

Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures
Fitness Component
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PURPOSE

Repeatedly, research has shown the need for high levels of aerobic fitness, muscular endurance and muscular strength to perform safely and effectively in the fire service. Physical fitness is critical to maintaining the wellness of our members. Fitness must be incorporated into the overall fire service philosophy.

Components of a successful physical fitness program include:

- Medical clearance
- On duty time for exercise
- Equipment and facilities
- Exercise specialists and peer trainers
- Incorporating fitness into the Fire Department philosophy
- Fitness self assessments
- Exercise prescriptions

NEED FOR A PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM

Employees in the fire service are frequently required to perform under extreme physical and stressful conditions. Between these episodes of extreme effort, there are periods of relative inactivity. The possession of physical strength, agility and endurance will enable the individual to survive when required to perform at maximum capacity whereas the lack of fitness has spelled catastrophe in many cases.

People working in the fire service have a history of developing significant disabilities in four categories. The first category is in cardiovascular and hypertensive vascular disease. The second category is pulmonary disabilities involving the capabilities of the lungs to deliver oxygen to the body's cells. The third category of involvement is emotional and environmental strain and stress. The fourth category is musculoskeletal disability involving the spine and adjacent fibromuscular structures of the back. The only known practical way to cope with this increasing problem is to physically, medically and emotionally equip members to prevent or build in a reserve to better resist these disabilities.

There is no way to obtain desired fitness levels without effort. Improved fitness levels however can be achieved with consistent training in less time than one might expect. General fitness and a basic understanding of dietary needs can substantially improve an individual's body composition and self esteem. Adherence to a general fitness program can lead to a healthier lifestyle, improved performance and a prolonged career.

OBJECTIVES

The basic objectives of the physical fitness program are:

- A. To provide a program of progressive conditioning for all members.
- B. To provide the physical ability and mental alertness necessary for the safe and proper performance of fire department operations.
- C. To reduce the frequency and severity of accidental injury.
- D. For all members to feel, look, and function better, and have a happier more productive life during their City service and after retirement.

PERSONAL BENEFITS

An obvious effect of regular exercise is improving body composition. Exercise can also prove to be beneficial in the functioning of internal organs, especially the heart, lungs and circulatory system. A systematic exercise and conditioning program can offer the following benefits:

- A. Reduction of the risk of heart disease and heart attack.
- B. Increased joint flexibility.
- C. Increased endurance.
- D. Increased strength and coordination.
- E. Improvement in general appearance.
- F. Increase energy.
- G. Reduction of minor aches, pains, stiffness and soreness.
- H. Improved ability to relax and to voluntarily reduce tension.
- I. Correction of some postural defects.
- J. Improved digestion.

PARTICIPATION AND EXERCISE PERIODS

This is a mandatory physical fitness program. All members of the department assigned to emergency response activity shall participate in the program. Company officers shall ensure participation of all crew members together as a company.

If you are disabled or sick to the extent that you cannot participate in physical training, then you are not in condition (or safe) to be on emergency response activity.

Exercise periods will be from 0830 hrs to 0930 hrs at the beginning of each shift.

When this period is preempted by emergency or other activity, it will be the responsibility of the company officer to reschedule physical fitness during the shift up to and including after 5 p.m.

EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES

To efficiently utilize dedicated exercise time, all fire stations will maintain a variety of strength/cardio equipment for members use to maintain overall fitness.

Peer Fitness Trainers

The role of the Peer Fitness Trainer is to encourage safety and participation in fitness through guidance and supervision of personal exercise. Peer Fitness Trainers are available to all members of the department.

Peer Fitness Trainers have been trained and educated in a state certified training course. Upon completion and certification, the peer trainers are educated in the following areas:

- Science of exercise
- Development of exercise programs
- Proper exercise techniques
- Nutritional and wellness consultation

Peer Fitness Trainers will also be used to:

- Educate company officers
- Educate incumbent and new hires
- Design and test fitness equipment
- Design and support personalized fitness programs for all members

The Tempe Fire Department will have 6 Peer Fitness Trainers available to all members. Each trainer will be assigned a group of department members for consultation, exercise program design, follow up and wellness information.

RESPONSIBILITY

A fitness program will be successful if all members assume certain responsibilities for themselves and others. Part of the answer is to have the member assume a degree of responsibility through an understanding of what is expected of him/her. It is the company officer's responsibility to ensure this understanding.

