



NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

Department of EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TOPIC: Physical Fitness	SOG #: 2.23
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Written by: Hollye B. Carpenter	Revised: 01/01/2013
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PURPOSE

The Northampton County Department of EMS recognizes the intense physical and mental demands of emergency responders and therefore establishes this policy as a commitment to supporting a level of personal fitness and health, both of which are strongly recommended for the short and long term well-being of each member and necessary to effectively carry out the duties of the Department.

SCOPE

All EMS providers.

CONTENT

This document establishes guidelines for physical fitness activities for Northampton County Department of EMS (NCEMS) staff members:

1. It is increasingly apparent that the physical and mental demands of EMS services are most like those of professional athletes. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain a physical and mental fitness commensurate with the demands of their respective positions.
2. Participation in on-duty fitness activities is strongly encouraged but not mandatory at this time.
3. Individuals choosing not to participate in fitness activities shall in no way inhibit others from participating. Non-participants will continue with their normal duties, or as directed by the Duty Supervisor.
4. Call response notwithstanding, personnel shall be allotted at least 60 minutes per shift for physical fitness training and exercise.
5. All fitness activities shall be conducted within a 500' radius of assigned units or station and will ensure a timely response.
6. If the fitness period is missed or interrupted due to a response, the period may be continued or rescheduled that day at the discretion of the Duty Supervisor.



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7. Members shall be professional and courteous in the presence of the public. All activities must project a positive, high-fitness appearance that enhances the department's public image.
8. Duty uniform may be replaced with the following during fitness activities:
 - a) NCEMS shirt or job shirt, depending on the environment, preferably maintaining identification of the department;
 - b) shorts or sweats (preferably navy);
 - c) appropriate shoes for the type of fitness activity being performed.
9. Time will also be allowed, after fitness, for showering as necessary.

ALLOWABLE FITNESS ACTIVITIES

1. All fitness and recreational activities are subject to the approval of the EMS Director and should include activities that improve:
 - a) cardiovascular fitness
 - b) muscular strength and endurance
 - c) body composition
 - d) flexibility
2. Contact and semi-contact sports such as football, basketball, and street hockey are not permitted at any time. Weapons related sports are also not permitted at any time.
3. The Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that fitness activities are safe and free of citizen complaints.

FIVE IMPORTANT STEPS TO MINIMIZE SPORTS INJURIES:

- Limbering Up: Walking or jogging in place to increase circulation and oxygen delivery to muscles (3 - 5 minutes).
- Stretching: After limbering up, 5 - 10 minutes of stretching exercises should be done. Each stretch should be done slowly without any ballistic (bounding) movements and should be held for a minimum of 20 - 30 seconds.
- Warming Up: Start exercising at approximately 40% - 50% of your maximum heart rate for 5 - 10 minutes.
- Cooling Down and Cool-Down Stretching: Allow your heart rate to come down slowly for five minutes after aerobic activity. Never stop abruptly. Stretching is the same as before.



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EXERCISES WHICH HELP TO IMPROVE ENDURANCE & MUSCULAR STRENGTH:

- Pull Ups: Hang from bar, hands shoulder width apart, palms facing out. Pull chin up to bar, slowly lower body until arms are fully extended. Repeat as many as possible, three times a week.
- Modified Pull Ups: Hang from low bar (approximately chest high) with feet out in front and your body at a 45 degree angle. With weight evenly distributed between feet and hands, raise your chin to the bar and lower slowly.
- Bent Arm Hang: Use a stool or chair to raise yourself into a chin-up position. Hold this position for 10 to 20 seconds, three times.
- Sit-Ups: Bent knees with hands behind head; focus eyes straight ahead; touch shoulder blades to floor. Repeat 30 to 40 times.
- Push-ups: Place hands shoulder width apart, extend arms fully; lower chest to floor keeping back straight, repeat 30 to 40 times.
- Modified Push-ups: Same as push up except knees support lower body. Keep back straight.
- Dips: Hands on parallel bars shoulder width apart. Begin with arms fully extended, lower upper body until chest is at bar level. Repeat as many as possible, three times a week.
- Grip Strength: Squeeze sponge rubber ball or spring hand grips 30 times with each hand. Wrist curls with dumbbells, palms up.
- Weight Training: Upper Body -- bench press, butterfly, overhead press, and bicep curls. Lower Body -- leg extension, leg curl, leg raises, half squats. Do not weight train on consecutive days. You may alternate upper and lower body training. Number of repetitions recommended is 8 to 15. Use spotter for free weight presses.
- Vigorous Aerobic Activity: Needs to be sustained for a minimum of 20 - 30 minutes.