General Order Number: 08-15	**Effective Date:** January 2010
Division: Health and Safety	
Chapter: Wellness and Fitness	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Marc S. Bashoor	**Revision Date:** N/A

POLICY

The purpose of this GO is to improve the overall fitness and performance level of all members and employees of the Prince Georges County Fire/EMS Department. This GO establishes a clear and defined commitment to improving and strengthening the human beings that are the foundation of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department and reducing the fiscal impact of injury and illness.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Goals

The three major goals of this GO are the following:

A. Individual and Departmental **safety.**

- Decreasing injuries and illnesses
- Increasing job performance and confidence
- Decreasing physiological and mental stress
- Manage overweight and high risk employees through fitness and behavior modification

B. The individual and overall **readiness** of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department

- Maintain a more physical and mentally prepared fire service
- Increasing the performance of physically strenuous job tasks in emergency and non-emergency situations
- Educating fire service personnel that total body wellness will lead to more fulfilling careers and personnel lives as it positively reflects on the community that is served

C. Implementation of individual and organizational wellness and fitness **training.**

- Start and establish a wellness and fitness program that is proven and acts as a solid foundation to build on.

- Establish wellness and fitness programs that are flexible, individualized, and easy to improve over time.
- Establish wellness and fitness programs that are feasible, fiscally responsible, and easily funded.

2. Description

Wellness and Fitness program components revolve around the systems of Total Health Risk Management. They are designed to protect the health and well being of the individuals in the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department and decrease the fiscal impact of injury, illness, and sick leave use. Individual health and fitness performance will be *confidential* and accessible to individual personnel through the Risk Management Office. Three major systems of health and safety are focused on:

- Health and Fitness of Individuals
- Prevention and Protection from Injury and Illness
- Proper Medical and Rehabilitative Care

The following Wellness and Fitness Program components support Total Health Risk Management Systems:

- Annual Medical Physical Program
- Injury/Illness Back To Work Program
- Fitness Training Programs
- Peer Fitness Trainer Programs
- Pre-Hire Medical Screening Program
- Pre-Hire Fitness Preparation Program
- Recruit Fitness Training Program
- Fitness Center Operations

The program components shall utilize a board certified physician designated by the Fire/EMS Department to provide professional expertise and oversight in the areas of wellness and fitness as they relate to the fire service. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall understand the physiological, psychological, and environmental demands placed on fire service personnel.

The program shall also utilize a Wellness and Fitness Coordinator designated by the Fire/EMS Department who, under the oversight of the Wellness and Fitness Medical Director, will coordinate and be responsible for Departmental Wellness and Fitness.

Annual Medical Physical Program

1. The Risk Management Office (RMO) shall schedule the employee's medical examinations annually.

2. Employee shall report to the examining location for their medical examination at the designated time and sign in. If the employee is unable to keep the scheduled appointment due to an unforeseen conflict prior to the appointment (i.e. emergency holdover or emergency leave), the employee's supervisor shall contact RMO about the conflict as soon as possible to reschedule the examination.

3. At the completion of the medical examination, if the employee has not been advised of failing any portion of the medical examination, then the employee will sign out of the examining facility and if on duty, shall return to full duty. Upon notification from the examining facility that the employee has successfully completed all portions of the medical physical, RMO will notify the employee, in writing, that they are fit for duty based on the minimum medical standards.

4. The notification will also advise the employee if any issues should be discussed and/or followed up with their personal physician. The employee may obtain a copy of their medical examination report from RMO by submitting a written request to RMO.

5. If the employee has been advised of failing any portion of the medical examination at the completion of the examination, then:

6. The employee will sign out of the examining facility and immediately report to RMO.

7. RMO will advise the employee to see their personal physician. The employee will have up to 10 days to submit a course of action to be taken by the employee to facilitate the successful completion of the medical examination.

8. If it is determined the employee has a job-related injury or medical condition, the appropriate steps, in accordance with General Order 08-20, Reporting Injuries on the Job, will be followed and the employee will be afforded disability leave or light duty under the direction of their medical documentation at that time.

9. If it is determined the employee has an on job-related injury or medical condition, the appropriate steps in accordance with General Order 08-11, Non-Service Connected Temporary Disability, Parental Leave and FMLA Leave, will be followed and the employee may request sick leave or light duty under the direction of the medical documentation at that time.

