

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|
|  | RULES AND REGULATIONS | Fitness, Health & Wellness |
| | Revised Date: 8/12/2025 | Article: I Section: 100.20 |
| | Effective Date: 5/8/2001 | Pages: 3 |
| | Kevin Ward Board Chairman | Britt Clark Fire Chief |

PURPOSE:

The District plans to offer a comprehensive health and fitness program that encourages the achievement and ongoing maintenance of good health and physical fitness among emergency response personnel. Implementing this policy will establish physical fitness standards related to job performance that are uniformly applied to all District employees involved in emergency firefighting, rescue, hazardous material incidents, and other appropriate fire department activities. Through employee participation, the program will:

1. Ensure that each employee subject to emergency activities is physically capable of meeting the job's demands.
2. Reduce accidents and injuries by enhancing employees' overall health and Physical conditioning.
3. Lower the occurrence and seriousness of illnesses.
4. Promote the health and longevity of both active and retired members.
5. Improve District efforts to comply with the provisions outlined in the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 1500: *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, and NFPA 1582: *Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments*.

GENERAL:

Physical fitness directly influences the ability to handle the demanding tasks of fire suppression, rescue operations, and other emergency services. In context, physical fitness is just one part of overall fitness; the others include weight management, diet and nutrition, quitting smoking, controlling substance abuse, and stress management.

Being physically fit is often confused with being healthy. While physical fitness and health are related, they are quite different. Health can be defined as the condition of having a fully functioning body, free from disease or injury. Physical fitness, on the other hand, refers to the ability to perform physically demanding tasks, with the energy and endurance to act effectively during emergencies.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE:

- A. The District shall establish and maintain an Occupational Safety and Health Committee in line with NFPA 1500, Section 4.5. This committee shall serve only in an advisory capacity to the Fire Chief.
- B. This committee shall meet regularly and suggest or recommend improvements or changes to the District's Fitness, Health, and Wellness Program (as only one part of their overall objectives, as outlined in NFPA 1500, Section 4.5).

PHYSICAL AND MEDICAL EVALUATIONS:

- A. The District shall utilize both external and internal resources and processes to assess the physical and medical fitness of District operational employees.
 - I. External (medical evaluations):
 - a. IHC's WorkMed
 - II. Internal (physical fitness evaluations):
 - a. Annual Physical Fitness Evaluation
 - b. Wildland FF I Pack Test
 - c. SCBA Confidence Drill
 - d. Daily Physical Training

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES:

- A. The District shall maintain Standard Operating Guidelines pertaining to:
 - a. Medical and Fitness Evaluations (SOG 2014.00)
 - b. Fit for Duty (SOG 2013.00)
- B. The District may, in addition to SOGs listed under "A", maintain other SOGs and/or programs as deemed necessary to meet the tenets of physical fitness as outlined in this Rule and Regulation.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINING:

- A. The District allows for up to two hours per shift for physical fitness training.
- B. Company officers should schedule their day to include time for physical fitness training. It is understood that, occasionally, workload may interfere with this time.
- C. Forty-hour employees can dedicate one hour and 30 minutes, three days a week, to fitness training.
- D. In cases where crews exercise off-site (at a gym, park, or other location), the fire crew shall exercise as a unit and not split up, although separate vehicles may be used to transport the crew to the exercise site.
- E. During physical fitness training, personnel shall stay prepared and alert for emergency response.
- F. In addition to physical fitness training, employees may participate in recreational sports. Recreational sports are defined as non-contact activities that involve physical and/or aerobic exercise.
- G. Employees may not engage in physical training that would hinder or delay emergency response.
- H. Members must wear the District-approved physical training uniform during fitness activities.
- I. Under no circumstances shall any member be allowed to wear the exercise uniform "only" during emergency responses. Jumpsuits, uniforms, or turnouts must be worn over exercise clothing.
- J. Injuries that occur during physical training shall be regarded as on-the-job injuries. These injuries must be reported according to the procedures outlined in SOG 1003.00, Accident/Damage/Loss/Personal Injury Reporting.
- K. Each employee shall be responsible for his/her fitness training.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN:

A. Medical Evaluations:

- I. An employee's failure to adequately meet any critical phase of the Medical Health Physical, as determined by the health officials administering the evaluation, may result in temporary or permanent removal from emergency operation responsibilities.
- II. Line personnel who receive a recommendation of "no-combat firefighting" or similar language restricting their ability to perform their duties as outlined in their job descriptions shall be relieved from duty until the issues are resolved.
- III. In either case above, the specific action will depend on the severity of the medical issue identified and whether it is correctable or can be managed with reasonable accommodations. A WorkMed physician or another District-approved doctor will assist with this assessment. The medical evaluation may also include referrals to other physicians.

B. Physical Fitness Testing:

- I. If a firefighter does not pass the annual Physical Fitness Evaluation or the NWCG Arduous Pack Test, the following methods will be used for rehabilitation:
 - a. The firefighter will be issued a letter of counsel.
 - b. Referral to an internal Peer Fitness Trainer for individual support with the employee.
 - c. The firefighter must retake the portion of the PT test they failed within 60 days after the initial test. If they do not pass on the second attempt, they will be immediately relieved of duty and issued a formal written reprimand. The firefighter will need to use their leave until they achieve a passing score.
 - d. A third attempt to pass the test will be scheduled within 60 days after the second attempt. Failure to pass will result in the firefighter being placed on disciplinary probation and barred from returning to work until a passing score is achieved.
 - e. Refer employees to Employee Assistance and a District-approved physician for tailored counseling and support based on their individual needs and circumstances.
 - f. If rehabilitative measures are unsuccessful, additional disciplinary actions will be implemented in accordance with *Rules and Regulations Article V, Section 510.00: Progressive Discipline Policy*.

Note: Corrective actions that have failed to provide adequate results shall require progression to the next level of corrective action until the employee has successfully met the requirements of the physical fitness evaluation or all attempts to rehabilitate the employee have failed.