

# RAAP 9 MEDICAL GUIDANCE

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Recreational Aviation Advisory Publication

## RECREATIONAL AVIATION ADVISORY PUBLICATION—RAAP 9

### MEDICAL GUIDANCE FOR RAAUS MEMBERS

#### Managing medical conditions and reporting requirements for changes to health status for RAAus pilots

This RAAP is intended to provide information about members' responsibilities as a RAAus Pilot, rating or approval holder or maintainer when assessing fitness to fly or maintaining a RAAus aircraft.

#### Pilot Certificate holders and students

RAAus pilots have unique opportunities to fly based on a self-certification of their health and fitness (if no nominated medical conditions are evident\*). The specific medical requirements for RAAus members are provided in Section 2.16 of our Flight Operations Manual which is available on our website [www.raaus.com.au](http://www.raaus.com.au)

In general terms if a RAAus member is fit to drive a private motor vehicle, they are at a fitness level suitable to fly a RAAus aircraft. However, this medical freedom includes a responsibility to self-assess and be responsible for ensuring their own fitness to fly every time they intend to fly.

#### \* What conditions require you to provide a doctors' statement to RAAus?

If you are 75 years of age or older or have been diagnosed with:

- Epilepsy
- diabetes (type I or II)
- have an ongoing heart condition
- a mental illness (medicated or otherwise)
- any medically significant safety related medical condition

you must supply RAAus with a copy of RAAus **Form MED001** which includes a signed statement from your doctor (GP) that these conditions do not affect your fitness to meet the Austroads private motor vehicle driver licence health standard.

If one of these conditions applies, annually thereafter you must supply RAAus with another **Form MED001** completed by your doctor. You are responsible for supplying RAAus with this renewal statement at the due date.

If your health subsequently changes, you must advise RAAus and are expected to ensure you are fit to fly before acting as pilot in command of a RAAus aircraft. RAAus members must be open and honest in discussions and interactions with doctors and RAAus. We trust our members to be responsible for their own fitness to fly and we will work with you as much as possible to keep you flying. RAAus requires members to fully disclose all relevant facts to their doctor to enable a complete assessment and to ensure the doctor can provide us with the correct advice.

RAAus is proud of our safety record of almost 40 years of pilots this medical standard. A review of accidents and incidents indicates there RAAus pilots do not suffer any higher rate of medically induced accident or incidents than other aviation sectors.

#### I am a RAAus student pilot – do I require a different health standard?

No, a RAAus student is required to meet the same health standard noted above for RAAus Pilots.

#### I am a RAAus student pilot but I don't hold a Driver Licence, how do I comply?

Provided you meet the health standard as referenced in the Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive document [Austroads - assessing-fitness-to-drive](#) the declaration you provided on the Junior Flying Declaration for Membership will meet this requirement.

### What health standard do I need to fly a RAAus aircraft as a RAAus pilot?

RAAus pilots must hold an equivalent health standard to that required to drive a private motor vehicle in Australia. There is a reference document on the Austroads website called Assessing Fitness to Drive [Austroads - assessing-fitness-to-drive](#) which you and your doctor can reference for this health standard.

### Instructors, CFIs, PEs and ROCs

For the purposes of this RAAPs we will be referring to all ratings and approvals as an Instructor.

### What health standard do I need to fly a RAAus aircraft as a RAAus Instructor?

For holders of RAAus Instructor ratings or higher Approvals such as Deputy Chief Flying Instructor (DCFI), Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) or Pilot Examiner (PE) RAAus requires evidence of a higher medical standard than that required for a Pilot Certificate holder or student. This higher medical standard is based on the minimum requirements for an **Austroads Commercial Driver Licence**.

As a RAAus member responsible for providing training to RAAus students and Pilot Certificate holders there are two possible methods for you to provide RAAus with confirmation you meet the required health standard.

You may meet the required health standard for an instructor by meeting the **Austroads Commercial Driver Licence** in Australia. Ask your usual treating doctor (GP) to complete the RAAus Instructor Medical **Form MED003** which will provide confirmation to RAAus that you meet the minimum health standard.