10. Once the injury or medical condition has been resolved, the employee is still required to successfully complete the medical examination.

11. If no injury or medical condition is identified, RMO will place the employee in a non-operational status and may consider the employee for a light duty assignment. As part of this assignment, the employee will comply with General Order 08-25, Sworn/Uniformed Personnel Physical Fitness Standard. General Order 08-25 may be modified to satisfy the recommendations of the employee's physician.

12. If no medical reason is submitted for the failure of the medical examination, a retest will be scheduled within 30 days.

13. Physical examinations conducted by private physicians or other sources will not be substituted for the required Department medical examination. However, if using the Department's standards, the Department's examining physician may consider those results to determine the health and physical capabilities of the employee. These physical examinations will be at the employee's expense.

14. Upon notification of second failure of medical examination:
    a. Employee will immediately report to RMO for counseling and be placed on Leave Without Pay (LWOP). The employee may request to be placed on emergency annual leave. Notification will be made to the Fire Chief of the employee's leave status.
    b. RMO will schedule the employee for an Independent Medical Evaluation (IME).
    c. The results of the IME may be reviewed at the next Medical Advisory Board (MAB) meeting.

15. The Medical Advisory Board may recommend the employee be:
    a. Recommended medically fit for full duty. The appointing authority may return the employee to full duty.
    b. Afforded more time to successfully complete the medical examination. The appointing authority may grant additional time to successfully complete the medical examination.
    c. Deemed medically unfit for full duty for their specific job classification and have their case reviewed by the Disability Review Board (DRB). Pending the results of the DRB meeting, the appointing authority may take the appropriate action as per Personnel Law, Subtitle 16, Division 12, Section 16-189, Separation --disability.
    d. Deemed unfit for full duty for their specific job classification. The appointing authority may take the appropriate action as per Personnel Law, Subtitle 16, Division 13, Section 16-194, Performance-related disciplinary actions.

16. All employees are required to maintain a minimum aerobic capacity of 13 METS (42 ml/kg/min) that is determined during an employee's medical physical.

17. All employees are required to maintain a Body Mass Index of twenty-nine (29) or less based on standard body composition BMI chart, clinical judgment and the physician conducting annual medical physicals for employees. (Attachment 1)

18. All employees that are unsuccessful in passing any portion of the Departmental medical physical may consult with the Wellness and Fitness Medical Director for support and guidance concerning their medical condition. It shall be an ongoing objective of the Department and the Risk Management Office to assist personnel in obtaining the best medical care that is needed to return to full duty where possible. This also includes personnel affected by occupational injuries or illnesses in their rehabilitation to return to light duty and/or to full duty.

Injury/Illness Back To Work Program

1. The Risk Management Office will conduct IOJ/light duty/FMLA case review meetings on a weekly basis. Members who fail their annual medical physical and/or need medical follow-up will also be reviewed during the case review meeting.

2. The Risk Management Office may contact the Prince Georges County Medical Review Officer and the Departmental Wellness/Fitness Medical Director for consultation and individual case management.

3. The Risk Management Office and Wellness/Fitness Coordinator may assist personnel to coordinate injury/illness follow-up medical appointments to facilitate healthier and proper back to work timeframes.

4. The Departmental Wellness/Fitness Coordinator and Peer Fitness Trainers may liaison with physical therapists to enhance and assist individuals' treatment and fitness plans.

Physical Fitness Training Programs

1. Physical Fitness Training – A minimum of one and one-half (1-1/2) hours three (3) days each week will be provided for personnel on day work and two (2) hours every work shift for employees on shift work. The facilitation of physical fitness training shall be realistic and appropriate as emergency call volume can permit. Records of all physical fitness activities will be documented on the Physical Fitness Training Record. (Attachment #2)

2. Physical fitness training shall utilize the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1583 Standard on Health-Related Fitness Programs for Fire Fighters to develop and implement physical fitness training activities and exercise regimens.

3. While on duty, the following physical fitness training activities and exercise regimens should be followed. Activities not written within this General Order are not authorized to be performed while on duty. Personnel will consider and utilize the following components:

   - Warm-up and cool-down exercises – Each workout session should begin with at least a 5-10 minute warm-up period. This will prepare the body for more strenuous exercise and decreases the risk of injury, and improves performance. 10 -15 minute warm-down periods should follow each workout. This period gradually reduces exercise intensity and should be followed by stretching to promote flexibility and reduce muscle soreness.

