



8 July 2026

CLDSA medical requirement:
solo swims of 25km or more or relay swims of 16km or more per swimmer

The medical assessment requirement came about in 2022 after the CLDSA committee and CLDSA Medical Officer noted a need to bring CLDSA in line with other international marathon swimming associations, and to ensure that CLDSA is making recommendations to protect the safety of swimmers choosing to take on very long swims under the CLDSA banner.

CLDSA is lucky to have two extremely experienced medical doctors on the committee, both of whom are specialists in cold water swimming. After consultation with these experts a medical form was drafted setting out the requirements for the medical. The requirements and standard of the medical were based on the advice and professional experience of the CLDSA Medical Officer.

During late 2022 and early 2023 CLDSA consulted widely with multiple stakeholders regarding the introduction of a new requirement for swimmers to complete a medical assessment, for swims of more than 20km, whereafter the medical requirement was implemented for swims longer than 20km from 1 July 2023.

The medical requirements were reviewed in 2026. Updated requirements include the medical assessment form for solo swims of 25km or more, or relay swims of 16km or more per swimmer.

Key points to note:

- It is strongly recommended that the medical assessment is completed by a physician (preferably a sports physician with cold-water/long-distance endurance sports experience). Alternatively, and based on the availability of specialist physicians, the swimmer's personal physician or a General Practitioner (GP) can complete the assessment.
- The swimmer will be required to submit the full medical assessment form plus the ECG. This includes the doctor's details, signature and professional stamp. The medical assessment form must be submitted at least one month prior to the swim date to medical@clds.co.za, in order for the swim to be ratified by CLDSA.
- The medical assessment form must be submitted directly by the swimmer or their examining physician (not the boat skipper).
- All medical information will be saved securely and confidentially and will only be viewed by the CLDSA medical officer and an appointed committee member for backup purposes.
- The medical assessment form will still apply for solo swims of 25km or longer (or relay swims of 16km or longer per swimmer), regardless of the expected time in the water, water temperature, swim category or swim route.
- A resting 12-lead ECG is required. This is not required by all international marathon swimming associations, but the CLDSA Medical Officer feels that this is important and prudent, and in the



interests of the swimmer's safety. A 12-lead resting ECG can be done by a physician or many GPs.

- The CLDSA Medical Officer will do an administrative check that the Medical is complete and acceptable. The swimmer will then be notified that the form has been accepted by the CLDSA together with any other required paperwork.
- If you are planning a swim of 25km or longer (or relay of 16km or longer per swimmer), CLDSA recommends that you should have your medical assessment form completed well in advance. The medical assessment form is valid for a full 12 months post clinical examination and can be used for multiple swims during the year. The medical assessment form must be submitted at least 1 month prior to the swim for the CLDSA to process the form and avoid any last-minute issues.
- If you are planning a marathon swim under a different swimming association which require a medical assessment, we suggest that you have any additional medical forms completed at the same time as your CLDSA Medical. This will save on admin and cost (the doctor should be able to complete one examination in order to sign forms for multiple swim associations, e.g. both CLDSA and CSA forms for English Channel swims, or even IISA medicals for ice swimming, at no extra cost).

Should members have any further queries these can be directed to medical@clds.co.za.

We wish safe and enjoyable training to members and prospective members that are training or planning for marathon swims, and we look forward to following your swim attempts.

Yours in swimming,
CLDSA Committee