Alternatively, if you hold a **current Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) Medical Certificate Class 2** you may use this document to meet the health standard requirement and you must supply RAAus with a copy. This includes providing RAAus with any interim or updated CASA Class 2 Medical Certificate information as required. At the time of writing, the CASA Class 2 (Basic) or Recreational Aviation Medical Practitioners Certificate (RAMP-C) is not acceptable for a RAAus Rating or Approval holder.

If any of the prescribed medical conditions\* are present, your GP must confirm that these conditions will not affect your ability to meet the required medical standard. Guidance material for doctors when assessing a person's fitness to drive – for both private and commercial driver licences, is available here [Austroads - assessing-fitness-to-drive](#)

As an example, you may have to complete a medical examination for a heavy vehicle driver licence. If you provide RAAus with a copy of confirmation from your Roads and Traffic Authority for your state or a copy of your Commercial Driver Licence we will accept this for the period specified on the Licence.

We cannot accept a copy of your Driver Licence as this does not meet the requirements of Section 2.16 of the RAAus Flight Operations Manual.

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### I am a Pilot Certificate holder - What happens if I have one of those nominated medical conditions\*?

All RAAus Pilot Certificate holders are expected to meet the same health standard noted above. However if you are over 75 or have one of the nominated medical conditions there are additional requirements.

Treatment of these nominated medical conditions can vary from time to time, depending on whether the condition is stable (managed with medication or diet) or if a recent change has occurred requiring management of the condition until your doctor is satisfied.

Examples include management of diabetes, which can vary considerably depending on if it requires treatment using medication or is managed with food. Likewise pilots personal situations and circumstances may change as a result of

triggers such as changes in work or family circumstances, periods of stress or physiological or hormonal changes.

If any changes in your medical status affects your ability to drive, you must not fly a RAAus aircraft until you are fit to drive a motor vehicle. This includes situations such as recovery from a mild heart attack, surgery for a broken bone or to insert a stent, etc. If you are unsure, talk to your doctor and carefully assess if you are fit to drive and therefore fit to fly. If you are in doubt always consult a health care professional.

RAAus is aware that mental health issues can become a problem and supports and encourages members to reach out to organisations such as Beyond Blue [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) and Black Dog Institute [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) which provide support to people undergoing mental health issues. Doctors are obviously also an important source of support and treatment to assist you manage these issues.

### What is a safety relevant medical condition?

RAAus do not employ doctors and the majority of our pilots are also not medical experts, so the question of exactly what is a safety relevant medical condition is very important. In broad terms, if you are diagnosed with any medical condition that prevents you driving for a period of time, or you are taking over the counter medications, if you have any changes in prescribed medication, undergo any surgical procedures, etc. you should not fly a RAAus aircraft until cleared to return to driving by your doctor. There are also some conditions which may be affected by changes in altitude, exposure to sunlight or glare and other unique aviation factors which can affect your fitness to fly.

More specifically safety relevant medical conditions unique to flying include changes in vision, hearing, age related changes to many body systems, excessive alcohol or drug use including smoking, hypoxia, changes to your circadian rhythm (body clock) due to shift work or time zone changes, stress, sleep disorders, respiratory diseases and more.

There are excellent reference documents on the CASA and FAA website for more information.

<https://www.casa.gov.au/wellbeing>

<https://www.casa.gov.au/licences-and-certification/aviation-medicine/fact-sheets-and-case-studies>

<https://www.faa.gov/pilots/safety/pilotsafetybrochures/>

Changes in your mental health, neurological conditions, seizures, blackouts or other disturbances are serious medical issues and must be assessed by your health care professional.

Pilots are recommended to review the Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive guidance [Austroads - assessing-fitness-to-drive](#) or alternatively talk to your health care professional for guidance when assessing your fitness.

### What other evidence can RAAus accept for my fitness to fly?

If you are a Pilot Certificate holder, RAAus can accept any CASA Medical Certificate including a **CASA Class 1, Class 2, Class 2 (Basic) Medical Certificate or Recreational Aviation Medical Practitioners Certificate (RAMP-C)**, a medical assessment from a Driver Licensing Authority (different for each state) or statements from your treating doctor provided the doctor declares that they are fully informed of your current medical status and all relevant conditions.

If you are an Instructor, you must supply a copy of MED003 or a statement that proves you meet the **Austroads Commercial Driver Licence** health standard or a copy of a current **CASA Class 2 Medical Certificate** (excluding the Class 2 Basic). RAAus will accept a doctors signed medical assessment for a Driver Licensing Authority for a Commercial Driver Licence health standard (different for each state).