Officers at all levels are responsible for themselves and for the physical fitness of members under their command. It is the captain's responsibility to manage the training program. Officers are responsible for maintaining a high level of fitness with the lowest possible level of injuries.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- A. All physical fitness activity will be from an in-service status. Full turnout and/or appropriate uniform apparel will be placed close to apparatus prior to beginning exercise periods, for immediate emergency response. PT cannot delay response.
- B. The public shall not be allowed to participate.
- C. Apparatus may be taken to a park or school yard for the cardiovascular portion of the program with the approval of the on duty deputy chief. Public recreation facilities shall be used only upon written agreement between that facility and the fire chief for such use by department members while on duty.
- D. Jogging or roadwork must be confined to an area that provides for prompt response to alarms, and you must be able to hear and monitor radio traffic. Outside jogging/roadwork is not permitted on duty when the expected temperature will be 100° or higher. All cardio activity will be performed indoors.
- E. Any member that has a physical impairment or restriction should not do any exercise that will aggravate his/her condition. This does not mean he/she cannot participate in a conditioning program. If a particular exercise causes discomfort or pain, he/she should eliminate that exercise and consult with their peer fitness trainer.
- F. Due to special assignments and/or working conditions, members may not be able to participate in the program.
- G. Golf, tennis, football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, racquetball or other competitive games will not be recognized as fulfillment of the physical fitness requirements.
- H. On duty swimming is prohibited.

Warning Symptoms (Discontinue the Exercise)

Any participant in the physical fitness program at whatever level, must be aware of indications of overexertion when exercising, participating in athletics, or when doing any extreme physical activity. When any of the following symptoms develop, stop the activity immediately. If condition persists or is repeated, medical advice should be obtained immediately.

1. Tightness or pain in chest.
2. Numbness or pain in extremities.
3. Severe breathlessness.
4. Lightheadedness with loss of balance.
5. Loss of control of bowels or bladder.
6. Severe nausea.
7. Unusual or severe pain anywhere.
8. Marked incoordination.

BATHING AFTER EXERCISE

A cool-down period should follow any strenuous physical activity to allow body systems to return to normal functioning. Failure to cool down may cause distress. Cool or lukewarm showers are recommended. Cold showers should be avoided. Hot showers should also be avoided, as this additional heating of the body surface places an added burden on the circulatory system.

EXERCISE AND WEIGHT CONTROL

While several types of disorders are often blamed for the overweight problem, the simple fact is that obesity is in 95% cases, the result of overeating and lack of physical activity.

The calories consumed in the diet must not exceed the calories expended or body weight will increase. Physical activity and a controlled diet are positive ways to achieve physiological fitness and weight control.

CATEGORIES OF EXERCISE

Individual participation at any level of exercise should follow these progression of steps:

Start Flexibility and warm up exercises to strengthen and limber up the muscles and speed up the action of the heart and lungs, thus preparing the body for greater exertion and reducing the possibility of unnecessary strain. Warm up exercises should not be intense or involve any rapid jerking movements. The purpose is to gradually stretch the tissue, not tear it. This is accomplished by slow, smooth, even motion. Caution: Do not bounce on stretched tissue (tendons, ligaments and muscles).

Middle Cardiovascular or endurance activities have the special purpose of training the heart, circulatory and pulmonary systems. These activities must be sustained over at least a fifteen minute period. These exercises include: stationary running, running/jogging, rope skipping, aerobic circuit training (par course).

Finish Strength training is beneficial in toning, shaping and strengthening various muscle groups within the body. Strength and conditioning exercises can be done with free and/or machine weights and proper training.

PROGRAM LEVELS

Acceptable program activities are divided into three levels. Participants should progress at their own rate from level to level with the following schedule to serve as a guide.

Level 1	Beginning exercises	First Four Months
Level 2	Intermediate exercises	Fifth through Eight Months
Level 3	Advanced exercises	Ninth Month and Continuing

Certain members will progress faster than others. These programs are designed to let each individual progress at their level. Age, motivation, physical capabilities, and starting condition will dictate which exercise level will be employed by an individual.

PERSONAL CAPACITY

Members who engage in a regular fitness program, abstain for a period of time, then restart their program, usually must begin with a lower or less intense program than when they stopped exercising. This is due to the body deconditioning process.

FITNESS EVALUATION

Fitness evaluations will be conducted by the Phoenix Fire Department Health Center to determine the fitness level of department personnel. These evaluations will show members progress, provide a continuing insight to department fitness level, and indicate needed changes to keep the program on a beneficial basis.