

	Nags Head Fire Rescue Department		
	Standard Operating Guideline		
	021	Physical Ability Test	
	Randy Wells - Fire Chief		
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I. PURPOSE

Firefighting is one of the nation’s most dangerous and hazardous jobs, with heart attacks, high physical stress levels, sprains, and strains all too common. In the United States, the leading cause of on duty firefighter deaths is the heart attack, while the primary cause of injuries for all firefighters is overexertion and strain. It is expected that Town of Nags Head firefighter staff will take preventive steps to maintain appropriate personal physical fitness levels necessary to safely conduct the basic functions of the job. To satisfy this need and evaluate firefighter readiness, the Nags Head Fire Rescue Department requires that all firefighting staff successfully complete a pre-employment and an annual Physical Ability Test. The Physical Ability Test SOG provides guidelines for the administration of the Nags Head Fire Rescue Department’s Physical Ability Test (PAT) for new candidate firefighters, reserve firefighters and career firefighters.

II. OVERVIEW AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Nags Head Fire Rescue Department Physical Ability Test (PAT) evaluates the participant’s ability to perform the individual job-specific, baseline functions required for Nags Head Fire Rescue Department fire operations. Reserve and career firefighters will be tested each February, or at such time as designated by the fire chief.

A “Physical Ability Test” course description shall be provided to all candidates. The course will be set up prior to the test for voluntary practice and participants are encouraged to become familiar with the assessment.

All reserve and career firefighters shall successfully complete the PAT after a period of work absence due to any illness, condition or other circumstance that causes the employee to be physically or mentally unable to perform any of their duties as a firefighter for a period exceeding 30 (thirty) days; or under other circumstances, where medical information provided to the Department, the employee’s conduct or statements, or other objective information provide a reasonable basis to question the employee’s fitness for full duty as a firefighter.

Annual PAT requirements shall not apply to members of the fire reserve - support unit.

In all cases, the failure of a reserve or career firefighter to fully complete all nine (9) components of either the initial or retest PAT in a reasonable amount of time will result in immediate removal from firefighter duty and investigation as to cause.

It is important that firefighters maintain themselves in a state of physical and mental readiness. Advance notice of the PAT may be given before the pre-employment and annual tests. No notice need be given before a follow-up or re-test is administered.

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All firefighter staff testing will be documented, and results maintained by the human resources director. All results will be investigated, and subsequent notifications distributed accordingly by the fire chief.

Evaluators used for the PAT shall be members of Nags Head Fire Rescue who have received training in the testing system and documentation, as approved by the fire chief or his designee.

The time required to successfully complete the PAT is nine (9) minutes.

NEW CANDIDATE FIREFIGHTERS

New candidate firefighters will be tested pre-employment and shall present a completed and approved physical ability test waiver for review prior to involvement in the test. Failure of a new candidate firefighter to complete the PAT in the required minimum time will result in their ineligibility to move to the next step in the firefighter application process. Successful completion of the PAT does not guarantee that the applicant will be hired.

RESERVE FIREFIGHTERS

Failure of a Nags Head reserve firefighter to complete the PAT in the required minimum time will result in formulation of a plan for supplemental task-specific exercise training and a PAT retest within 60 days if possible. Failure to pass the retest may result in consideration of immediate removal from firefighter duty and re-assignment in a support role.

CAREER FIREFIGHTERS

Failure of a Nags Head career firefighter to pass the PAT in the required minimum time will result in formulation of a plan for supplemental task-specific exercise training and a PAT retest within 60 days if possible. Failure to pass the retest may result in consideration of immediate removal from firefighter duty, investigation, and potential discipline up to and including dismissal per the Town of Nags Head personnel policy.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE PAT EVALUATOR

Participants shall be encouraged to stretch before participating in the PAT.

A PAT event shall be timed in its entirety by two (2) approved fire staff evaluators operating (2) approved timing devices.

Running is not permitted during the PAT.

The evaluator should instruct the participant when they are varying from described PAT actions in an event. This shall cause the participant to repeat the evolution without restarting time.

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If a participant does not follow the directions given for the PAT, they will be stopped and required to restart that portion of the test. In the event a participant is required to restart a portion, their time will not be stopped.

If a mechanical error occurs with the PAT, it should not count against the time of the participant. The time shall be stopped until the error is corrected.

Each participant will have two evaluators accompany them through the course. Their job will be to lead the participant through the PAT and time the event. Evaluators should encourage the participant to complete each challenge. At no time should evaluators physically assist the participant in any way.

The official completion time of each participant shall be documented and kept confidential. Official times for each participant shall only be shared with the supervisory fire officer and participant.

The same or equivalent equipment shall be used for all participants.

Evaluators shall terminate the PAT when the participant can no longer continue, or; participant voluntarily concludes performance of the course or; weather becomes inclement or dangerous, or; participant becomes dizzy, vomits or experiences other deficits, or; becomes impaired to the point that continuing the PAT will endanger the participant.

III. PAT COURSE DESCRIPTION

1. DON TURNOUT GEAR AND SCBA SKILL

The participant shall don a full complement of approved firefighting turnout gear and SCBA. This equipment includes approved firefighter turnout pants, boots, coat, hood, helmet, gloves and a positive pressure, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is to be donned during this skills station, but the face piece is not to be donned at this time. The participant will remain in full turnout gear and SCBA for the duration of the timed Physical Ability Test. The participant will breathe on SCBA supplied air later in the timed Physical Ability Test. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the DON TURNOUT GEAR AND SCBA SKILL.

