

Waterloo Vol Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

PHYSICAL ABILITY POLICY

1. Participation in the Department as a responding member is a privilege. Only those persons who are physically and mentally fit within the meaning of this policy shall be qualified and permitted to perform in such role. No person is entitled to perform any role, regardless of their qualifications. The Department's medical provider is the ultimate authority regarding whether or not a member meets the required physical abilities for the role performed by the member.
2. All candidates for active membership shall successfully complete a physical exam provided by the Department's medical provider prior to the Department's final approval of membership. Approval of membership may be contingent upon successful completion of a physical for the position applied. Should a candidate obtain a physical exam prior to acceptance by the Department, such candidate's results shall not be provided to the Department for consideration until after a decision on membership has been made by the Department. All new active members shall be offered the Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers and a test for TB.
3. Every individual in the department must successfully complete a physical, for their position, as determined by the Department's medical provider. Physicals will be administered by the Department's medical provider when due. If a member has not had or successfully completed an exam within three months, they shall be removed from active duty and shall not respond to emergencies, participate in drills or trainings or represent the Department at any event until such an exam is successfully completed. The Chief's Committee will compile a list of all members who have not completed their physical during the prior calendar year. At the Chief's Committee meeting in April, the Chief's Committee will remove the privileges of the non-compliant members of performing active duties. The Chief's Committee will inform the Chief and send letters to all non-compliant members and send a copy of the list to the Department President.

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4. Members shall only be qualified to perform in the positions for which they are physically and mentally qualified, and if there are no such positions, then they shall be removed from active duty until they are so qualified.
5. A member shall be subject to discipline for performing in any role if they have been removed from such position.
6. Any member which is aware that it cannot meet the physical and mental fitness requirements for a prolonged period shall report the same to the Chief and shall not respond to emergencies or participate in any active event.
7. When a member is given medical restrictions, or returns to active membership status, it is the Department's responsibility to inform the Chief and firematic officers of the changes in the person's membership status.
8. Any member returning to active duty, or returning or moving to a more strenuous and physically demanding position must complete a physical. The member will, before visiting the Department physician, inform the Department Chief of their request. The Department will direct the member to schedule an appointment. The Department will inform the Chief as soon as possible. The member is to inform the Chief of his/her understanding of their request. If the Chief needs additional information he/she will contact the vendor.
9. Any active member who has an obvious physical injury or disability which prohibits them from performing any active role shall be placed on medical leave. The Chief shall be notified by the member or a member's representative of such condition.
10. Fire Chief will be a contact point for the vendor service organization to assure assistance is provided when required. The vendor service organization will provide a contact person for the Fire Department.

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11. If a member declines a service from the vendor organization they will be asked to sign a vendor supplied form indicating their decision.
12. The vendor organization will provide monthly billing for services provided.
13. All active members shall successfully complete a physical provided by the Department each year regardless of age or operational assignment. Failure to do so shall result in removal of active status until such requirement is met.
14. The Fire Chief will provide all members with the authorization to schedule an exam appointment with the Department's exam group.
15. The Department will arrange for the physician and medical assistants to perform the exam and review the results with the active member. If the member wishes the physician to provide the exam results to their personal physician, the member will be required to complete a written form requesting this disclosure. The physician will maintain all confidential records and the fire chief will only be provided a summary indicating that the member has passed, failed or passed with restrictions. The Chief will be informed within five (5) days after receipt of the results of each physical, by mail. The Chief will confirm with the member who has restrictions that he/she understands the limitations placed on him/her as a result of the exam findings. The Chief will inform all firematic officers that the member has either been placed in inactive status or the member has restrictions. If a member is asked to perform duties that are not allowed per restrictions, the member must inform the person giving the direction and must NOT comply with directions that compromise any restrictions. The Chief will confer with the staff conducting the physical exams if clarification is required, may request information on the member's abilities and limitations, but will not request any information on the individual's physical health. This summary will be kept in the member's secured personnel folder.
16. The categories of Active Membership for which physical requirements shall be issued are:

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- Interior Firefighter
 - Exterior Firefighter/Scene Support
 - Fire Police
17. The Department shall maintain a list of physically demanding tasks for each firefighting category. A person must be physically and mentally qualified to perform all of the tasks for any category for which he desires to perform on an emergency scene.
 18. All physical exams shall be performed by the Department's medical provider or company chosen by the Department. The Department shall pay for all initial physical exams. The treatment or further examination of any discovered condition, illness or medical problem shall be the responsibility of the member and not the Department, unless such is covered by VFBL.
 19. If the Department's medical provider is unable to determine whether or not a member meets the physical fitness standards without the assistance of a specialist, the Department will not pay for the necessary exams of the specialist and the applicant or member shall provide the specialist's report to the Department's physician for review.
 20. No second opinions will be paid for by the Department. Challenging opinions are also not permitted and will not be considered.
 21. Only those persons who are deemed physically capable of performing those duties which may be assigned to them during emergencies shall be qualified to do such duties.
 22. Persons with known heart disease or heart conditions, epilepsy, or emphysema, may not participate in interior emergency activities unless the Department's medical provider certifies that the individual's fitness allows him to participate in such activities.

