

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST

INTRODUCTION 2021-01

This study guide is designed to describe the physical tasks you will be required to perform for the Entry-Level Firefighter Physical Ability test. You may improve your performance if you carefully review this study guide and know what to expect on the day of testing.

Be sure you follow the specific directions regarding attire, and evaluate your current physical ability and medical condition. Being a firefighter is a physically demanding job. Conditioning, exercise, and diet are all important in preparing for the Physical Ability Test. You may want to consult with your doctor prior to taking the test.

Preparation for this test is directly related to your current health and physical abilities. If you are currently not involved in an exercise and health program, you are putting yourself at risk of failing this test. This test is just the beginning of the physical demands that will be placed upon you.

OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PROCESS

Extensive interviews with firefighters, fire service training experts, and command personnel at the Union Fire Protection District, as well as an analysis of data collected from active firefighters, provided the background information necessary to develop this job-related physical ability test.

A job analysis conducted for the Union Fire Protection District revealed that firefighters perform many essential or important physical functions, which are vital to their job duties. Included among these many duties were 85 physical functions, which a firefighter must be able to perform when needed. Though too numerous to list in detail, they include climbing ladders/stairs, dragging hoses/victims, carrying and operating equipment, raising ladders, and using the tools of the trade (axe, sledgehammer, etc.).

The Union Fire Protection District Entry-Level Firefighter Physical Ability Test measures some of the job-related physical skills, which are necessary for successful performance of a firefighter. The test is equally valid for assessing the physical skills of applicants with firefighting experience and those without. For example, one portion of the test requires the applicant to climb an aerial ladder, and it is not necessary to be a firefighter to have the physical ability to climb a ladder.

SEQUENCE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST

1. The Physical Ability Test will take place only as weather permits. The test will be delayed or cancelled if hazards are present that may harm or injure anyone.
2. On the day of testing the applicants will be moving, dragging, and carrying large and/or heavy objects.
3. A test proctor will give an orientation and walk through to all applicants prior to the actual test. Applicants must fully understand what is expected of them before being allowed to take the test.
 - a. A turnout coat, helmet, & gloves shall be worn throughout the course of the test. The testing authority reserves the right to require full PPE with SCBA and to inspect all equipment, and to disallow equipment, to ensure that its use does not affect the fair and impartial administration of the PAT.
4. The applicant will don and adjust the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (S C B A). The SCBA will be worn for during the remainder of the test.
5. During the sequenced events, there are no breaks or rest periods provided. If the applicant stops it does not constitute a failure, but the stoppage will be noted in the applicant's overall time.
6. When time for the aerial climb or sequenced events is exceeded, the Applicant will be informed, and the physical ability test will be terminated. Applicants unable to successfully complete the Aerial Climb will not be allowed to continue the testing process.
7. There will be at least one test proctor at each station.
8. All events must be completed safely. If any unsafe action is seen the action will be immediately corrected by the test proctors. If unsafe actions continue the proctor will decide if the applicant should continue or be removed from the testing process.
9. Unnecessarily dropping, throwing or other intentional misuse of any of the testing props will be grounds to disqualify a candidate. If a candidate is observed by any of the test administrators misusing the test props, the candidate will be immediately escorted from the test site and registered as having failed the test.

10. You must not run during the test. Failure to heed a first warning not to run will result in disqualification. Running is defined as any time both feet are off the ground at the same time while you are advancing on the course. You may move as fast as you like, while remaining safe, on the hose drag and stair climb stations as it is not technically possible to run during these components.

The events are as follows:

(1) HYDRANT OPENING

The Applicant will stand in the square marked on the ground during the entire event. A hydrant wrench will be placed on the operating nut on the top of the hydrant. The Applicant using his or her hands only, will turn the hydrant wrench until the hydrant is fully open. Proceed to event no. 2.

(2) CHARGED HOSE ADVANCE

The Applicant will pick up the nozzle and move a 1-3/4" charged (filled with water) hose 100 feet and place the nozzle in the square marked on the ground. The end of the hose may be placed over a shoulder or grasped in the applicant's hands. Proceed to event no.3.

(3) FAN CARRY

The Applicant will pick up an exhaust fan, carry it along the marked course and then place it in the designated area. Dragging the fan is not allowed and will result in failure of the test. Proceed to event no. 4.

(4) UNCHARGED HOSE DRAG

The Applicant will move an uncharged 3" diameter hose line straightforward 100 feet and place the end of the hose in the square marked on the ground. The end of the hose may be placed over a shoulder or grasped in the Applicant's hands. Picking up extra hose in any manner is not acceptable. Proceed to event no. 5.

(5) KEISER SLED

The forcible entry evolution utilizes the Keiser Force Machine (a chopping simulator). Using the provided mallet, and with both feet on the diamond plate surface, the applicant must drive the sled, a steel beam a horizontal distance of five feet. Pushing, raking or hooking the beam is not allowed; only the head of the mallet is allowed to strike the beam. The handle must not come in contact with the beam at any time. Prior to completing the evolution, if the applicant loses control of the hammer, and it travels outside of the vertical boundaries of the sled the applicant will be disqualified. Proceed to event no. 6.

(6) LADDER EXTENSION

The Applicant will stand in the area marked on the ground during the entire event. The Applicant will pull the halyard rope until the ladder is at full extension and locked as confirmed by the test monitor. The ladder section must be raised and lowered using the halyard in a hand-over-hand fashion. Wrapping the halyard around the body in any fashion is unacceptable. The ladder cannot be dropped or the applicant may fail the examination. Proceed to event no. 7.

(7) VICTIM RESCUE

The Applicant will drag (not carry) the victim (dummy) by grabbing it under the arms and pulling it backwards a distance of 100 feet. The Applicant may also drag the victim by grabbing it under one arm and over one shoulder. The timed event is complete when both victim and the Applicant completely clear the finish line.

After completion of step 7 the timed portion of the test is completed. Applicants who are able to complete the entire sequence of exercises successfully within 8 minutes 30 seconds will pass the test. Step 8 shall be completed within 4 minutes. Steps 9 & 10 are separate tests that are not timed.

(8) AERIAL CLIMB

There is a 4-minute time limit on the aerial climb. If the Applicant maintains continuous motion, there is adequate time to safely complete the event. The Applicant shall climb to the top of the aerial ladder that is extended to 75 feet at a reasonable angle. The Applicant will be tethered to a belay line and upon instruction will ascend the ladder without stopping. Once at the top of the ladder, both hands are placed on the top rung.

The Applicant then proceeds to the beginning of the next sequenced events no. 9 & 10.

(9) SCBA CONFIDENCE COURSE

The applicant must complete a SCBA confidence course to show that the applicant has the knowledge and ability to use a SCBA and perform a basic search. The applicant will be provided all PPE needed for the test. The applicant will be given 5 minutes prior to the test to become familiar with the SCBA and PPE. The applicant will then be given 3 minutes to don the PPE. The applicant will don the PPE and then be led to a blacked-out area of the testing facility to perform a search in the prop provided. This test will not be timed but the proctors of the test will be assessing the applicants search techniques and ability to properly use the SCBA. This portion of the test will be conducted after completion of the PAT.

(10) STAIR CLIMB

The applicant will safely carry the hose pack on the shoulder to the 3rd floor via the interior stairway of the drill tower. The Applicant will place the hose pack in the square marked on the floor and then return to the drill ground. Upon completion proceed to the EMS vitals station.