POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 350

Employee Wellness, Fitness and Departmental Gymnasium

Date Issued: January 1, 2017
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1. PURPOSE:

The Worcester Police Department recognizes that the physical and mental health of its employees is essential to effective law enforcement and to the well-being of the individuals who serve this department. The demands of police work—including shift work, exposure to critical incidents, physical confrontations, and sustained operational stress—place extraordinary demands on the body and mind. This policy affirms the department's commitment to supporting employee fitness and wellness, and establishes guidelines for use of the departmental gymnasium.

2. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Worcester Police Department to encourage and support the physical fitness and overall wellness of all employees, sworn and non-sworn. The department believes that employees who maintain good physical health and attend to their mental and emotional well-being are better prepared to serve the public, more resilient in the face of the unique challenges of police work, and more likely to enjoy long, healthy careers and retirements.

The department supports employee fitness and wellness through the following: maintaining a gymnasium facility at police headquarters for use by employees; permitting on-duty use of health and wellness time during an employee's tour of duty, with supervisory approval; providing access to the Stress Unit, peer support resources, and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for mental health and emotional wellness support; and encouraging employees to pursue personal fitness goals and to make use of available wellness resources.

The department does not impose mandatory fitness standards or testing. The fitness and wellness resources described in this policy are provided on a voluntary basis to support employees who choose to invest in their health and readiness.

3. MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS:

The Worcester Police Department recognizes that mental health is as important as physical health to overall officer wellness and operational effectiveness. The cumulative effects of critical incident exposure, traumatic calls for service, shift disruption, and the daily pressures of police work can affect any employee regardless of rank, experience, or assignment.

The department encourages all employees to make use of available mental health and wellness resources, including the Stress Unit, peer support personnel, the Employee Assistance Program, critical incident stress debriefings, and any other programs offered by the department or the City. Seeking assistance for mental health or emotional wellness concerns is a sign of

professional maturity and personal strength, and the department is committed to fostering a culture in which employees feel supported in doing so.

Additional resources and procedures related to employee support services, critical incident stress management, and line-of-duty injury support are addressed in Policy and Procedure No. 120 (Stress Program) and Policy and Procedure No. 80 (Injured on Duty).

4. DEPARTMENTAL GYMNASIUM:

A. General

The Worcester Police Department has a gymnasium facility at police headquarters for use by employees. The gymnasium is provided as a resource to support employee fitness and wellness.

B. Equipment Ownership and Maintenance

The gymnasium equipment is purchased and maintained by department employees through voluntary contributions. The purchase, repair, replacement, and upkeep of gymnasium equipment is not the financial responsibility of the Worcester Police Department or the City of Worcester. The department appreciates the initiative of employees who invest in and maintain this shared resource for the benefit of their colleagues.

C. Authorized Users

The departmental gymnasium may be used by the following persons: active employees of the Worcester Police Department (sworn and non-sworn); retired Worcester police officers; and members of the immediate family or significant other of an active employee, when accompanied by the employee.

D. Hours and On-Duty Use

The gymnasium should remain open during such hours as the Chief of Police may determine.

Active employees may use their health and wellness time during their tour of duty with the prior approval of their commanding officer. The duration of on-duty health and wellness time should be at the discretion of the commanding officer based on operational needs, staffing levels, and the employee's assignment and workload. Employees should remain available for recall during on-duty health and wellness time and should return to duty immediately when directed.

E. Rules of Use

All persons using the gymnasium should be in good physical condition and have no known disability, impairment, or ailment that would make exercise detrimental to their health, safety, or physical condition. Persons with medical conditions affecting their ability to exercise safely should consult with their physician before using the gymnasium.

No gymnasium equipment should be removed from the facility. Violation of this provision may be subject to disciplinary action.

Weight training should be limited to persons sixteen (16) years of age or older, and should only be conducted when at least one other person is present in the gymnasium.

Children under fourteen (14) years of age should not be permitted near fitness equipment.

All persons using the gymnasium are expected to exercise reasonable care, maintain equipment in a clean and orderly condition after use, and report any equipment damage or safety hazards to a supervisor.

All persons using the gymnasium do so at their own risk. Users should be aware that physical exercise carries inherent risks of injury.

F. Injury Reporting

Any injury sustained by any person during their on-duty wellness time should be reported forthwith in writing through channels to the Chief of Police.

Employees who are injured while engaging in their on-duty wellness time during their tour of duty should refer to Policy and Procedure No. 80 (Injured on Duty) regarding IOD eligibility and reporting requirements.

Per:

Paul B. Saucier
Chief of Police

Revisions:

April 16, 2026–

Complete revision of Policy 350 (originally issued January 1, 2017 under Chief Sargent as "Gymnasium Policy"). Policy reframed as Employee Wellness, Fitness and Departmental Gymnasium to reflect the department's commitment to physical and mental health. Added sections addressing fitness and wellness values and mental health support. Removed 50-minute on-duty time limit; on-duty gymnasium use now at commanding officer discretion based on operational needs and assignment. Clarified equipment ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Added cross-references to Policies 80 and 120. Updated to current WPD template with Chief Saucier signature.

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