   - Cardiopulmonary fitness – Aerobic workouts enhance the bodies' ability to take in, transport, and utilize oxygen; improved muscular activity for a prolonged period of time. Activities that include large muscle groups in a rhythmic continuous manner increase aerobic fitness. Authorized on duty aerobic activities include walking, running, elliptical trainers, cycling, rowing, stair climbing, and rope skipping. Considerations in determination of aerobic exercise activities should include the following:

- Individual preferences
- Availability of proper equipment
- Risk of injury versus benefit of activity
- Specificity to occupational demands

- Muscular strength and muscular endurance – Activities that provides resistance that muscles have to overcome can be used to improve muscular strength and endurance. Muscular strength and endurance modalities will be separated into four groups:

  - *Machine Weights*. Equipment that uses pulleys, cables, and weight to provide resistance to the muscles. The controlled movements of machine weights are ideal for starting a muscular fitness program and/or individuals recovering from muscular-skeleton injuries.
  - *Free Weights.* Equipment that uses barbells, dumbbells, kettle bells and/or tools and equipment (e.g., hose bundles, ladders, tool bags) to provide resistance to the muscles. The balance between weight and individual while lifting weight improves strength transfer to real-life movements during emergency operations.
  - *Calisthenics.* Participants perform exercises using an individual's body weight to provide resistance to the muscles (e.g., push ups, lunges, leg lifts, free squats, core stabilization exercises) can be used. Since fire service personnel support their body weight and additional loads such as PPE and SCBA, using a weighted vest while performing calisthenics can benefit participants.
  - *Circuit Weight Training*. Participants perform a series of exercises using a variety of modes (e.g., machine weights, free weights, calisthenics) organized to work all major muscle groups. Work periods are 15 – 30 seconds long. And rest intervals between exercises vary from 15 seconds to one minute.

- Functional Physical Fitness Training – (Attachment #3) This training is designed to offer the opportunity to combine physical fitness training with heavy exertion skills and movements required of job tasks that are specific to emergency operations. Examples of activities would include:

  - High rise operations
  - Ladder and heavy equipment operations
  - Hose line deployment (charged and uncharged)
  - Cot and EMS operations involving stairs
  - RIC operations
  - Extrication operations

  Note: Personnel and supervisors should be creative and consider real life scenarios when developing Functional Physical Fitness Training activities. To ensure that realistic and appropriate activities are performed, crews should consider the following guidelines:

Specific - What is the specific task?
Measurable - What will be measured?
Attainable - Is the task to hard or difficult?
Relevant - Is the task applicable to the needs of emergency operations?
Time-bound – Can the task be timed?

- Battalions Chiefs and company officers should consider in station, parking lot and first due geographical locations to perform this training. Training and tasks can be conducted individually or as crew. Records of all Functional Physical Fitness Training will also be documented on the Physical Fitness Training Record. (Attachment #2)

- Battalions Chiefs and company officers should forward copies of Functional Physical Fitness Training forms to facilitate research and development of improved fitness training and safety within the Department.

4. Dress requirements – Personnel are allowed to wear tee shirts, sweat shirts, sweat pants, shorts, balls caps, wool caps, and while en route to or from the exercise sites. All clothing will be navy blue in color. Tee shirts, sweat shirts, and ball caps will be required to have Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department logos or seals that will identify personnel during emergency incidents that occur during physical fitness training. Union logos will be permissible in addition to any departmental logos or seals.

5. Temporary inability to participate in the Department's Physical Fitness Program must be documented using the forms; Attending Physician's Statement and Temporary Disability Form. These forms shall be forwarded via chain-of-command to the Occupational Safety and Health Office

6. All injuries as a result of the Physical Fitness Training, while on duty and adhering to this General Order will be considered on the job injuries. On-the-job injuries related to Physical Fitness Training will be reported in accordance with General Order 5-4, Reporting Injuries on the Job.

7. Consultations with the Wellness and Fitness Medical Director are available for any personnel requesting support and guidance that may be helpful in attaining and/or maintaining physical fitness levels needed to operate safely during emergency operations. Consultations will be scheduled through the Risk Management Office.