2. 5 INCH SUPPLY HOSE PULL & HYDRANT WRAP SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the designated area. The participant shall pull the 5-inch supply hose from a staged area. The participant shall advance the 5-inch supply hose a distance of 40 feet to the designated fire hydrant. The participant shall

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wrap the designated hydrant with the 5-inch supply hose. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the 5 INCH SUPPLY HOSE PULL & HYDRANT WRAP SKILL.

3. HOTEL PACK CARRY & STEP SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the area of the HOTEL PACK CARRY & STEP SKILL. The participant shall pick up the hotel pack, composed of 100 feet of double jacket one- and three-quarter inch accordion fold secured hose line and begin the STEP SKILL on a ledge in the designated marked area. Steps shall be taken in the following order: Begin on the bottom of the step with both feet flat on the ground, right foot up, left foot up, right foot down, and left foot down. These four individual foot movements are considered one step. While continuing to support the hotel pack, the participant shall complete fifty (50) steps. The PAT evaluator will count off each step one by one until the completion of fifty steps. At this time the participant shall lower the hotel pack to the ground. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the HOTEL PACK CARRY & STEP SKILL.

4. SCBA FACE PIECE DON SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the area of the SCBA FACE PIECE DON SKILL. The participant shall remove helmet and gloves. The participant shall don the SCBA face piece, and re-don all gear removed to don the SCBA face piece. The participant shall attach SCBA regulator and breath SCBA supplied air. The participant will remain in full turnout gear and on SCBA supplied air for the remainder of the timed Physical Ability Test. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the SCBA FACE PIECE DON SKILL.

5. HOSE ADVANCE SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the area of the HOSE ADVANCE SKILL. The participant shall pick up the 1.75 inch nozzle attached to the 1.75 inch hose line and advance hose line along the marked line a distance of fifty 50 feet, make a 90 degree turn and advance hose line along the marked line a distance of twenty 20 feet to a designated area. The participant shall stop in the designated area and pull twenty 20 feet of hose line into the designated area. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the HOSE ADVANCE SKILL.

6. FORCIBLE ENTRY SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the area of the FORCIBLE ENTRY PROP. During this event, using a 10-pound sledgehammer, the participant is responsible for striking the measuring device in the target area until the buzzer signal is activated. The participant shall stand in the designated area and the participants' feet must remain outside of the toe-box. The participant will be given one warning for stepping inside the toe-box. The participant will fail the event if he/she fails to maintain control of the sledgehammer while swinging or commits a second infraction for stepping inside the toe-box. Once the

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buzzer is activated, the participant will place the sledgehammer on the ground. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the FORCIBLE ENTRY SKILL.

7. CRAWL SKILL

The participant shall proceed to CRAWL SKILL. The participant shall lower to their hands and knees and proceed through a designated twelve-foot (12') long thirty-six-inch (36") diameter pipe. The participant shall progress through the pipe, until reaching the end, exit the pipe and stand up. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the CRAWL SKILL.

8. VICTIM RESCUE SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the VICTIM RESCUE SKILL. The participant shall grasp the 165-pound simulated victim and navigate this victim down and back through a twenty-five (25) foot course for a total of fifty (50) feet. The course is defined on each side by orange cones and has a marked point at each end. The entire 165-pound simulated victim must cross the marked point on each end. The 165-pound simulated victim may be carried or dragged through this fifty-foot course, and the entire 165-pound simulated victim must cross the finish point to complete the VICTIM RESCUE SKILL. The participant shall walk to the next skill after completing the VICTIM RESCUE SKILL.

9. CEILING PULL SKILL

The participant shall proceed to the area of the CEILING PULL SKILL. The participant shall grasp the suspended pike pole with thirty pounds of resistance attached and simulate the pulling of ceiling material, accomplishing a total count of fifteen pulls. The participant, in a standing position, will pull the weighted pike pole downwards to a waist high position, and then back up until the arms are fully extended. These two movements shall be defined as one completed pull. The Physical Ability Test evaluator will count each pull by one and indicate when fifteen pulls are complete. At this point the participant shall release the pike pole and the evaluator will indicate your completion of the PAT – PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST.

10. REHABILITATION

The participant shall remove SCBA and all firefighter turnout gear. The participant will then be escorted to the designated rehabilitation area. Rehab shall include rehydration and obtaining vital signs. Vital signs include blood pressure, heart rate, and Oxygen Saturation.

AERIAL LADDER CLIMB The purpose of this event is to test the applicant's ability to safely ascend and descend the Aerial device to perform work from an elevated position. The aerial ladder will be set up at a 70-degree angle and extended 75 feet Applicant will climb the ladder using a ladder belt and safety line. Applicants must also wear a firefighting helmet, gloves and steel toe boots with pants.

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- Applicants must use a continuous motion and must touch every rung while ascending and descending the aerial device.
- Each applicant will be instructed to grasp the top rung on the ladder with both hands and remain holding the top climbing rung of the aerial for 15 seconds prior to descent.
- A voice command will signify the completion of 15 seconds. After the command is given the applicant must then start descending the aerial ladder.
 - Applicant must ascend and descend the ladder at a safe pace, but not stop for an extended period on the way up or on the way down. Applicants are not allowed to rest at any time. If applicant stops once to rest, they will be given a warning. If the applicant stops twice, they will be disqualified.
- Applicants will not have a time limit when conducting the aerial climb exercise; however, they must not pause for more than 10 seconds during the event.
- Applicant's ladder belt will be removed by FD personnel after dismounting the aerial apparatus onto the ground.
- Failure point: Skipping rungs Stopping for more than 10 seconds Stopping more than twice, not including the mandatory stopping at the top rung.

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