



GERMANTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT - STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES	
SUBJECT: PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM	S.O.P. 11.06
CATEGORY: TRAINING	PAGE: 1 OF 3
APPROVED BY: Chief, Germantown Fire Department	DATE: July 1, 2009

PURPOSE: To ensure that personnel are able to perform the strenuous physical requirements of fire suppression and emergency operations, to reduce the chances of injuries and health problems of fire department personnel, and to enhance the overall health, wellness, happiness and longevity of personnel. To meet this purpose, this S.O.P. will establish physical fitness standards and guidelines for all personnel necessary to meet their job responsibilities.

I. POLICY

All full-time suppression/E.M.S. personnel shall adhere to the following policy. Other Reserve personnel have a responsibility to maintain themselves in adequate physical fitness, also, to perform their work properly. It is recommended that Reserve personnel establish personal physical fitness programs and utilize those resources available through the department to assist them with this program.

This program is for the benefit of both the individual and the department. A healthier individual is happier, generally has a longer and more productive life and is more effective at his/her work. It is the intent of the department to use this policy to assist personnel in achieving an acceptable level of fitness and lead a healthier life. It is not the intent of the department to use this policy to discipline personnel for poor fitness, although all personnel will be expected to participate fully in this program and meet established minimum acceptable criteria.

II. DAILY FITNESS PROGRAM

Shift personnel shall participate in a routine fitness training program each on-duty shift day. This fitness training shall comprise of at least 1 hour of fitness training per day. The fitness training shall be included in the daily work routine for each station. Morning exercise is generally recommended by fitness experts as the preferred time for exercise. The only exception to this that would allow for a rearrangement of the fitness training time would be for emergency calls and work requirements that cannot be scheduled at other times. The standard daily fitness training shall include:

- A. No less than 10 minutes of warm-up and cool-down. Warm-up and cool-down are very important to limiting the possibility of injury and strain upon the cardiovascular system. The warm-up should include stretching and light exercise to prepare your body for the heavier exercise. The cool-down should also include stretching and light exercise, such as walking, to slowly bring your heart rate down and prevent cramping.

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- B. No less than 20 minutes of strength building utilizing weight training.
- C. No less than 30 minutes of cardiovascular (aerobic) activity. This shall comprise of activities as approved by the fitness committee, including walking, jogging, bicycling, stair climbing, using a rowing machine, or using an elliptical machine. To be beneficial, the exercise must significantly increase the continuous blood flow through the heart, lungs and large muscles. Aerobic activity increases the heart rate and blood flow, supplying needed oxygen to the muscles. This activity shall be at a level to obtain the recommended heart rate for aerobic activity, as recommended by the individual's fitness evaluation, in accordance with the individual's age for at least 10 minutes of this period. Engine and rescue companies and other personnel may wish to utilize local jogging tracks or other facilities in their district, as they desire to accomplish these objectives.

At times, company personnel may decide to concentrate more on cardiovascular activity rather than muscular strength or vice versa. This will be acceptable as long as the total of the fitness training for the set of three workdays averages the acceptable level of fitness training in each area. In some instances, the standard fitness training program may not be recommended, but rather a specialized program may be recommended by a physician or fitness coordinator. Personnel that have been directed to perform a specialized fitness training program through a medical and/or fitness evaluation shall submit this program to the Department's Fitness Committee and shall follow this recommended fitness training program during the 1 hour fitness period, rather than the standard training program.

Station Lieutenants shall be responsible for assuring that all station personnel conduct the required fitness training program. This training shall be recorded in the daily Station Log and Firehouse Training Records. Each Lieutenant shall be responsible for assuring that their personnel are performing the required fitness training, achieving the expected levels of fitness and maintaining an acceptable level of fitness required to perform their duties.

Battalion Chiefs shall be responsible for performing the daily fitness training. This training shall be recorded on the Station Log at the station that the Battalion Chief performed this training.

It is recommended that administrative staff personnel participate in the fitness training program at least two (2) times per week.

III. MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Fire fighting and emergency operations demand a higher than average level of fitness and capabilities. All persons are responsible for assuring that they are in physically fit

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condition as necessary to perform their duties. It is necessary that each member be able to meet and perform a minimum acceptable level of physical capabilities, regardless of sex, age, or race.

- A. **Physical Ability Test:** The Department's Physical Ability Test shall consist of those activities and abilities determined by the Physical Fitness Committee as being the minimum acceptable standards of physical fitness relative to the duties and demands of fire fighting and related emergency duties. All Physical Ability Tests shall be approved and witnessed by the Chairman of the Physical Fitness Committee or his/her designee.
- B. **Exceptions to Minimum Physical Requirements:** In a few special circumstances, such as injuries, the time frame for these minimum physical requirements may not be recommended. In these circumstances, the physician or Fire Department Fitness Committee may establish other guidelines and time frames. However, these revised guidelines must provide reasonable time frames in which the minimum physical requirements will be met by the individual.
- C. **New hires:** All full-time suppression/E.M.S. candidates must pass the department's Physical Ability Test prior to being considered for hire and shall maintain this level after employment by the Department. Periodic retesting shall be done to assure that this minimum level is maintained. The overall fitness and health of the candidates should be considered when evaluating candidates for employment.
- D. **Maintenance of physical fitness:** All shift personnel shall maintain these minimum physical fitness abilities and condition, with exceptions as noted in B, above. Annual retesting of shift personnel shall be done to assist personnel in recognizing areas of need and to assure that these minimum levels are maintained.

IV. **SAFETY**

The primary purpose of the Physical Fitness Program is to limit the chances of injuries to personnel and promote good health and wellness. As in most other aspects of the fire service, safety should be a prime concern. Personnel should follow recognized techniques for exercising, weight lifting, and all other aspects of fitness training. All Fire Department personnel should follow safe practices in the performance of this training.