<u>Peer Fitness Training Program</u>

1. Peer fitness trainers will be assigned to all battalions to conduct physical fitness appraisals, maintain equipment, and facilitate wellness/fitness education and promotion at the station/battalion level. Peer fitness trainers are responsible for the coordination and communication of information and data to the Risk Management Office and the Wellness and Fitness Coordinator.

2. Peer fitness trainers will be available for one-on-one individual fitness goal setting, fitness regimen prescriptions, education, and coaching.

3. Selection and education of personnel to become Departmental peer fitness trainers will be coordinated by the Risk Management Office, the Wellness and Fitness Medical Director and the Wellness and Fitness Coordinator.

4. Peer fitness trainers will administer and schedule physical fitness assessments. This will enable personnel to have their current physical fitness level assessed and evaluated for baseline, progress, or regression of their individualized fitness level. All fitness performance assessment information is ***confidential*** and will be forwarded to the Risk Management Office to become a part of the employee's medical file.

5. A physical fitness regimen and plan will be provided as a result of the physical fitness assessment. The potential and course of action for physical fitness improvement will be specific to the level of fitness at the time of the physical fitness assessment.

6. Consultations with the Wellness and Fitness Medical Director are available for any personnel requesting support and guidance that may be helpful in attaining and/or maintaining physical fitness levels needed to operate safely during emergency operations. Consultations will be scheduled through the Risk Management Office.

Pre-Hire Medical Screening Program

1. The Risk Management Office will liaison with Public Safety Investigations (PSI) to ensure pre-hire medical screening processes are followed for potential new employees.

2. The Risk Management Office will liaison with the County Medical Review Officer for pre-hire case review that pertains to potential new employees.

3. The Risk Management Office will provide education and training as needed for pre-hire medical physical review processes by PSI.

4. The Risk Management Office will liaison with the Research, Planning and Development (Recruitment) during any hiring process to enable timely medical screenings and any needed medical follow up needed for potential new Departmental employees.

5. The Risk Management Office will liaison with the Office of Law and County Risk Management Office for direction and legal consul that involves pre-hire medical screenings.

Pre-Hire Fitness Preparation Program

1. The Wellness and Fitness Coordinator and Peer Fitness Trainers will provide fitness training and preparation classes for the Departmental Physical Abilities Test (PAT) to potential new employees.

2. Wellness and Fitness Coordinator and Peer Fitness Trainers will provide education and familiarization of fire service and Departmental Wellness/Fitness Program Training during the recruit class orientation phase for potential new employees.

3. The Risk Management Office, Wellness and Fitness Coordinator, and Peer Fitness Trainers will liaison with the Research, Planning and Development (Recruitment) during any hiring process to enable fitness training and preparation for the Departmental PAT to potential new employees.

4. The Risk Management Office, Wellness and Fitness Coordinator, and Peer Fitness Trainers will continue research and development of improved physical ability testing for potential new employees.

Recruit Fitness Training Program

1. The Risk Management Office, Wellness and Fitness Coordinator, and Peer Fitness Trainers will assist and provide guidelines for wellness/fitness training, education and promotion for recruit classes at the FETA.

2. The Wellness and Fitness Coordinator and Peer Fitness Trainers will provide recruit physical fitness appraisals during recruit class.

3. The Risk Management Office, Wellness and Fitness Coordinator, and Peer Fitness Trainers will continue research & development of improved recruit fitness training methods for future recruit classes

4. The Risk Management Office, Wellness and Fitness Coordinator, and Peer Fitness Trainers will communicate and coordinate with the FETA for scheduling and logistical needs for wellness and fitness training.

Fitness Center Operations

1. The Risk Management Office, Wellness and Fitness Coordinator, and Peer Fitness Trainers will coordinate Fitness Center Operations that include the following:
   - Wellness and Fitness Education, Training and Seminars
   - Support of the Pre-Hire Fitness Preparation Program
   - Coordination of Mandatory Orientation Training Sessions
   - Proper and Safe Use of Equipment
   - Enforce Fitness Center Rules, Codes of Conduct and Entry Security/Sign In Procedures
   - Ensure Proper Maintenance, Cleanliness and Appearance

3. Responsibilities

A. Personnel

1. Each member of the Department shall review the Wellness and Fitness GO. It is the **individual employee's responsibility to participate** in the annual medical physical and physical fitness training. Failure of the employee to comply with this GO may result in disciplinary action as stated in Prince George's County Personnel Law, Sec. 16-194 (a)(1)(2)(3).

