



Save Our First Responders 5K

The Florida Correctional Officers Association, Inc.
Official 18-Week Training & Preparation Guide
(Sept 1, 2026 – Jan 9, 2027)

Trimming 3 minutes off your 5K time over 18 weeks (September 1, 2026 to January 9, 2027) is a highly realistic goal. Dropping 3 minutes requires lowering your average pace by approximately 58 seconds per mile, which can be reliably targeted through structured interval progression, tempo runs, and strategic tapering.

3-Minute Time Reduction Strategy

To shave nearly a full minute off each mile:

- **Targeted Speedwork:** Introduce 400m and 800m repeats at sub-goal pace (around 1:05–1:10 per mile faster than baseline) to build cardiovascular power and stride efficiency.
- **Lactate Threshold Expansion:** Weekly tempo runs at a "comfortably hard" effort push back your fatigue point so goal pace feels manageable on race day.
- **Pacing Discipline:** Aim for even splits or a slight negative split (running the second 1.5 miles 5-10 seconds faster than the first half).

Month-by-Month Training Schedule

Below is the calendar breakdown across the 18-week timeline leading up to race day on Saturday, January 9, 2027.

Month	Phase & Focus	Tuesday (Speed / Intervals)	Thursday (Tempo / Threshold)	Saturday (Long Run)	Sun / Mon / Wed / Fri
September 2026 (W1–W4)	Phase 1: Base & Aerobic Conditioning	6 × 400m @ goal pace (90s recovery jog)	20-min easy run + 4 × 20s stride accelerations	3.5 – 4.0 miles (easy conversational pace)	Rest Days (Mon/Fri), Cross-Training / Strength (Sun/Wed)
October 2026 (W5–W8)	Phase 2: Speed Build & Endurance	8 × 400m or 4 × 800m @ sub-goal pace	20-min continuous tempo run (comfortably hard)	4.0 – 4.5 miles (easy build)	Rest Days (Mon/Fri), Cross-Training / Strength (Sun/Wed)

Month	Phase & Focus	Tuesday (Speed / Intervals)	Thursday (Tempo / Threshold)	Saturday (Long Run)	Sun / Mon / Wed / Fri
November 2026 (W9–W12)	Phase 3: Threshold & Race Pace	5 × 1,000m repeats @ target 5K pace (2 min rest)	25-min tempo run or 3 miles alternating race/easy pace	5.0 miles (over-distance endurance)	Rest Days (Mon/Fri), Cross-Training / Strength (Sun/Wed)
December 2026 (W13–W17)	Phase 4: Peak Conditioning	3 × 1-mile repeats @ goal pace (3 min rest)	30-min tempo effort with middle 15 mins fast	5.0 – 5.5 miles peak distance	Rest Days (Mon/Fri), Light Strength (Sun/Wed)
January 2027 (W18)	Phase 5: Taper & Race Execution	Jan 5: 4 × 400m light strides @ goal pace	Jan 7: 2 miles easy + 2 × 100m accelerations	Jan 9: RACE DAY (Save Our First Responders 5K) Jan 8: Complete Rest	—

Full Weekly Schedule Calendar

Month 1: Aerobic Base & Stride Efficiency

Weeks 1–4 (Sept 1 – Sept 27, 2026)

- **Tuesday:** 6 × 400m at target pace with 90s walk/jog rest.
- **Thursday:** 20-minute easy run ending with 4 × 20-second strides.
- **Saturday:** 3.5 to 4.0 miles easy endurance.
- **Strength/Rest:** 2 bodyweight strength sessions (glutes/core), 2 full rest days.

Month 2: Speed Build & Capacity

Weeks 5–9 (Sept 28 – Nov 1, 2026)

- **Tuesday:** Alternate weekly between 8 × 400m and 4 × 800m at sub-goal pace.
- **Thursday:** 20 to 25 minutes continuous tempo run.
- **Saturday:** 4.0 to 4.5 miles steady effort.
- **Milestone:** Run a timed 1-mile benchmark test at the end of October to verify pace improvements.

Month 3: Race-Pace Specificity

Weeks 10–13 (Nov 2 – Nov 29, 2026)

- **Tuesday:** 5 × 1,000m repeats at goal 5K pace with 2 minutes recovery.
- **Thursday:** 25-minute tempo run or 3 miles alternating between race pace and easy recovery.
- **Saturday:** 5.0 miles easy build.

Month 4: Peak Conditioning

Weeks 14–17 (Nov 30, 2026 – Jan 3, 2027)

- **Tuesday:** 3 × 1-mile repeats at goal 5K pace with 3 minutes rest.
- **Thursday:** 30 minutes tempo run with the middle 15 minutes at sustained race effort.
- **Saturday:** 5.0 to 5.5 miles peak distance (building extra stamina so 3.1 miles feels short).

