

**OEUK Offshore Medicals – non-compliant remote medicals****Safety Alert – Publication March 2026**

Distribution – International Marine Contractors Association, International Association of Drilling Contractors, G+, Marine Safety Forum, Step Change in Safety, Offshore Energies UK (OEUK) Registered Doctors and Members.

**Summary**

This safety alert explains why **OEUK offshore medicals must be carried out in person** and why **remote or online medicals are not in line with the OEUK Offshore Medical Guidelines**.

Each year, **over 1,500 OEUK-approved medical examiners** around the world carry out more than **200,000 medicals** in accordance with the OEUK Offshore Medical Guidelines.

However, OEUK has been made aware that some examiners have been offering **remote medical assessments** by phone or video, which they have been describing as OEUK medicals. These **do not meet OEUK requirements** as set out in **the current version of the guidelines** (version 8.1a published on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026).

It is acknowledged that remote assessments were used **temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic**, under emergency guidance that allowed limited “socially distanced” assessments. This temporary option **ended** when general Covid restrictions were eased. Issue 8 of the OEUK Offshore Medical Guidelines was published in November 2025 with an administrative update (version 8.1a) in February 2026. The effect of the requirements set out in Issue 8 is that **OEUK medicals must include in-person assessment**. Despite this, a small number of examiners continue to offer remote assessments.

Companies and workers are free to determine their own medical assessment requirements and to choose any type of medical assessment. Where a company has selected the OEUK medical examination process it is obligatory that the Guidelines are adhered to by medical examiners carrying out those medical assessments. Only medicals carried out in accordance with the OEUK Guidelines can be described as an OEUK Medical where a valid certificate can be issued.

**Delegated medicals** are permitted under restricted conditions where sufficient clinical governance ensures consistency and quality, however these are not accepted in all geographical areas.

Workers and companies should always verify medical examiners and their clinics against the [OEUK doctors list](#) to avoid being issued a non-compliant certificate.

**History:**

The OEUK Guidelines are developed by a steering committee of medical experts who determine the format for OEUK medical assessments. Individuals who have not had an examination that is consistent with the Guidelines may be exposed to an increased health risk when at work because health risks that could have been identified during an in-person examination may be missed during a remote assessment.

Some workers will have experienced remote medical assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic. The then-extant Medical Fitness for Offshore Work Guidelines (Issue 6, published in March 2008) were temporarily modified by the “*Socially distanced medical assessments*” Technical Note (Issue 1 dated June 2020 and Issue 2 dated November 2020). Once Covid restrictions were lifted almost all medical examiners reverted to previous practice as set out in Issue 6 of the Guidelines, but a small minority of medical examiners continued to offer remote medicals. OEUK therefore issued a statement in July 2025 confirming that OEUK Guidelines do not provide for medical examiners to undertake assessments remotely. The steering committee that developed the current issue of the OEUK Guidelines determined that in-person medicals are materially superior to remote medicals in terms of ensuring that all workers meet the health standards required for offshore working. The Medical Fitness for Offshore Work Guidelines Issue 8 (November 2025) restated the requirements for OEUK Offshore medicals and confirmed the formal withdrawal of all previous guidance. Issue 8 does not provide for OEUK medical assessments to be carried out remotely. The effect of the requirements set out in Issue 8 is that OEUK medicals must include in-person assessment.

It has been brought to our attention that several medical examiners are continuing with remote medicals despite these clarifications.

While medical examiners are free to offer remote medical assessments to workers or other customers who are content to accept them, remote medical assessments should not be presented as being consistent with the OEUK Guidelines – i.e. they must not be described or otherwise held out as being 'OEUK offshore medicals'.

## **Conduct of the OEUK Medical**

### **In-person Medicals:**

In-person medical examinations involve the examinee physically attending a doctor's clinic and seeing the doctor within the clinic, where the doctor may examine and question the patient.

There are many reasons why an in-person medical, regardless of technological changes, is superior to other options and physical examination is a core element of the OEUK medical. These include (but are not limited to) the ability for the doctor to see the patient moving around, to accurately measure height and weight, blood pressure and visual acuity, and to identify evidence of previous medical issues and/or actual or suspected pathology previously unrecognised by the examinee (OEUK Medical Guidelines, Issue 8, s.2.7, 2.8.4, 2.8.5, 2.8.6, 2.8.8, and 2.13.2.1)

Furthermore, for more complex cases there may be a requirement for follow-up checks or additional assessment: this is easier to achieve in a clinical environment.