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23. Persons may only perform for those operational assignments for which they are physically and mentally qualified.
24. In order to serve in any of the following capacities, a person must be physically and mentally competent to perform the following tasks without jeopardizing his health or safety, or another's health or safety, due to health related conditions or physical or mental disabilities. The Department's medical provider is the ultimate authority regarding whether or not a member meets the required physical abilities for the role performed by the member. If the Department's medical provider determines that a member is not capable of performing any particular required task for a particular assignment, the member may be reassigned to a different operational assignment at the discretion of the Fire Chief.

The Department's medical provider or other qualified health individual shall assure that an individual can satisfy the following requirements, subject to review and confirmation by the Department's medical provider:

Interior firefighters

- Wear 60 pounds of gear for up to two (2) hours.
- Climb a 24' ladder wearing such gear, carrying 15 pounds of equipment.
- Crawl for 30 minutes while wearing such gear.
- Hear voices at a reasonable audible level from the distance of 15', though use of a hearing aid is permissible
- Hear radio communications at a reasonable audible level 6" from a radio speaker, though use of a hearing aid is permissible
- See at least 100' without any significant impairment, though use of corrective glasses is acceptable
- Drag a person of 175 pounds utilizing two arms
- Carry a 12' ladder by oneself and place such a ladder against a building
- Don an air pack and mask and breath through such mask while on air for 45 minutes

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- Be physically and mentally capable of performing all of the above while wearing an air pack
- Bend, reach and flex so as to be able to lift and place heavy objects
- Speak clearly so as to be understood
- Have the mental capacity to understand and competently deal with hazardous emergency situations
- Be able to work for prolonged periods in the dark and heat and confined spaces

Exterior firefighter /Scene Support

- Wear 60 pounds of gear for up to two (2) hours
- Hear voices at a reasonable audible level from the distance of 15', though use of a hearing aid is permissible
- Hear radio communications at a reasonable audible level 6" from the radio speaker, though use of a hearing aid is permissible
- See at least 100' without any significant impairment, though use of corrective glasses is acceptable
- Drag a person of 175 pounds utilizing two arms
- Carry a 12' ladder by oneself and place such a ladder against a building
- Don an air pack and mask and breathe through such mask while on air for 45 minutes
- Lift at least 50 pounds and hold such weight for at least 5 minutes

- Walk rapidly carrying 25 pounds of equipment for at least 15 minutes
- Pull a weight of 50 pounds for a distance of 100'
- Bend, reach and flex so as to be able to lift and place objects
- Speak clearly so as to be understood
- Have the mental capacity to understand and competently deal with hazardous emergency situations

Fire Police

- Wear 30 pounds of gear for up to two (2) hours

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- Drive and operate a motor vehicle weighing up to 10,000 pounds
 - Fulfill all physical and mental fitness requirements for an operator of a motor vehicle
 - Hear actual voices at a reasonable audible level from the distance of 15', though use of a hearing aid is permissible
 - Hear radio communications at a reasonable audible level 36" from the radio speaker, though use of a hearing aid is permissible
 - See at least 100' without any significant impairment, though use of corrective glasses is acceptable
 - Lift at least 25 pounds and hold such weight for at least 5 minutes
 - Walk rapidly carrying 15 pounds of equipment for at least 15 minutes
 - Have the flexibility to bend in order to place cones and flares on the street
 - Stand for at least 60 minutes
 - Speak clearly so as to be understood
- (a) Have the mental capacity to understand and competently deal with hazardous emergency situations
- (b) Possess the agility to be able to quickly avoid unexpected oncoming traffic

The following reflects the initial elements associated with the physical examination for each position:

Interior Firefighter Physical

- Review and authorize OSHA Respirator Questionnaire
- Complete physical examination
- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Pulmonary function test
- Snellen vision exam
- Audiometric testing (OSHA)
- Urine dip and Hernia exam

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- Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers (offered but need not be accepted)
- EKG
- Interpretation by physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up as needed

Exterior firefighter Physical

- Complete physical examination
- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Pulmonary function test
- Snellen vision exam
- Audiometric testing (OSHA)
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers (offered, but need not be accepted)
- EKG
- Interpretation by physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up as needed

Fire Police Physical

- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Snellen vision exam
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers (offered but need not be accepted)
- EKG for members over 40 years of age or if it is medically necessary as determined by Department's vendor
- interpretation by physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up as needed

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New Member Physical

- Review and authorize OSHA Respirator Questionnaire
- Complete physical examination
- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Pulmonary function test
- Snellen vision exam
- Audiometric testing (OSHA)
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- EKG
- Interpretation by physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up