

SECTION H IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this study was not only to validate physical fitness tests and standards for application within the 19 agencies, but also to provide direction for the agency's fitness program. The overriding conclusion from this study is **physical fitness is a necessity for an officer to be able to perform the essential functions of the job**. Consequently, we have formulated 33 implementation recommendations for the application of fitness standards and programs.

The 19 agencies have made a commitment to address the fitness needs of officers. The implementation recommendations are intended to focus that commitment and cover the following areas: 1) implementation of the physical fitness testing for applicant, recruit, and incumbent populations, 2) implementation of academy and incumbent education and maintenance programs, 3) program leadership, and 4) ongoing program operations and administration. These recommendations are intended for each agency to implement.

I. PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTING

Recommendation 1 Applicants should have a medical clearance form signed by their physician prior to testing. A standard form should be used which states the purpose of the testing, the tests to be used, the physical demands of the test and a statement by the physician that he/she does not know of any contraindications to the individual taking the fitness tests. This complies with both the ACSM standard of ordinary care and the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. **See example form in the Appendix B .**

Recommendation 2 Develop and disseminate a program description to applicants and incumbents emphasizing the following: 1) the rationale for the fitness testing process, 2) the description of the tests, 3) the job-related standards that applicants and incumbents will have to meet, and 4) a training regimen that can be utilized to prepare for the tests. **See example description in the Appendix F.**

Recommendation 3 The applicant fitness testing process should be sequenced as follows:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
<u>At gym</u>	
3 minutes	1. Warm-up 2. 1 RM bench press * 3. Vertical jump
<u>Travel to track</u>	
10 minutes	4. Push ups 5. Rest 6. Sit ups
20 minutes	7. Rest
2 minutes	8. Warm-up 9. 1.5-mile run
5 minutes	10. Cool down

* Optional test If, because of logistical purposes with no access to bench press equipment for testing, the 1RM test can be deleted with the just the push up serving as the mandatory upper body dynamic strength test.

Recommendation 4 The incumbent testing process should be as follows:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
<u>At gym</u>	
3 minutes	1. Body fat 2. Warm-up 3. 1 RM bench press *

	4. Vertical jump
<u>Travel to track</u>	
10 minutes	5. Push ups 6. Rest 7. Sit ups 8. Sit and reach
20 minutes	9. Rest
2 minutes	10. Warm-up
	11. 1.5-mile run
<u>5 minutes</u>	<u>12. Cool down</u>

* Optional test If, because of logistical purposes with no access to bench press equipment for testing, the 1RM test can be deleted with the just the push up serving as the mandatory upper body dynamic strength test.

Recommendation 5 Allow a retest process for applicants. Any applicant who does not pass one or more of the test(s) can undergo a retest not sooner than 48 hours after the first test, redoing just those items failed. Allow only one retest for applicants.

Any incumbent failing all or any portion of the test can be re-tested within two weeks of the testing period.

Recommendation 6 To pass, the individual must meet or exceed the standards for all mandatory tests.

Recommendation 7 Test incumbents at least once a year, preferably twice a year.

Recommendation 8 Follow a medical screening process such as the American College of Sports Medicine system prior to fitness testing for incumbents. **See Appendix C for example.**

II. EDUCATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMING

Recommendation 9 Provide an incumbent education program with instruction on the following:

- fitness self-assessment
- goal setting
- aerobic conditioning
- anaerobic conditioning
- strength conditioning
- flexibility conditioning
- weight control
- nutrition
- safety and injury prevention
- stress management/relaxation techniques
- defining an individual program
- substance abuse prevention

Of special importance is awareness training that physical fitness conditioning is a major method for minimizing the stress and fatigue of the job. The FitForce video curriculum and the Fit for Duty fitness book are recommended.

Recommendation 10 At annual fitness assessments, provide each officer feedback and goals for mandatory fitness areas, body composition and flexibility. Although not part of qualifying standards, feedback on body composition and flexibility are valuable for officers' personal fitness and injury prevention.

Recommendation 11 At semi-annual fitness assessments, provide each officer failing to meet standards and others requesting help, an exercise prescription. The prescription should be as individualized as possible, with a variety of training options such as the following:

- a) Aerobic Training Sample endurance training routines such as running, cycling, swimming, walking, sports (racquetball, basketball) and supercircuit weight or calisthenics training.

- b) Anaerobic Sprint Training Short interval training (50-100-yard) routines.
- c) Strength Training Both calisthenics and weight training routines emphasizing the major muscle groups that are being tested to include:
 - Legs - squats, knee bends, leg extensions, leg curls, and plyometric jumping and bounding
 - Abdominal - sit-ups, curl-ups
 - Upper Body - push-ups, bench press
- e) Flexibility Training Static and ballistic stretching

III. PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Recommendation 12 Only those staff who have been certified by the following organizations should be responsible for administering fitness testing and programming: FitForce program, Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research , American College of Sports Medicine, and the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

Recommendation 13 There should be a yearly in-service training session for the Fitness Coordinators to upgrade skills and review program operations.