### **Delegated Medicals:**

Issue 8 of the OEUK Guidelines provides the ability for delegation of some aspects of a medical by OEUK doctors in specific and limited circumstances (OEUK Medical Guidelines, Issue 8.1a, s.2.9).

Some aspects of OEUK medical examinations, where the medical risk is suitably low, can be delegated to other health professionals such as a nurse or offshore medic working under the close clinical supervision of the examining OEUK doctor, provided there is a suitable clinical governance

structure in place. At a simple level this may include having the examinee's weight, height and/or blood pressure taken by a nurse or medical technician; in some cases, the physical examination might be carried out by a qualified offshore medic. There must nevertheless be arrangements in place to ensure that if the examinee requests, or their health circumstances require it, they can be promptly seen by the certifying doctor at an appropriate medical facility. There should also be proper management arrangements in place to ensure that the certifying doctor is satisfied as to the competence of all the health professionals involved.

Delegated medicals will not be appropriate for all examinees, for example those attending a first OEUK medical assessment (i.e. where there are no notes and records from any previous OEUK assessment) or cases where a conditional certificate is required. It should be noted that in the specific and limited circumstances where physical medical examination is delegated, the geographical scope of the certificate will have to exclude some regions that do not allow for delegated medical examination (i.e. Norway, Netherlands, Denmark) and the medical examiner signing the certificate must make clear that they did not examine the examinee.

### **Remote or online medicals:**

Remote or online medicals are assessments which are carried out remotely without any in-person access to clinical facilities or to the medical examiner. These assessments do not reflect the detailed requirements of an OEUK medical examination as there is no ability for the medical examiner to see an examinee and, unlike a delegated assessment, there is neither in-person interaction with a suitably trained and directly supervised health professional nor suitable clinical governance over important aspects of the medical assessment such as weight and height measurements.

While medical examiners are free to offer such medical assessments to workers or other customers who are content to accept them, remote medical assessments should not be presented as being consistent with the OEUK Guidelines – i.e. they must not be described or otherwise held out as being 'OEUK offshore medicals'.

### **What action to take:**

OEUK is raising awareness for all workers and companies that remote or online medicals are not in line with Issue 8.1a of the OEUK Guidelines and therefore must not be described or otherwise held out as being 'OEUK offshore medicals'.

Those seeking to secure OEUK offshore medicals should verify that the doctor and their associated clinic are registered on the OEUK list available here: [OEUK Doctors](#), before booking their medical assessment.

OEUK performs several checks on medical examiners to assess their suitability prior to adding them to the official list. OEUK also handles complaints and concerns in relation to listed doctors which might result in their removal from the list. Therefore, the only definitive method to check if a medical examiner or clinic is registered with OEUK is to check directly.

Companies should be aware that there are medical certificates in circulation that purport to be the result of OEUK offshore medicals, but which are in fact the result of remote or online medicals and/or medicals carried out by doctors not properly registered on the OEUK list. Verification of workers' certificates is therefore recommended. You can verify an OEUK medical certificate by

visiting the OEUK doctors website and checking that the doctor issuing the certificate is registered against the clinic named on the certificate and that the doctor's pin matches the certificate. If you still cannot verify the certificate, you can contact [doctors@oeuk.org.uk](mailto:doctors@oeuk.org.uk)

- **WORKERS** - Verify the legitimacy of the doctor and clinic before booking a medical using the OEUK Register, and do not agree to a medical that does not involve any in-person examination.
- **EMPLOYERS** - Verify the legitimacy of the doctor and clinic using the OEUK Register.

### **What to do if you are concerned you have had a non-compliant medical:**

You should contact your employer to discuss. If the medical examiner and clinic are registered on the OEUK medical examiner's list, then you may be able to go back to the doctor who issued it to carry out an in-person assessment. The doctor can then issue a compliant certificate.

If you cannot agree a resolution with the medical examiner / clinic who issued the certificate, it is likely you will have to visit another medical examiner, who is registered with OEUK, and obtain a new medical assessment. You can also raise a complaint to OEUK using the complaints procedure.