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Department of Defence



Extenuating Circumstances Policy

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Approved by	Cep Carty, Principal, Civil Defence Branch
Further info	civildefence@defence.ie
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Policy Summary	This policy outlines how extenuating circumstances should be managed in respect of training courses and recertification dates.
Changes Made	This policy has been updated to include procedures

Civil Defence – Extenuating Circumstances and Procedures Policy

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Attachments

Reference: PHECC Letter

Application forms - Civil Defence Responders

Application forms - Civil Defence Volunteer Instructors

1. Background

PHECC require Civil Defence to establish an Extenuating Circumstances Policy in relation to the process of recertification at responder and Instructor level

2. Purpose

PHECC Education and Training Standards outline certification periods and minimum course duration, the recertification course is generally shorter than the full course. The recertification course and assessment must be completed before the expiry date of the existing certificate. Otherwise, the Volunteer is required to complete the full course. The exception to this is where there are extenuating circumstances.

3. Scope

To simplify the process, the Civil Defence College will accept applications for responder recertification courses 6-months in advance of the expiry date of certification. This will allow a Volunteer to complete the shorter recertification course during this 6-month period. If a Volunteer does not complete the shorter recertification course and assessment before this end date, they must complete the full certification course.

The Civil Defence College will ensure that dates for Instructor recertification courses are published in a timely manner that will allow for instructor recertification before certification expires.

In the event where a Volunteer is due for recertification, has been invited on or is undertaking a recertification course, but due to unforeseen circumstances, find themselves unable to complete the course and assessment before the end date of their existing certification, extenuating circumstances could be initiated. PHECC Education and Training Standards allow for a maximum of 30-days, beginning immediately after the end date of their existing certification, during which the Volunteer must complete the shorter recertification course.

This 30-day period is only applicable to those Volunteers who have applied for Extenuating Circumstances before the end date of their existing certification, and whose Extenuating Circumstances Application has been approved by the relevant official.

4. Decisions

- Responder/Local Training – the process is held within the Local Authority
- Instructor/Central Training – the process is held within the Civil Defence College

There are four steps in the process

1. The Application for Extenuating Circumstances to be granted
2. The Decision of the relevant person
3. An Appeal Application - *if relevant*
4. An Appeal Decision - *if relevant*

5. Aim

The aim of this Extenuating Circumstances Policy is to outline the required criteria and the steps that must be taken, for a Volunteer to avail of the 30-day period in which to complete the shorter recertification course.

The following is a list of circumstances under which a Volunteer may apply for extenuating circumstances:

- A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- A physical disability of chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other illness
- Recent bereavement of a close family member or friend
- Severe accident/physical injury
- Domestic crisis/serious illness of a close family member
- Other (details should be described in your Extenuating Circumstances Application)

6. Examples of Scenarios and Outcomes of decisions

Two distinct scenarios under which extenuating circumstances may be applied for are outlined below:

Scenario 1: Volunteer Responder

In the case where a Volunteer Responder is due for recertification, has been invited on or is undertaking a recertification course and due to extenuating circumstances cannot complete the course and assessment, their application for Extenuating Circumstances must be sent to their Course Instructor during the 6-month recertification period.

Outcomes:

Approved: This decision will **require** the Volunteer Responder to complete the recertification course/assessment in the 30-day period that immediately follows the end date of their

existing certification. Once availing of the 30-day period, the Volunteer Responder is **not** permitted to practice or respond on medical duties/courses until they have completed the recertification course.

Not Approved: there is an Appeals Process, which a Volunteer Responder can engage with to have the decision re-examined by their Civil Defence Officer. Due to time constraints, the Appeal Application should be lodged as soon as possible after your Extenuating Circumstances Application has not been approved.

Scenario 2: Volunteer Instructor

In the case where a Volunteer Instructor is due for recertification, has been invited on or is undertaking a recertification course and due to extenuating circumstances cannot complete the course and assessment, their application for Extenuating Circumstances must be sent through their Civil Defence Officer to the Civil Defence College Instructor in charge of that discipline

Outcomes:

Approved: This decision will **require** the Volunteer Instructor to complete the recertification course in the 30-day period that immediately follows the end date of their existing certification. Once availing of the 30-day period, the Volunteer Instructor is **not** permitted to instruct or respond, at the level of the instructor certificate, on medical duties/courses until they have completed the recertification course.

Not Approved: There is an Appeals Process, which a Volunteer Instructor can engage with to have the decision re-examined. This will involve a more senior official in the Civil Defence College reviewing the application. Due to time constraints, the Appeal Application should be lodged as soon as possible after your Extenuating Circumstances Application has not been approved.

Applications, Decisions, Appeals and Final decisions should be made in a timely manner to allow, where successful, the course and assessment to be completed within the 30-day period that immediately follows the end date of their existing certification.

Please note: All information shared during the application/appeals process is viewed as strictly confidential. Only those involved in the application/appeals process will have access to this information.

All information will be stored with strict adherence to GDPR rules.

All applications, decisions and appeals are liable for an audit from PHECC and, as such, must be available for future reference.