



Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office**General Order: 36.12****Subject: Physical Wellness and Physical Abilities Testing Program**Revised: 07/08/2014

This General Order consists of the following sections:

- A. Purpose**
- B. Policy**
- C. Definitions**
- D. Program Information**
- E. Procedures**

A. Purpose

The purpose of this general order is to set forth the expectation of the Sheriff that all (full and part time) employees of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) are capable of meeting the physical demands of law enforcement duty. While also ensuring both sworn and non-sworn OCSO employees strive to maintain their personal physical wellness to lessen their chances of injury or sickness and to control agency funded health care costs.

B. Policy

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office recognizes that good physical and mental health are essential attributes of a professional law enforcement officer. Employees must be sufficiently fit to perform under adverse conditions, pursue and subdue subjects, and appropriately protect and defend themselves and others. Additionally, it is widely accepted that physical fitness promotes self-esteem, increases confidence and greatly enhances one's ability to perform strenuous or stressful duties. There is significant evidence supporting the benefits from participation in a health and fitness program, including the following:

1. Regular physical exercise reduces the effects of stress on the human body.
2. A physically fit employee is less susceptible to common injuries, and, if injured, tends to recover more rapidly.
3. Specific physical and mental health risks, such as heart disease, diabetes, orthopedic disorders and anxiety, are less likely to occur in individuals who exercise on a regular basis.
4. Physically fit employees tend to perform their duties with greater ease and tend to use less sick-leave.

C. Definitions

1. Physical Abilities Test (PAT) Certification - A status achieved by an employee after successful completion of the "Physical Abilities Testing Requirements and Responsibilities" which have been documented by the Training Section.
2. Agency Certified Trainer - An employee of the Sheriff's Office who has completed a course of health and fitness instruction approved by the agency, who is certified to train and evaluate employees on completion of the PAT.
3. Wellness Committee - No less than five and no more than eight full and or part-time employees of the Sheriff's Office appointed by the Sheriff or his designee. Committee members assist employees in establishing a wellness program and obtaining PAT certification by ensuring proper application of PAT testing policies and procedures. The Human Resources Manager will serve as the committee chair. A vice-chair shall be selected by the chair of the committee.
4. Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) - A status referring to the greatest extent of

recovery from an injury, illness, or disease and further recovery is not anticipated based upon reasonable medical probability.

D. Program Information

1. JOB RELEVANCE

a. The PAT is designed to measure the ability of all sworn personnel to meet the physical demands of performing duties as a law enforcement officer. Successful completion of the PAT shall be considered an essential performance factor for every sworn employee.

2. FITNESS FOR DUTY – ILLNESS/INJURY/DISABILITY

a. In certain situations where an employee is ill or has been injured and cannot obtain PAT certification, a fitness-for-duty determination may require examinations and medical physicals/evaluations to determine if subject employee is capable of meeting the physical demands of duty as a sworn employee of the agency. Fit for duty evaluations will be coordinated through the Human Resources Manager or their designee. Only licensed physicians or physician's assistants will be used to conduct medical evaluations and certify fitness-for-duty.

b. Medical restrictions/limitations will be considered by the agency, consistent with applicable law. Employees requiring accommodation or determination of applicability of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) will contact the Human Resources Manager or their designee for assistance.

c. Any medical evaluation/examination required of employees in permanent, full-time positions will be provided at no cost to the employee.

3. FITNESS PROGRAM

a. The Sheriff's Office will provide reasonable assistance to ensure all sworn employees successfully obtain PAT certification. In order to encourage sworn employees to successfully meet and maintain good physical health and fitness, all sworn employees will be allowed to use on-duty time to exercise and utilize local physical fitness facilities subject to following provisions/restrictions:

I. Permission to work out during duty hours is contingent upon supervisor's discretion and approval based on workload and the operational needs of the Sheriff's Office.

II. The time allowed for on-duty workouts shall not exceed 1 ½ hours per calendar week (Sun-Sat) or 3 hours per pay cycle (two weeks). If mission requirements preclude an employee from working out during duty hours, there will be no entitlement with regard to the time.

III. Employees unaccustomed to physical exertion must train within their physical limits to prevent injury and ensure they properly and safely improve their fitness level. The Wellness Committee should be contacted for assistance in establishing a viable physical training regime. When lifting heavy weights, climbing, jumping or engaging in other injury prone activities employees should train with a partner or spotter to help prevent mishaps and injuries.

IV. Employees may utilize local gyms as well as other facilities during on-duty workout time.

4. PHYSICALS AND HEALTH SCREENINGS

a. New sworn employees will provide physicals or health screenings as part of the application process.

b. Employees may utilize agency provided health insurance for annual health

screenings/physicals. Each employee will be responsible for scheduling physicals and meeting any co-payment or co-insurance requirements.

5. PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST (PAT) COURSE DESCRIPTION

a. All sworn employees will be required to complete the PAT, which is approximately one-half mile in length and consists of 16 obstacles/stations. Completion of the course will consist of the following (not necessarily in this exact order):

I. Begin the course seated in a vehicle with the seat belt on and both hands on the steering wheel. They will be given the description of a suspect they will encounter at a subsequent obstacle. When instructed, they will exit the vehicle, removing a training shotgun from the gun rack. While using the vehicle as cover, they will simulate charging or "racking" the weapon, pulling the trigger, and laying the weapon down back in the vehicle with the safety "on". (Tests agility.)

II. Sprint 40 yards. (Tests quickness/speed)

III. Climb over a wall approximately four feet in height. (Tests agility)

IV. Run a serpentine, which will consist of 10 poles each placed approximately two yards apart. (Tests agility.)

V. Crawl under three markers placed approximately 27" from the ground and eight feet long without knocking over the markers from their stand. (Tests agility.)

VI. Jump over three hurdles of various heights (approximately 12", 18", and 24") spaced several feet apart without knocking the hurdle off its stand. (Tests agility.)

VII. Jump over and clear a marked area of approximately four feet in length (simulated ditch/pit). (Tests agility.)

VIII. Proceed through a large pipe approximately four feet in diameter. (Tests agility.)

IX. Cross a balance beam consisting of three 10 foot logs, for a total of 30 feet in length. The member must touch the red marker of the last log (or beyond) with at least one foot. (Tests agility.)

X. Climb a ladder approximately two stories high (15 feet) and touch a bell at the top. When climbing down, the member must touch the next-to-last rung (marked with red) with at least one foot. (Tests agility.)

XI. Climb a flight of stairs to a simulated one-story landing. When climbing down, the member must touch the next-to-last stair (marked with red) with at least one foot. (Tests agility and stamina.)

XII. Climb a six foot wall. Must completely scale wall to other side. (Tests agility)

XIII. Climb through a window opening. With training pistol drawn approach the window, clear the opening, then holster the weapon and proceed through the window. (Tests agility.)

XIV. Proceed through a door with a training weapon drawn, properly identify a suspect based on the description provided at the beginning of the course, and then holster the weapon. (Tests memory, sight, hearing, and gross motor skills.)

XV. Drag a weight of approximately 150 pounds a distance of seventy feet. (Tests stamina and endurance.)

XVI. Return to the vehicle and "dry-fire" a training handgun six times with each hand holding the weapon with one hand and arm fully extended. (Tests fine motor skills.)

XVII. Re-enter the vehicle, closing the door, and indicate that the assignment has been completed over the radio microphone. The participant will verbally state, "Unit (state unit #), PAT Course completed." (Tests fine motor skills, memory, and logic.)

b. Failure to properly identify the correct suspect or failure to successfully complete any individual segment of the course disqualifies the attempt. Failure of an individual segment may be repeated as long as the overall time does not exceed eight minutes and thirty seconds.

6. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST (PAT)

a. The PAT will be required biannually (Twice per year) for all sworn Full-time and Part-time deputies.

b. Testing will be limited to daylight hours with due regard for temperature and humidity. Testing during times of extreme temperature and/or humidity will be avoided.

c. Members meeting the established minimum standard of eight minutes, 30 seconds (8:30) for the PAT will be deemed to be in compliance with the fitness policy.

d. Members who do not meet the minimum standard (as described above) shall be considered to have failed the PAT.

e. Failure to meet the minimum PAT standards will be designated by category as follows:

I. "Category 1": Failed to complete the course in less than 10 minutes and 30 seconds (10:30).

II. "Category 2": Completed the course in less than 10 minutes and 30 seconds (10:30), but more than 8 minutes and 30 seconds (8:30).

i. Failure to place the shotgun on safe and/or failing to identify the correct subject are considered technical failures under this category.

7. CATEGORY 1 FAILURE

Excluding exemptions as provided herein, a sworn employee who does not complete the PAT in less than 10 minutes and 30 seconds (10:30) will:

a. Immediately be removed from sworn status.

b. Be placed on leave without pay or at their request be authorized up to 30 days annual leave.

c. Be ineligible for any specialty team assignments.

d. Have any specialty pay discontinued.

e. Be ineligible for off-duty assignments or secondary employment.

f. Be responsible to fulfill all court and court-related responsibilities, attend scheduled in-service training and be compensated accordingly. During this time period, members will not be authorized to attend training offered outside of the agency.

- g. If successful completion of the PAT is not achieved within 30 days of the original failure, sworn personnel in category 1 may at the discretion of the Sheriff be permanently reassigned to non-sworn positions, if qualified, or if non-sworn positions are unavailable be terminated from the agency.

