



# Update ME

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A brief update from the  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Central Medical Unit

19 October 2007

Welcome to another issue of our *Update ME* newsletter.

## **Reminder: Do not issue duplicate certificates**

A recent incident has drawn our attention to the fact that some MEs have, on occasion, issued applicants with duplicate copies of their medical certificate. In the case in question the subject pilot had been issued two identical laminated copies of their medical certificate, a fact that CAA was not aware of when safety concerns necessitated withdrawal of the medical certificate.

A similar situation can result when a medical certificate is issued with different endorsements to its predecessor, and the previous medical certificate is not handed-in by the holder. Even though the legislation (rule 67.61(b)(2)(ii)) is worded so that a previously issued medical certificate remains in force, for as long as it is current, unless a subsequent or replacement medical certificate is issued to the holder" this has the potential for problems.

Both of these circumstances can lead to someone holding two documents that, to most people, appear to be current valid medical certificates. In one situation those two documents are identical and in the other they are different.

Our recent troubles occurred when we withdrew a medical certificate, and it was returned to us as requested. We then learnt that the pilot held another identical certificate that had been issued at the same time as the one that had been handed back.

Do not issue duplicate copies of medical certificates.

When medical certificate endorsements are changed and a new certificate printed please recover the previous certificate.

While we have no reason to believe that this pilot

flew after we withdrew the medical certificate this is a situation that has the potential for abuse and safety failure. This is best avoided by not enabling more than one (seemingly valid and current) medical certificate at any time.

## **From the literature: Pulse oximetry**

The latest issue of the "blue journal", Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine (Vol 78, No 10, October, October 2007), contains an article titled "Pulse Oximetry: Basic Principles and Applications in Aerospace Medicine".

This article updates on the theory behind pulse oximetry, looks at the limitations of the technology, discusses applications of this technology in aerospace medicine.

We only have room for one short quote: "Pulse oximeters in current use were originally designed to be used as a patient monitor in a setting without bright lights, motion, or other conditions that may impede measurement. As a result, signal extraction algorithms in current use may not work well in aviation or other hostile environments."

## **Meeting: Joint workshop with CASA**

On Monday 12 November 2007 the Australian regulator, CASA, is hosting a joint aviation medical workshop in Melbourne. This is the next in our series of quarterly joint workshops, on alternate sides of the Tasman. The topic for discussion this time is alcohol and recreation drugs, with a focus on the detection phase of the problem.

MEs are welcome to attend these workshops, including this one. If you're interested in joining us please contact the CASA PMO directly to RSVP (ian.hosegood@casa.gov.au).

## **We are here to help!**

If you have any problems, questions, or queries, please contact our help-desk (details below).

## **CAA Medical Help**

Tel: +64-4-560 9466 Fax: +64-4-560 9470  
Email: [med@caa.govt.nz](mailto:med@caa.govt.nz) web site: [www.caa.govt.nz](http://www.caa.govt.nz)