

SUBJECT: FITNESS AND WELLNESS**SECTION:** 103.17**REVISED:** APRIL 3, 2011**PAGE(S):** 4

PURPOSE

The tasks that firefighters are faced with on the fireground are extremely demanding physically. These tasks are usually performed without any warm-up and under environmentally hostile conditions. This set of circumstances is conducive to a higher risk of injury. If injuries are to be reduced, the capacity to endure the physical demands of firefighting must be increased.

Regular physical fitness activities are very important to the total well-being of the firefighters. Participation in a fitness program not only helps to reduce injuries; it also increases strength and stamina, keeps our minds alert, releases various forms of personal stress, and can be a key factor in building cohesiveness among the firefighters.

This policy establishes guidelines for physical fitness and wellness activities among all members of the Reading Fire Department.

REFERENCES

1. *IAFF/ IAFC Wellness and Fitness Initiative, Second Edition*
2. *NFPA 1583: Standard on Health Related Fitness Programs for Firefighters, 2008 Edition.*
3. *NFPA 1582: Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments, 2007 Edition.*
4. *Ohio Administrative Code – Chapter 4123:1-21-07 Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health.*

POLICY

- A. It shall be the responsibility of all employees to actively participate in the fitness and wellness program.
- B. All personnel assigned to paid-on-call positions shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the fitness/wellness program. Participation in the program is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.
- C. Class E uniforms (102.01) shall be worn when participating on-duty.
- D. Those part-time and career members assigned to a shift shall be allotted at least 60 minutes per shift for physical fitness training and exercise between the hours of 9AM and 9PM (unless otherwise approved by shift supervisor prior). Adequate time shall also be allowed for the member to shower and change clothing appropriate for regular duty.

- E. All career members assigned to a shift shall accomplish a minimum of two (2) hours of prescribed physical training/exercise per calendar week, unless otherwise on granted leave. Off-duty fitness activities are also encouraged.
- F. All part-time members assigned to a shift shall accomplish a minimum of 60 minutes per calendar week, unless otherwise on granted leave. Off-duty fitness activities are also encouraged.
- G. Personnel participating in physical training should restrict non-emergent disruptions during this time, such as visitors and telephone calls.
- H. Those members assigned to 40-hour work week are encouraged to engage in fitness activities during lunch and after business hours. They may participate with the members assigned to shift if workload permits.
- I. Those members mandated to participate, once approved to participate, shall participate unless a physician issues limitations when the member returns to work following an injury, illness or assigned to light duty.
- J. Any individual excused to participate, as outlined previously, shall in no way inhibit others from participating. Non-participants will continue with their normal duties, or as otherwise directed by their supervisor.
- K. When planning for physical training/exercise, consider other activities being conducted within the building that might be interrupted (i.e. court or council meeting).
- L. All fitness activities shall be conducted within the first-due response area, with apparatus close to the activity, ensuring a timely response.
- M. If any fitness activity is missed or interrupted due to a response, the period may be continued or rescheduled at the discretion of the supervisor.
- N. Members that take advantage of other facilities on their days off may substitute on-shift physical training/exercise, with approval of the Lead Peer Fitness Trainer. The shift supervisor must be advised of this exception and may require periodic verification of this training/exercising.
- O. Members shall be professional, dignified and courteous in the presence of the public.
 - a. Avoid the use of violent, abusive or immoderate language at all times.
 - b. All activities must project a positive, high-fitness appearance that enhances the Fire Department's public image.
 - c. Aggressiveness and competitiveness must be controlled.

ALLOWABLE FITNESS ACTIVITIES

- A. All fitness and recreational activities are subject to the approval of the Fire Chief and should include activities that improve:
 - a. Cardiovascular fitness
 - b. Muscular strength and endurance
 - c. Body composition
 - d. Flexibility
- B. Members may engage in non-recreational activities prior to 4PM weekdays and noon on weekends when their work schedule allows and with the approval of the shift supervisor.

- C. Recreational activities are permitted after 4PM weekdays and after noon on weekends.
- D. The shift supervisor is responsible for ensuring that fitness activities are safe and free of citizen complaints. Activity must be a non-contact activity pursued in a safe manner.
- E. Recreational activities cannot involve non-fire department personnel without prior approval of the Fire Chief.
- F. Always warm up thoroughly with ample stretching.

EXERCISE FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- A. To encourage and facilitate exercise, the department will provide for space and equipment to support the physical fitness and wellness programs as the fitness committee recommends and the department's budget allows.
- B. Any members who utilize fitness equipment are expected to clean up after themselves and abide by any rules that have been established.
- C. In addition to using fire department facilities, units are encouraged to use public recreational facilities at parks, community centers, and gyms within the first-due response area.
 - a. Use only facilities with good lighting and non-slippery surfaces.
 - b. Never utilize a facility if people are waiting.
 - c. Maintain a low profile by parking apparatus inconspicuously; keeping radios low; being courteous, quiet and professional.

TRAINING RECORDS

- A. Any physical fitness training activity conducted while on-duty shall be recorded by each member, on the posted fitness log for the month.
- B. No physical fitness training completed while off-duty will be recorded on the fitness log, unless approved prior by the Lead Peer Fitness Trainer.
- C. The Lead Peer Fitness Trainer will maintain all participation records and submit quarterly reports to the Fire Chief.

PEER FITNESS ADVISORS AND TRAINERS

- A. Through the IAFF, the IAFC and the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the department will provide training to maintain a minimum of two fitness instructors.
 - a. Those members who received certification as a result of this training hold the designation of Peer Fitness Trainer (PFT).
 - b. Those who did not certify, but have completed the training, hold the designation of Peer Fitness Advisor (PFA).
- B. Peer Fitness Advisors/Trainers will be available upon request to assist personnel with their fitness goals, which may include:
 - a. A written performance program.
 - b. Demonstration of exercise techniques and equipment use.

- c. Provision of general health and nutrition information.
- C. If a PFA develops a workout program, it will need to be reviewed and signed off by a PFT.

ANNUAL MEDICAL/FITNESS ASSESSMENTS

- A. Personnel shall receive a mandatory annual medical examination as required within these written guidelines and as a component of the wellness-fitness program.
- B. Personnel required to participate (following medical clearance) will attend a confidential annual fitness assessment administered by a PFA or PFT, as outlined in the Wellness-Fitness Initiative.
 - a. The primary purpose of the fitness assessment is to provide a “fitness report card” to the individual for their benefit.
 - b. These annual fitness assessments are non-punitive.
 - c. Members can seek additional assessments throughout the course of the year, through the PFA or PFT (also confidential).
- C. Once the assessment is completed, the PFT will provide feedback to the individual regarding his/her current level of fitness, level of improvement since past assessments, and a suggested exercise program.
- D. Generic information from the assessments may also be used to populate Reading Fire Department and/or IAFF data bases for the purposes of identifying fitness related trends of fire service members.