



HEALTH & FITNESS

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I. POLICY

The department requires all employees to maintain a satisfactory level of general health and physical fitness to enable them to perform the required duties of their jobs.

II. CRITERIA

All sworn police officers, regardless of rank or duty assignment, must maintain a level of health and fitness that will allow them to physically subdue and arrest violent criminals, and to control violent mentally disturbed persons. This high level of health and fitness may be difficult to maintain for older officers or those whose work assignments do not require daily exercise. It is especially incumbent on these officers to make a determined effort to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of health and fitness.

Civilian employees do not make arrests or subdue violent prisoners, but are expected to maintain a level of health and fitness that will prevent excessive use of disability leave, and will maximize job performance. However, because civilians' job assignments are less physically demanding than those of sworn officers, the expected level of health and fitness for civilian employees is less than for police officers.

III. HEALTH GUIDELINES

In order to maintain a level of general health and physical fitness, employees should be guided by the following factors:

- A. Employees should receive proper nutrition by eating a balanced diet to include proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water.
- B. Employees should receive adequate rest and relaxation.
- C. Employees should undergo periodic medical and dental examinations to assess their physical condition.
- D. Employees are encouraged to keep physically fit and engage in exercise programs necessary to maintain such fitness.
- E. Employees should avoid health-threatening factors such as tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse.
- F. Physical fitness is improved by physical activity and exercise and is one of the most important keys to good health. Physical fitness consists of many components that can be identified as health-related.

IV. FOUR COMPONENTS OF PHYSICAL FITNESS

A. Cardiovascular endurance is the ability of the circulatory and respiratory systems to supply fuel, most importantly oxygen, during sustained physical activity. Employees with good cardiovascular endurance have less risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, low back pain, and obesity.

B. Muscular endurance and strength are the ability of certain groups of muscles to exert force for many repetitions or successive exertions. Persons who possess good muscular endurance and strength have greater working capacity, less chance of injury, and less risk of contracting back pain.

C. Flexibility is the range of motion available in a joint. Persons who possess good flexibility are less likely to injure muscles and joints, and have less risk of contracting back, leg and neck pain.

D. Body fat composition is one of the most important aspects of a member's fitness profile. Decreased physical activity is directly related to excess body fat. Excess body fat on overall health can be very debilitating. Proper diet and exercise will reduce excess body fat.

V. PHYSICAL FITNESS GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are offered to assist employees in attaining optimal benefits and enjoyment from a physical fitness program.

- A. Employees should have their physicians' approval before undertaking a conditioning or reducing program.
- B. Employees should consider their age when choosing a physical fitness program. Older employees may not be capable of performing physical activity as they did in their younger years.

There is probably no one best physical fitness program for all employees. Employees should choose a physical fitness program that satisfies their particular needs and interests. In order to attain benefits from a physical fitness program, it is essential that a regular, progressive program be developed to meet the specific needs of the individual.

A physical fitness program should be performed on a regular basis. Three times a week for at least thirty minutes is suggested. Employees should set goals which they have a reasonable chance to attain, and they should measure their progress. A physical fitness program should be started gradually to avoid soreness or injury. Physical fitness programs should be chosen carefully. Some exercises do more harm than good.

A physical fitness program should consist of exercises that reduce body fat, improve the cardiovascular system, improve strength/strength endurance and it should increase flexibility and maintain the fitness required for police work.

VI. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Employees are strongly encouraged to undergo a periodic physical examination to ensure their health and fitness. The frequency of the examination should increase as the employee ages. Current health insurance benefits cover some or all of the costs of a physical examination, depending on the employee's choice of health insurance provider. Physical examinations are required in the following cases:

A. Pre-Employment Physical

Applicants for the position of police officer are required to undergo a pre-employment physical examination after they have successfully completed the initial parts of the application and testing process.

B. Fitness for Duty Physical Examination

An employee may be required to undergo a physical examination to determine his or her continued fitness for duty in the position currently occupied, upon a written request by any supervisor in the employee's chain of command. Such a request must be supported by documented evidence that the employee's job performance is substandard as a direct result of an obvious or suspected physical impairment or condition. This request will be directed to the employee's bureau commander, who will approve or deny the request based on the evidence presented. The examination will be conducted by a licensed physician employed or contracted by the County. Police Personnel will coordinate the scheduling of the examination.

C. Cost of Required Physicals

The County will pay all costs of physical examinations required of current employees and police applicants. Current employees will be granted leave when required to undergo a physical, or will be paid according to the terms of their applicable labor contract, if the physical cannot be scheduled during the employee's normal work hours.

VII. VOLUNTARY PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT

A. Voluntary physical fitness assessments will be scheduled by the Training *Division*, for those Department personnel (sworn and civilian) who wish to determine their physical fitness condition. The assessment, developed through the Aerobic Research Center, will consist of a series of exercises which will measure the three components of physical fitness:

1. Pushups - measures strength/strength endurance of the upper body.
2. Sit-ups - measures strength/strength endurance in the abdominal area.
3. 1.5 mile run/walk - measures cardiovascular endurance.

B. Any employee (sworn or civilian) who takes and achieves an average of a level three or higher (see Appendix) on all three exercises will receive a physical fitness ribbon. The ribbon may be worn for one calendar year beginning in January and in accordance with Index Code 301(V). To continue wearing the ribbon, personnel must participate in one of the scheduled physical fitness assessments each fall. The Training *Division* will provide a list to the Bureau Commanders of those personnel authorized to wear the physical fitness ribbon for each upcoming calendar year.

C. Employees who receive all level ones in all three assessment exercises will be classified as superior and will receive a ribbon with a star.

1. Employees who receive two level ones and one level two will be classified as a level one.
2. Employees who receive two level twos or above and one level three will be classified as a level two.
3. Employees must receive at least a level three on each exercise to receive a level three.

VIII. MANDATORY PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT

Maryland Public Safety Article 3-209 requires all sworn officers certified under Public Safety Article 3-201 pass a mandatory, yearly, physical fitness assessment as defined by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission. The Training Division will administer the assessment as part of yearly in-service or during specially scheduled sessions and maintain appropriate records of testing.

IX. PROPONENT UNIT: Training *Division*.

X. CANCELLATION: This directive cancels Index Code 719, issued *12-05-14*.