## **My doctor has asked what standard to assess my fitness against, what does RAAus recommend?**

The Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive document is regularly reviewed and updated [Austroads - assessing-fitness-to-drive](#). This document provides guidance to your doctor about the appropriate health standard (private motor vehicle for Pilot Certificate holders and Commercial motor vehicle for Instructors) required.

## **I can't drive a car yet; what health standard do I need?**

The same Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive medical requirements apply regardless of whether you have been issued with a motor vehicle licence or not.

## **I have a physical or sensory disability, partial paralysis, or require some specialised changes to my car to permit me to drive, what about flying?**

RAAus is proud to have supported a number of pilots with physical disabilities who are safely flying our aircraft. The same health standard requirement applies, if you can drive a car (even if modifications to the vehicle are required), you may still be able to fly a RAAus aircraft. Modifications to aircraft which are already in use include hand operated rudders, changes to control columns and throttle mechanisms and more. Members must ensure that aircraft must be only modified with appropriate engineering acceptance or approvals and equipment must be fitted by suitably qualified engineers.

RAAus pilots have successfully overcome challenges related to sensory impairment, physical impairment, use of prostheses and partial paralysis.

Talk to RAAus about your specific circumstances for more information and consult the Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive publication for specific guidance on managing disabilities. [Austroads - assessing-fitness-to-drive](#)

## **What about fatigue management?**

While RAAus pilots are not required to comply with CASA regulations about fatigue management pilots would be foolish to think fatigue is not a major factor in ensuring the safe completion of a flight. Using a checklist like IMSAFE will ensure you think about the sort of factors that may affect your flight.

### **I.M.S.A.F.E.**

**Illness** – are you recovering from flu, a cold or any illness which could affect you?

**Medication** – Have you changed medication, or taken something you haven't taken before?

**Stress** – Is work, family or other stresses possibly affecting your decision making?

**Alcohol** – are you suffering the effects of alcohol? It is metabolised by people at different rates.

**Fatigue** – Did you sleep well over the last week? Are you tired and fuzzy headed right now?

**Eating and Emotion** – This includes dehydration, eating nutritious food recently (not chips or candy)

## **When do I need to report a medical condition or change to RAAus?**

Any time you have a change in your health which may affect your ability to meet the required medical standards this can have an effect on safe flying. Always consult your doctor to be sure. If you are recovering from surgery or are undergoing other health challenges, as a Pilot Certificate holder or student you simply should not fly until you are cleared by your treating doctor or specialist.

If you are an Instructor, you must advise RAAus (an email or phone call to Flight Operations is fine) and advise of the expected length of time you will be affected. Depending on the condition you may need to supply a statement from your doctor confirming your return to fitness to fly.

## How will RAAus manage my personal medical information?

RAAus will always treat any personal information about members in accordance with the RAAus Privacy Policy and with the greatest of respect for your privacy. The RAAus Privacy Policy is available on the [RAAus website](#).

RAAus works collaboratively with third parties on members' behalf to ensure safe flight is conducted and any disciplinary matters are managed in accordance with the RAAus Occurrence Complaint Handling Manual available on the [RAAus website](#). Third parties do not become directly involved with RAAus members unless the member is not current or a serious safety concern is identified.

## I am a RAAus maintainer; do I have to meet a specific health standard?

There are no required health standards for a RAAus Maintainer, however the same assessment process to determine if you are fit to maintain should be followed. Refer to the **IMSAFE** check and considerations noted in **Safety Relevant Medical Conditions** provided above to determine if you should defer conducting any maintenance until you are recovered.

## What is a RAAP?

RAAus has developed Recreational Aviation Advisory Publications (RAAP) to provide helpful guidance material for the reporting requirements and member actions in the event of an accident or incident. RAAPs are designed to provide information that interprets RAAus Flight Operations and Technical Manual requirements, provides additional member information in addition to operational and training information to assist Instructors, Flight training Schools, Examiners and Approval holders.

A RAAP is an additional document provided to enhance understanding of operational requirements. They DO NOT replace the appropriate requirements contained in the Flight Operations Manual or any Flight Operations Bulletins that may be issued.

*That's a WRAP!*