IV. PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

Recommendation 14 Maintain records on each individual applicant and incumbent. Include demographics (age, gender, race) and fitness test scores. Keep these records

for a minimum of five (5) years or longer if required. Ensure confidentiality of the records.

Recommendation 15 Implement an ongoing data collection process and program evaluation design, with a yearly review. The program evaluation should report data on the following:

- program scheduling efficiency
- problems and deficiencies, including no-shows
- fitness testing performance (failures, remedial programs, etc.)

Recommendation 16 Document all planning and developmental activities.

Recommendation 17 Reword all sworn job descriptions to include physical fitness in the job description as an essential underlying element for performing essential physical functions. In addition, include all essential physical functions. For example, pursue suspects on foot, for short distances and over 2 minutes, run up stairs, pull/drag heavy objects, people and/or equipment, etc.+ This list should include all tasks rated as frequent and critical in Table C2. **See example in Appendix D.**

The job descriptions of all sworn supervisors and administrators who are required, in fact, to perform the essential physical job functions just referred to should refer to those specific, essential functions.

Recommendation 18 Revise officer performance review ratings to address the following:

- Rate officers on their ability to perform specified essential physical tasks that are rated as critical in Table C2. If the officer hasn't been called upon to perform any of those tasks during the rating period, the rater should make a subjective evaluation of his/her capability. The rater should make that evaluation based upon the rater's observations and knowledge of the officer.

- It is important to document each officer's ability to perform strenuous physical tasks. Too often, officers are only rated on nonphysical task performance leading to a false rating of perceived capability. An agency which tries to impose sanctions for failure to meet performance standards will have difficulty if an officer can produce performance reports which indicate completely satisfactory performance.

- Recognize that there are performance reviews taking place in promotional processes, post incident reviews or debriefings, and in a myriad of other possible situations. If the chain of command (or someone in a member's chain) communicates that an employee is performing in a satisfactory (or better) fashion, that will have an impact on the fitness program's effectiveness and on the department's ability to defend it.)

Recommendation 19 Offer the taking of the job task simulation tests as an option for incumbents who fail the fitness testing. Those officers taking those tests must meet the criterion performance on each test.

Recommendation 20 Institute a standards phase-in process for incumbents with the following components:

1. Notify officers of the new standards and how they are different from past efforts.

2. Designate a transition period to institute new standards. We recommend that the transition period be at least two years long. During that time period monitor test performance to observe the incumbent pass/fail percentages. During the transition period, the incumbent program should consist of mandatory fitness testing and education, with guided self assessments but voluntary compliance to the fitness standards.

3. Design a structured remediation program to facilitate compliance with the recommended standards. Remediation recommendations should be tailored to each individual.

4. During the transition period, conduct a review to compare officers in the following areas: absenteeism, use of sick time, disability claims, assignment,

rank, line of duty and non-line of duty injuries, exercise frequency, performance appraisals and workload indicators.

Recommendation 21 At the incumbent level (after the transition period), address non-compliance to the standards through a formal system of recommendation, review, remediation and employee reclassification.

1. First test failure - set improvement goals and provide an individual exercise/nutrition remedial program. Retest within one to two months.
2. Second test failure - if no improvement, provide a mandatory supervised remedial exercise/nutrition prescription program with retesting in three (3) months.
3. Third test failure - if no improvement, there should be a referral for a medical/personnel review to ascertain if there is any underlying chronic medical problem. If there is a remediable medical problem, then design an appropriate mediation/ rehabilitation program. If a non-medical problem, allow the officer the option of taking the Job task Simulation battery. The passing score is the effective level of performance on each test. If there is failure at this level then an appropriate reclassification/reassignment review is warranted. If the problem is lack of initiative or officer refusal to comply, sanction(s) should be utilized.

Recommendation 22 Incorporate the fitness standards into an incentive system for incumbents. **This project identified valid standards which reflect only the minimum level of fitness to perform the job.** It is important to provide a program that facilitates officers increasing their fitness levels beyond that of the standards. In turn, a voluntary incentive program can assist during the transition period to mandatory standards to get officers exercising. Two components of an incentive plan that need to be addressed are 1) the fitness test performance level required to be eligible for the incentive and 2) the aggregate performance required to be eligible for the incentive,

1. The performance required to be eligible for an incentive should be as follows:

* The officer must first meet the recommended mandatory standards on each fitness test.

* The officer must attain a certain percentile score on the fitness test that corresponds to the CIAR age and gender norms. The rationale is that for voluntary standards the age and sex based norms work best to get all officers involved in the process. If this system was employed the incentive requirements are presented in Table H1. Three %tile options are provided with the standard always being the minimum.