Race Week & Taper

Week 18 (Jan 4 – Jan 9, 2027)

- **Tuesday, Jan 5:** 2 miles light jog + 4 × 400m light strides at goal pace.
- **Thursday, Jan 7:** 2 miles very easy run + light stretching.
- **Friday, Jan 8:** Complete rest, light hydration and carbohydrate prep.
- **Saturday, Jan 9:** Save Our First Responders 5K — Race Day!

Targeted Dietary Guidelines

To support higher training speeds without muscle fatigue or injury:

- **Daily Carbohydrates (45–55% of intake):** Complex carbs (oats, brown rice, sweet potatoes, whole grains) replenish muscle glycogen needed for intense interval sessions.
- **Protein Support (1.2–1.6g per kg of body weight):** Lean proteins (chicken, fish, eggs, tofu) facilitate rapid muscle recovery after heavy workout days.
- **Hydration:** Aim for 2.5–3+ liters of water daily, adding electrolytes during warmer weather training days.
- **Pre-Run Fueling (60–90 min before):** Easy-to-digest carbs (e.g., banana with a light spread of peanut butter or oatmeal) to prevent gastrointestinal distress during fast pace work.
- **Post-Run Recovery (within 30–45 min):** A 3:1 carb-to-protein ratio (e.g., fruit smoothie with protein powder or eggs on whole-wheat toast) to optimize recovery.

Dietary (Allergies) & Physical Fitness Legal Advisory and Hold Harmless Notice

IMPORTANT NOTICE & DISCLAIMER: *Please read this document carefully before initiating any training, exercise program, or dietary protocol outlined in this plan.*

1. General Health & Physical Fitness Clearance

- **Medical Consultation:** The physical fitness schedules, workouts, training routines, and exercise recommendations provided herein are intended for informational and educational purposes only. You should consult a qualified healthcare provider or licensed physician before beginning any new exercise routine, high-intensity workout, or athletic training program—especially if you have a history of heart conditions, respiratory issues, joint or musculoskeletal injuries, high blood pressure, or any other pre-existing medical condition.
- **Assumption of Risk:** Participation in physical exercise, running, speedwork, strength conditioning, and race preparation for the Save Our First Responders 5K carries inherent risks of physical injury, including but not limited to muscular strains, sprains, cardiovascular distress, heat-related illness, exhaustion, or severe physical harm. By voluntarily engaging in these physical activities, you assume full responsibility for any and all risks, known or unknown, associated with your participation.

- **Listen to Your Body:** Exercise recommendations should be performed only to your individual physical comfort and tolerance limit. Discontinue exercise immediately and seek emergency medical care if you experience chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, lightheadedness, nausea, or unusual discomfort.

2. Dietary, Nutritional & Allergy Disclaimer

- **Informational Purpose Only:** Dietary recommendations, nutritional breakdowns, pre- and post-workout meal ideas, and hydration advice provided in this plan are for general educational guidelines only. They do not constitute personalized medical nutrition therapy, clinical diagnosis, or individualized dietetic advice.
- **Allergens & Dietary Restrictions:** You are solely responsible for reviewing all food items, ingredients, recipes, and dietary suggestions for potential food allergens, sensitivities, intolerances, or adverse drug-nutrition interactions. Always verify product labels and manufacturer information for common allergens including, but not limited to, peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish.
- **Individual Variations:** Nutritional requirements vary significantly based on age, sex, weight, metabolism, underlying health conditions, and daily activity levels. Consult a registered dietitian or medical professional before making major changes to your daily nutrition or carbohydrate intake.

3. Hold Harmless & Release of Liability

- **Waiver & Release:** You hereby release, waive, discharge, and hold harmless The Florida Correctional Officers Association, Inc., its officers, directors, employees, volunteers, agents, race organizers, sponsors, partners, and associated entities from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss, damage, illness, allergic reaction, or injury (including death) that may be sustained by you while participating in or following any exercise, dietary, or training recommendations contained in this guide or participating in the Save Our First Responders 5K.
- **Indemnification:** You agree to indemnify and hold harmless The Florida Correctional Officers Association, Inc. and the event organizers of the Save Our First Responders 5K from any financial loss, liability, damage, or costs (including legal fees) that may occur due to your participation in the suggested physical routines, event activities, or consumption of suggested dietary items.

By proceeding with the training plan and nutritional guidelines, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and voluntarily agreed to the terms of this Legal Advisory and Hold Harmless Notice.