the air traffic controller is attending by choice (for example after recommendation) or not.
- it should be clear to you what type of medical the air traffic controller needs, and what tests are required.
- you should be aware of any risk of conflict of interest (for example a friend, relative, or when you are also the treating physician).

A copy of an air traffic controller's roster can be valuable in the understanding of the day to day challenges of the air traffic controller's job.

Don't assume that the air traffic controller understands the reason behind all the questions, examination or tests being performed. Be open about giving explanations.

Does the air traffic controller have faith in your expertise, and trust in your judgment? If so, how do you know? If not, why not? And how can you help to build such faith and trust?

Who is the air traffic controller's employer and how would they respond to a request for Peer Support for the air traffic controller. Does a Peer Support Programme exist in the company or through their union?

How will the air traffic controller and their employer respond to a period of 'temporarily unfit'?



The Air Traffic Controller/DAME Relationship



What an Air Traffic Controller should know about the Designated Aviation Medical Examiner (DAME) medical assessment:

Professionalism, honesty and trust are the building blocks of a good working relationship between a designated aviation medical examiner (DAME) and an air traffic controller. This does not happen overnight. It requires work from both parties.

Your DAME shares the same aim as you: to keep you healthy and operating safely. An ongoing relationship between you, the air traffic controller and your DAME provides a firm basis for building up trust, enabling health promotion and facilitating better communication both during, and between, examinations. Most medical problems arise between medicals. The medical itself helps to identify, and thus prevent such problems.

DAMEs and air traffic controllers together should foster a culture where disclosure by the air traffic controller of potentially career threatening medical problems is likely. When it exists, the air traffic controller can expect a supportive response to their problems and then both can work together towards a shared goal of a long and safe career in aviation.

What you can expect from your DAME:

Your DAME is a doctor and should possess a higher qualification in Aerospace Medicine, be up to date with medical requirements, and have access to specialist support where this is required.

Your DAME needs to understand both your life and social circumstances and nature of your employment as an air traffic controller, so expect questions about your personal and family life, as well as your job. An understanding of your work pattern/rosters and employment contractual situation can be very important.

If you identify any areas that you would like further support with as a result of such discussion, your DAME can recommend various ways to address them outside of the medical, in order to prevent them becoming an issue that could impact your fitness to operate in the future. This might include Peer Support Programmes, specialised counselling, or support from a professional association. Anything that does not directly impact your fitness to fly will remain confidential between you and your DAME.

Your DAME:

- should give adequate time for your appointment and practice from appropriate, and properly equipped, premises.
- should treat you with respect and maintain the confidentiality of your medical information.
- will expect you to answer both written and verbal questions, honestly and fully, and not omit any information.
- should respond to any concerns or questions you may have concerning your medical history, or the various clinical tests during your medical.

ASAM acknowledges the European Society of Aerospace Medicine in allowing ASAM to base this leaflet on ESAM's 'The Pilot/AME Relationship' leaflet.



During the medical:

- you should feel free to ask about any examination or test being performed. For example 'What is the reason for this part of the examination?'
- your DAME will explain the medical certificate, and any limitations applied, and your obligation to notify any changes to your health status between medical examinations.
- your DAME may recommend further health promotion actions, such as losing weight, giving up smoking, or other lifestyle changes that promote good psychosocial wellbeing.

If your certificate is not revalidated or your DAME advises you not to exercise the privileges of your certificate, your DAME should provide a clear explanation of the reasons and explain what further actions are needed to re-gain certification. However, only 0.29% of all initial and renewal medical certificates were refused by CASA during 2016-2017 **(source: CASA Annual Report 2016-2017)**

Further information as to how CASA Aviation Medicine and DAMEs consider certain medical conditions is available at <http://services.casa.gov.au/avmed/guidelines/disclaimer.asp> and <https://www.casa.gov.au/licences-and-certification/aviation-medicine/fact-sheets-and-case-studies>

Information regarding complaints or objections to a medical decision by CASA Aviation Medicine is available at <https://www.casa.gov.au/licences-and-certification/aviation-medicine/complaints-and-objection-medical-decision>

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