



Valley Regional Fire Authority Manual of Operations

7301

Wellness-Fitness Initiative

Reference: Local 1352 Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2010-2013
IAFF/IAFC Wellness-Fitness Initiative, 2nd Edition

Effective Date: May 3, 2001, Revised January 1, 2011

Approved By:

Policy

The Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) and IAFF Local 1352 have adopted the IAFF/IAFC *Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative*.

The Wellness-Fitness Initiative will be administered as a positive, individualized program that is not punitive. Results from each component are measured against the individual's previous examinations and assessments and are not measured against any standard or norm. *However, medical practice standards may be used after physical exams to determine that a member may not safely perform their duties when their results indicate that life saving medical intervention is required.*

This policy addresses each of the five major areas covered by the Initiative: Medical, Fitness, Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health and Data Collection.

Operational Plan

Medical Exams and Annual Physicals

General

Annual physical exams will be performed on all uniformed personnel within the VRFA. Like all elements of the Initiative, these exams will be confidential and are non-punitive. The exams will accomplish the following:

- To determine, through the VRFA physician, whether a member is physically and mentally able to perform essential job duties without undue risk of harm to self or others
- To monitor the effects of exposure to specific biological, physical, or chemical agents
- To detect changes in a member's health that may be related to harmful working conditions
- To detect any patterns of disease in the workforce that might indicate underlying work related problems

- To provide the member with information about the individual's occupational hazards and current health
- To provide a cost-effective investment in the early detection, disease prevention, and health promotion of each uniformed VRFA member
- To comply with federal, state and local requirements

VRFA Physicians

Annually, the VRFA will review qualified medical providers as defined in the initiative and identify a service provider to be designated as the "VRFA Physician".

Confidentiality

All information collected in the annual exams shall be confidential and will not be used to determine a member's fitness for duty, unless such information indicates a condition that poses an undue risk to the member or to others. Examples of such conditions may include previously undiagnosed cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease or cancer. The VRFA Physician(s) shall notify the VRFA should this occur. Please see the section entitled **Rehabilitation** below.

The confidential medical files will be maintained by the designated medical provider/s and will not be accessible by the administration of the VRFA.

VRFA members may choose to use their own private physician to conduct certain portions of the exam with prior approval of the Administrator or designee and within the defined cost parameters for each procedure, or be responsible for those portions at their own expense. However, those members and their personal physician shall provide the results from these portions of the exam to the VRFA physician(s) for inclusion in the member's confidential medical file.

Special Physical Exams

Special physicals for SCUBA qualified personnel will also be performed by the VRFA physician and will fulfill the member's requirement for an annual exam. Any special or specific tests shall be coordinated and approved through the Administrator or designee.

Scheduling of Physicals

Physicals will be scheduled by the Training Division for completion prior to May 1st of each year. All billing including those using private physicians will be received by the VRFA prior to June 30th of each year to be considered for payment by the VRFA.

Fitness Assessments

All VRFA members are encouraged to participate in an annual, non-punitive and confidential fitness assessment following medical clearance. Qualified peer

fitness trainers will facilitate the assessments and can provide personalized feedback to each member so that they may improve their level of fitness.

The fitness evaluations will evaluate four specific areas:

- Aerobic capacity
- Muscular strength
- Muscular endurance
- Flexibility

A complete description of the fitness evaluation protocol is contained within the Initiative.

Physical Fitness Time as part of the regular Workweek or Work Shift

The goals of the Wellness-Fitness Initiative and of this policy are to improve the long and short-term quality of life of all VRFA members and by doing so, enhance the effectiveness at which the VRFA delivers services.

24 hour Shift:

In order to meet these goals, VRFA members working twenty-four (24) hour shifts will try to commit up to sixty (60) minutes of their shift for physical fitness during the normal operating hours of 0700 to 1900. This time will be for the sole purpose of fitness related exercise. If a member chooses not to exercise during their shift, this fitness time will be allocated to work activities as directed by their supervisor. Up to an additional thirty minutes will be allowed for the cleanup of fitness equipment, showering and meals after the workout period. It is understood that this workout period may occasionally need to be altered to accommodate the routine operational and training needs of the VRFA. In addition to this allotted time, members may also choose to exercise before and/or after the designated shift hours with approval of their supervisor or on their day off using VRFA facilities as reasonably determined by the duty supervisor at each VRFA facility.

Morning workouts are recommended, but it is up to the individuals and their supervisor to manage the productive balance of their workout period and their and work time.

Day Shift:

VRFA members working a regular day shift shall also be allowed time to exercise during their normal work week. Members working a 40 hour work week will be allowed up to 120 minutes of work out time per workweek. In addition to this allotted time, members may also choose to exercise before and/or after their normal shift hours or on their day off using VRFA facilities as reasonably determined by the duty supervisor at each VRFA facility.

Day shift supervisors will coordinate and schedule the workout times for each member to ensure the most effective and efficient operations in each division or section of the VRFA.

Fitness Activities

The VRFA encourages individual crews/stations/co-workers to exercise as a group when possible. It is recognized that each member has preferred exercise activities that may not accommodate group participation. For example, an individual member may choose to walk laps around the perimeter of the fire station property and perform calisthenics instead of engaging in circuit training with others on the crew.

Fitness activities should include elements that address each of the following areas: cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength/endurance, body composition and flexibility. See a peer fitness trainer for a personalized fitness program.

24 hour shift personnel may use the recreational facilities at parks and schools within their first due response areas for fitness activities as long as it does not adversely impact turnout and response times. Members engaged in physical fitness activities at public facilities should demonstrate the utmost in professionalism while representing the VRFA. . The following guidelines shall also be adhered to when working out in public facilities:

- Crews shall not engage in competitive sports with members of the general public.
- Proper VRFA workout attire shall be worn: T-shirts, shorts, and/or sweats.
- As part of their fitness program, crews may engage in non-contact recreational sports such as, pickle ball, tennis, jogging and basketball.
- A duty pager, cell phone and portable radio must be readily accessible to ensure a prompt response to 911 alarms and inquiries by supervisors.

Rehabilitation

The administration of the VRFA and the Local shall work together to provide a progressive individualized injury/fitness/medical rehabilitation program that shall ensure full rehabilitation of any affected member to a safe return-to-duty status.

See your specific Collective Bargaining Agreement and VRFA Administrative policy for special terms related to an extended absence of an employee due to injury or illness.

Behavioral Health

The behavioral health component of the Initiative provides important tools to assist all VRFA members in achieving total wellness. The services available

through behavioral health shall ensure confidentiality and privacy of all VRFA members

A behavioral health program will include coordination between the VRFA physician(s) and other existing resources; such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), VRFA Chaplain program, and Critical Incident Stress Management programs.

Issues addressed by the VRFA Behavioral Health program may include weight control, nutrition, cholesterol control, tobacco cessation, fitness, stress management, hypertension awareness, preventative medicine, infection control, substance abuse, retirement planning, career/vocational guidance, shift work and sleep disturbances, and other specific work related issues.

Data Collection

The data component of the Wellness-Fitness Initiative includes the storage and analysis of detailed case information related to the medical exam, firefighter fitness, rehabilitation and behavioral health. The goal is to collect long term information on the health and fitness of the members of fire service that will quantify the medical and fitness history of the firefighter profession and qualify the impact of the Wellness-Fitness program.

All data collected by the Wellness-Fitness database is confidential. Individual identities are not submitted by the VRFA to the database for any job history, annual medical and fitness evaluation, or injury data. This confidential data will be reported to the IAFF & IAFC on an annual basis as directed in the Initiative.