2. Each employee of the Department shall maintain and monitor their own physical fitness. It is the **individual employee's responsibility to maintain** a training log of documented physical fitness training and functional physical fitness training. (Attachment #2) This training log is required to be signed by the **individual employee's supervisors** and presented upon request to the Risk Management Office.

3. It is the **individual employee's responsibility to recognize the need and seek assistance** from Departmental peer fitness trainers and/or the Wellness and Fitness Coordinator to enable the adequate health and fitness levels to perform their assigned duties in the Department.

B. Battalion Chiefs/Station Supervisors

1. Battalion Chiefs/Station Supervisors shall encourage and ensure that employees understand the importance of physical fitness in the fire service and their role in the Wellness and Fitness Program. It is the **Battalion Chief/Station Supervisors responsibility to recognize the need and seek assistance** from Departmental peer fitness trainers and/or the Wellness and Fitness Coordinator to enable the adequate health and fitness levels of employees to perform their assigned duties in the Department.

2. Supervisors shall be creative and resourceful in enabling the time and effort to be contributed to physical fitness training and the wellness of the employees they supervise. Any need for education and/or training in a battalion and/or station can be requested through the Risk Management Office.

3. It is the **station supervisor's responsibility to review and sign** employees' annual training log of documented physical fitness training and functional physical fitness training.

C. Peer Fitness Trainers

1. Peer Fitness Trainers (PFT) will have responsibilities within the Risk Management Office to provide to Departmental personnel as follows:

- Wellness/fitness education and promotion
- Physical fitness appraisals
- Peer Fitness Trainer continuing education and training
- Recruit physical fitness appraisals and pre-hiring wellness/fitness mentoring
- Research & development of new wellness/fitness methods
- Communication/coordination of activities, information, and data with the Risk Management Office

D. Wellness and Fitness Coordinator

1. The Wellness and Fitness Coordinator will have responsibilities within the Risk Management Office to provide to Departmental personnel as follows:

   - Consultation and liaison with the Wellness and Fitness Medical Director and the County Medical Review Officer
   - Maintain physical fitness program and physical fitness appraisals
   - Communication/coordination with Fire Training Academy staff
   - Communication/coordination of Battalion Peer Fitness Trainers
   - Maintain employee medical files, databases, overall wellness/fitness data collection
   - Wellness/fitness education
   - Research & development
   - Wellness/fitness promotion – all levels
   - Provide resources for behavioral health to personnel

E. Wellness and Fitness Medical Director

1. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall be responsible for guiding, directing, and advising members with regard to their health and fitness as explained in NFPA 1582 and NFPA 1583.

2. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall maintain a liaison relationship with the Fire/EMS Department Physician, the Departmental Employee Medical Services Physician and the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health office that includes the Departmental Wellness and Fitness Coordinator.

3. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director, when necessary, will facilitate appropriate referrals for mental health and/or behavioral modifications as required by Departmental guidelines.

4. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall review annual individual Fitness Performance Appraisals and progress reports that are conducted under his/her auspices though performed by the Departmental peer fitness trainers.

5. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall review all Departmental wellness and fitness aggregate data with the Wellness and Fitness Coordinator on a quarterly basis and generate a quality assurance update report and/or modifications made to the Wellness and Fitness Program.

6. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall review evaluate wellness and fitness regimens to enable employee's reaching and maintaining required fitness levels and/or recovery from injuries to facilitate an effective and manageable "back to work" time frame. The appropriate use of peer fitness trainers from within the Department for coordination and support would be incorporated in this process.

7. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall review and evaluate the progress of rehabilitation programs for employees that have been injured and under specific care to return to their assigned job tasks.

8. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall review all participating individual's coronary risk factors, failed medical physicals, injuries, activity level and fitness level.

9. The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall assist on all issues of development with the current Wellness and Fitness Program, as well as future methodology changes and improvements for the program.

The Wellness and Fitness Medical Director shall work with a certified nutritionist(s) to develop weight loss and/or create individualized diet plans to achieve and maintain optimum health, body weight while reducing chances for disease.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

Attachment # 1 - Body Mass Index Chart

Attachment # 2 - Physical Fitness Training Record

Attachment # 3 - Functional Physical Fitness