8. CATEGORY 2 FAILURE

Excluding exemptions as provided herein, a sworn employee who completed the PAT in less than 10 minutes and 30 seconds (10:30) but more than 8 minutes and 30 seconds (8:30) or failed to successfully complete the PAT due to a technical failure will:

- a. Be placed on 30 days probationary status.
- b. Be ineligible for any specialty team assignments.
- c. Have any specialty pay discontinued.
- d. Not be authorized to attend training offered outside of the agency.
- e. Be ineligible for off-duty assignments or secondary employment.
- f. If successful completion of the PAT is not achieved during the 30 day probationary period the member may at the discretion of the Sheriff be placed on 30 day unpaid leave or at their request be authorized 30 days annual leave. If at the end of this 30 day period the member has not successfully completed the PAT the member may at the discretion of the Sheriff be permanently reassigned to non-sworn positions, if qualified, or if non-sworn positions are unavailable be terminated from the agency.

9. SPECIALITY TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- a. Certain specialty teams or positions will have specific physical requirements to be eligible and remain on the team. These requirements will be specific to the type of specialty team and may exceed the minimum standard established in this directive.
- b. Enforcement of these requirements will be in accordance with the position or team's written policies and directives.
- c. Those requirements will augment not replace or supersede the requirements of this directive.

10. EXEMPTION FROM THE PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST (PAT)

- a. Certain temporary exemptions may apply to the Physical Abilities Test requirements including, but not limited to:
 - I. Employees on light (limited) duty or medical leave.
 - II. Employees who are pregnant or have temporary disabilities.
- b. In order to receive a temporary exemption, the employee must provide the Human Resource Section certification from a physician or physician's assistant reflecting the reason they are unable to perform the PAT and anticipated date of return to full duty.
- c. Any retiring member within 12 months of separation, with 10 or more years of full-time service, may request an exemption from the semi-annual PAT requirement. This request must be submitted in writing to Human Resources Section and approved by the Sheriff or his designee. A written retirement notice must be submitted to Human Resources prior to this exemption request.

11. RETURN TO FULL, UNRESTRICTED DUTY

- a. Employees returning to full, unrestricted duty will be required to complete all PAT requirements at the next scheduled PAT date.

12. SWORN APPLICANTS

- a. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office shall require all sworn employee candidates to obtain PAT certification prior to employment or appointment. Failure to pass the PAT will result in their application being placed on hold.

E. Procedures

1. ADMINISTERING THE PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST (PAT)

- a. Administration of the Physical Abilities Test may only be conducted by Agency Certified Trainers. PAT certification can be achieved after instruction on "Physical Abilities Testing Requirements and Responsibilities" conducted and documented by Training per [Standard Operating Procedure 36.23](#).
- b. On a bi-annual basis, agency-certified trainers will schedule, test, and record PAT results for each full-time and part-time sworn employee. All completed PAT records will be forwarded to the Training Section.
- c. Two agency certified trainers with separate timing devices will be present for each PAT conducted. Both times will be recorded on a [Physical Abilities Test Score Sheet](#) and submitted to the Training Section. Test failures will be recorded on the [Physical Abilities Test Failure form](#). The form will be given to the employee with instructions to report to his/her Bureau Chief with the form. The Bureau Chief will forward the form to the Training Section after review and signature. If the employee is a Bureau Chief, the form will be reviewed and signed by the Undersheriff or Sheriff.
- d. All PAT testing of applicants will be administered by agency-certified trainers.

2. RELIEF FROM DUTY

- a. Sworn employees who fail to successfully complete the PAT due to a Category I Failure will report immediately to Office of Professional Standards with their agency vehicle, weapons, and equipment.

3. MEDICAL FITNESS COMMITTEE

- a. The Wellness Committee will also serve as the Medical Fitness Committee. The Human Resources Manager shall serve as coordinator and will periodically review each employee's case that involves medical restrictions.
- b. The Human Resources Manager will maintain and disseminate all necessary documentation of the Medical Fitness Committee.

4. RETURN TO FULL, UNRESTRICTED DUTY

- a. Sworn employees who have not taken or passed the PAT for the current bi-annual cycle and are returning to unrestricted duty (full duty) will contact the Human Resources Section within five business days of being cleared to schedule a PAT date. Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) is not required to return to unrestricted duty (full duty).
- b. Sworn employees who have previously taken and passed the PAT for the current bi-annual cycle and are returning to full, unrestricted duty will notify their supervisor that they are cleared for full duty and will not be required to re-test until the appropriate test date is scheduled for the following biannual cycle.
- c. Supervisors shall contact the Human Resource Section to determine the applicable test date and will direct the employee to complete the test as scheduled.

5. FORMS

a. The Office of Professional Standards shall maintain forms necessary to document the course completion in compliance with this written directive.

b. The Human Resources Manager/designee will prepare, maintain, and approve forms necessary for the Wellness Committee and actions related to sworn position status.

APPROVED: *Larry Ashley ISI*
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