TABLE H 1
INCENTIVE REQUIREMENTS OPTIONS

TEST	Males				Females			
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59
1.5 mile								
90th	9:09	9:30	10:16	11:18	11:43	12:51	13:22	14:55
75th	10:42	11:18	11:49	13:22	13:22	14:08	14:57	16:05
50th	12:18	12:51	13:53	14:55	14:55	15:26	15:54	15:54
Sit up								
90th	51	48	43	39	48	40	35	35
75th	46	42	37	35	42	35	35	35
50th	40	36	35	35	35	35	35	35
Push up								
90th	57	46	36	30	37	33	25	25
75th	44	36	29	25	27	25	25	25
50th	33	27	25	25	25	25	25	25
Vertical Jump								
90th	25.0	24.0	20.3	19.5	18.1	16.0	16.0	16.0
75th	23.0	21.0	18.0	16.5	17.0	16.0	16.0	16.0
50th	20.5	19.5	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0
1RM Bench ratio								
90th	1.48	1.24	1.10	.97	.90	.75	.75	.75
75th	1.26	1.08	.96	.87	.77	.75	.75	.75
50th	1.06	.93	.84	.76	.75	.75	.75	.75

2) The aggregate performance to be eligible for an incentive could have two options:

OPTION # 1 To be eligible for an incentive the officer must meet the incentive performance level for each test.

OPTION # 2 To be eligible for the incentive the officer must have an **average percentile** score across all tests that meets the incentive requirement.

Recommendation 23 Develop a medical and performance review system to

reflect the following:

- If an officer can not take the fitness test or participate in exercise he/she should be placed on temporary limited duty until he/she can exercise and take the test. **This reflects a very basic rationale for the program - if an officer can not exercise or take the fitness test because of a serious medical or physical problem, then he/she cannot perform the essential physical tasks of the job and should not be left in a position where doing so is required.** Likewise, a member with a medical excuse for nonparticipation in firearms training, defensive tactics training, or any job related training that is physical in nature is not ~~fit~~ for duty+. Additionally, a medical exemption from performance of any physical job function that is essential for incumbents in that job demonstrates that the member is not ~~fit~~ for duty+.
- Establish criteria for mandatory remediation/rehabilitation programming.
- Establish criteria for reclassification, retirement or dismissal of officers who are permanently unable to take the fitness test or perform exercise.
- Physician medical forms should contain information on the essential physical tasks an officer must perform and the specific tests he/she must take to determine fitness for duty. The physician forms must communicate that if an officer can not take the fitness test the officer can not be returned to full duty status. **It is important that physicians do not clear an officer for full duty status and yet excuse the officer from fitness testing.** An individual who is unable to perform every essential job function should not be ~~cleared~~ for full duty.

Recommendation 24 Develop a procedure for determining whether a member who has been on sick leave, injury leave, or light duty or who has been medically excused from any kind of mandatory training is fit for duty. That procedure should provide for one or more of the following (if applicable), in the event there is probable cause (i.e., a fair probability) for believing the member is not fit for duty:

- Physical examination by a medical doctor, with an opinion regarding the member's fitness for duty (or lack thereof).

- Successful completion of all parts of the fitness battery.

- Psychological screening, psychiatric or psychological evaluation.

Recommendation 25 The agency should adopt a definition of fitness for duty, if it has not already done so. That definition should reference the agency's physical fitness standards as well as the agency's mental/emotional readiness standards, the agency's ethical standards, the agency's character and integrity standards, the agency's judgment standards, and the agency's medical standards. If the aforementioned standards do not reflect the realities of the job (with particular reference to the critical, essential job functions), they should be changed.

Recommendation 26 Any medical evaluation process should require that the examining physician be aware of the most critical of the member's essential physical job functions and that the physician evaluate whether, in his/her professional opinion, the member is reasonably likely to be able to safely and effectively perform each. That evaluation should be required and reported to proper authority in the agency.

Recommendation 27 The agency should require members to report the usage of any medication likely to impair the member's perception, judgment, and/or ability to safely and effectively perform any essential job function.

Recommendation 28 Any psychological or psychiatric evaluation process should require that the psychologist or psychiatrist performing the evaluation be aware of the critical essential job functions. The evaluation should contain a professional opinion whether the person evaluated can safely and effectively perform the most critical essential job functions. That evaluation should be reported to proper authority.

Recommendation 29 Upgrade critical incident debriefing to include physical readiness. Require that the debriefing include an assessment of the adequacy of the physical readiness of the involved members and of whether each involved member was able to safely and effectively perform applicable essential job functions.

Recommendation 30 Require an assessment of the apparent ability of each member seeking a promotion or a special assignment to safely and effectively perform the critical, essential functions of the position in question.

Recommendation 31 Require that every lead instructor in any situational training program evaluate and report on the apparent ability of each participant to safely and effectively perform the critical, essential job functions relevant to the situation(s) simulated in the training.

Recommendation 32 Develop essential function descriptions for all light duty jobs,

positions, and assignments. Require medical clearance before allowing assigning any member to light duty.

Recommendation 33 Require supervisors to document and report any circumstances or behavior indicative of an apparent lack of fitness for duty on the part of any employee.