
Physical Fitness

1021.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide firefighters with on-duty physical fitness guidelines. The District provides on-duty time for firefighter physical fitness to assist personnel in achieving and maintaining optimal health and physical fitness.

1021.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Fire District to establish guidelines for physical fitness activities that are designed to prevent injuries while maintaining fitness. The ultimate goals of this policy are to:

- Meet the physical demands required on emergency responses.
- Reduce the risk of member injury or illness.
- Enhance the overall health, fitness and safety of members.

Physical fitness activities should not interfere with primary job duties (e.g., emergency responses, public education, training activities, other legal responsibilities), nor should physical fitness activities delay an emergency response in any way.

The District retains the right to prohibit any physical fitness activity which, in its sole discretion, presents greater risks than benefits.

1021.3 PROCEDURE

The time, location and duration of company physical fitness activities are at the discretion of the on-duty Captain and the Captain. In all cases, the location for physical fitness must be within the company's first-in response area or approved arrangements for coverage, be consistent with this policy and not result in a response delay.

All Operations Division members should be allowed to participate in physical fitness activities during the course of their shift. Members who choose not to participate in physical fitness activities shall conduct duties as assigned by the Captain during the designated physical fitness period. Members who have provided the District with written physical restrictions from a qualified health care provider shall not participate in any physical activity that conflicts with the restriction.

At the discretion of the District, one or more of the following may apply:

- (a) Station physical fitness equipment
 1. Physical fitness equipment is available for the use of members at fire stations with adequate space. Members assigned to these stations should utilize the fitness equipment for their on-duty physical fitness activities.
- (b) Fitness club membership

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1. Members assigned to fire stations that are not equipped with physical fitness equipment may be provided, at the district's discretion, with fitness club memberships for on-duty physical fitness activities.

1021.4 PHYSICAL FITNESS GUIDELINES

Physical fitness and conditioning activities should be designed to maintain or improve flexibility, muscular strength, endurance and anaerobic and aerobic capacity. They should also correspond to the physical movement patterns required in the performance of firefighter duties. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Stretching.
- (b) Running, jogging, walking or rowing.
- (c) Weight training (with spotter present).
- (d) Stationary aerobic training (e.g., stair-climber, treadmill, stationary bicycle).
- (e) Core strengthening.
- (f) Firefighter-specific activities (e.g., hose drag, simulated ventilation, dummy drag).
- (g) Physical fitness activities as recommended by the District Wellness and Fitness Program and/or peer fitness trainers (PFTs).

Member participation in competitive or contact sports is not recommended while on-duty.

1021.5 INJURY PREVENTION

- (a) When participating in approved on-duty physical fitness activities, reasonable precautions should be taken to avoid injury. Common reasons for injuries sustained during physical activity include, but are not limited to:
 1. Insufficient warm-up.
 2. Poor core stabilization.
 3. Exceeding physical capabilities.
 4. Improper equipment use.
 5. Defective equipment.
 6. Lack of proper instruction.
- (b) Members who are participating in physical fitness activities are expected to:
 1. Allow sufficient time to warm up muscles prior to engaging in exercise for optimum performance and to reduce the risk of injury.
 2. Develop sufficient trunk muscle strength to keep the spine and body stable in order to remain strong and balanced.
 3. Maintain realistic goals and limits for physical fitness routines.

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4. Develop an understanding of how to use fitness equipment properly and safely.
5. Check equipment prior to use to ensure safe operation, report defective or broken equipment to the supervisor as soon as practicable and disable equipment to prevent others from using it, if necessary.
6. Develop and maintain sufficient fitness training knowledge, accounting for fitness level, age and previous injuries or limitations, to avoid fitness-related injuries.