

# ENDWELL FIRE DISTRICT

## PHYSICAL ABILITY POLICY

**Number: 2024 - 29**

**Adopted: January 17, 2024**

Participation in the Endwell Fire District as a responding member is a privilege. Only those persons who are physically and mentally fit within the meaning of this policy shall be qualified and permitted to perform in such role. No person is entitled to perform any role, regardless of their qualifications. The District's medical provider is the ultimate authority regarding whether or not a member meets the required physical abilities for the role performed by the member.

1. All candidates for active membership (other than as a Rehab Member) shall successfully complete a physical exam provided by the District's medical provider prior to the District's final approval of their membership. Approval of membership may be contingent upon the successful completion of a physical for the position applied. Should a candidate obtain a physical exam prior to acceptance by the District, such candidate's results shall not be provided to the District for consideration until after a decision on membership has been made by the District. All new active members shall be offered the Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers and a test for TB.
2. Every individual in the department must successfully complete a physical for their position every year. Physicals will be administered by the District's medical provider on a yearly basis. If a member has not had or successfully completed an exam by their expiration date, they shall be removed from active duty and shall not respond to emergencies, participate in drills or training, or represent the District at any event until such an exam is successfully completed. The Board of Fire Commissioners will compile a list of all members who have not completed their physicals by their expiration date as needed. At the next board meeting, the Board of Fire Commissioners will remove the privileges of the non-compliant members performing active duties. The District Board of Fire Commissioners will inform the Fire Chief. The Chief will send letters to all non-compliant members, pull the member's gear, and send a copy of the list to the Fire Company President.
3. Members shall only be qualified to perform in the positions for which they are physically and mentally qualified, and if there are no such positions, then they shall be removed from active duty until they are so qualified.
4. A member shall be subject to discipline for performing in any role if they have been removed from such position.
5. Any member which is aware that they cannot meet the physical and mental fitness requirements for a prolonged period shall report the same to the Fire Chief and shall not respond to emergencies or participate in any active event.
6. When a member is given medical restrictions or returns to active membership status, it is the District's responsibility to inform the Chief and firematic officers of the changes in the person's membership status.
7. Any member returning to active duty or returning or moving to a more strenuous and physically demanding position must complete a physical. The member will, before visiting the District physician, inform the Fire Chief of their request. The District will direct the member to schedule an appointment. The District will inform the Chief as soon as possible. The member is to inform the Chief of his/her understanding of their request. If the Chief needs additional information, he/she will contact the vendor.

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8. Any active member who has an obvious physical injury or disability which prohibits them from performing any active role shall be placed on medical leave. The Chief shall be notified of such condition by the member or a member's representative, and the Chief shall notify the Board of Commissioners.
9. A Fire District Commissioner will be a contact point for the vendor service organization to ensure assistance is provided when required. The vendor service organization will provide a contact person for the Fire District.
10. If a member declines a service from the vendor organization, they will be asked to sign a vendor-supplied form indicating their decision.
11. The vendor organization will provide monthly billing for services provided.
12. All active members shall successfully complete a physical provided by the District each year regardless of age or operational assignment. Failure to do so shall result in the removal of active status until such a requirement is met.
13. The District will provide all members with the paperwork to schedule an exam appointment with the District's exam group. The paperwork given to the member will include an authorization form to get a physical. The signed acknowledgment will be given to the District secretary by the Chief. The Chief will ensure the application form clearly states what position the member is being tested for after discussing with the member and reflecting on the member's choice of position. The Chief may ask an assistant chief to perform this task. If a member is to assume the duties of a different position, they must first meet the physical exam requirements of the new position.
14. The District will arrange for the physician and medical assistants to perform the exam and review the results with the active member. If the member wishes the physician to provide the exam results to their personal physician, the member will be required to complete a written form requesting this disclosure. The physician will maintain all confidential records, and the Board of Commissioners will only be provided a summary indicating that the member has passed, failed, or passed with restrictions. The Chief will be informed within five (5) days after receipt of the results of each physical by phone message and email. The Chief will confirm with the member who has restrictions that he/she understands the limitations placed on him/her as a result of the exam findings. The Chief will inform all firematic officers that the member has either been placed in inactive status or the member has restrictions. If a member is asked to perform duties that are not allowed per restrictions, the member must inform the person giving the direction and must NOT comply with directions that compromise any restrictions. The Chief will confer with the staff conducting the physical exams if clarification is required and may request information on the member's abilities and limitations but will not request any information on the individual's physical health. This summary will be kept in the member's secured personnel folder.
15. The categories of Active Membership for which physical requirements shall be issued are:
  - Interior Firefighter

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- Exterior Firefighter / Scene Support
  - Fire Police
16. The District shall maintain a list of physically demanding tasks for each firefighting category. A person must be physically and mentally qualified to perform all of the tasks for any category for which he desires to perform on an emergency scene.
  17. All physical exams shall be performed by the district's medical provider or company chosen by the District. The District shall pay for all initial physical exams. The treatment or further examination of any discovered condition, illness, or medical problem shall be the responsibility of the member and not the District unless such is covered by VFBL.
  18. If the district's medical provider is unable to determine whether or not a member meets the physical fitness standards without the assistance of a specialist, the District will not pay for the necessary exams of the specialist, and the applicant or member shall provide the specialist's report to the District's physician for review.
  19. No second opinions will be paid for by the District. Challenging opinions are also not permitted and will not be considered.
  20. Only those persons who are deemed physically capable of performing those duties which may be assigned to them during emergencies shall be qualified to do such duties.
  21. Persons with known heart disease or heart conditions, epilepsy, or emphysema, may not participate in interior emergency activities unless the district's medical provider certifies that the individual's fitness allows him to participate in such activities.
  22. Persons may only perform those operational assignments for which they are physically and mentally qualified.
  23. In order to serve in any of the following capacities, a person must be physically and mentally competent to perform the following tasks without jeopardizing his health or safety or another's health or safety due to health-related conditions or physical or mental disabilities. The District's medical provider is the ultimate authority regarding whether or not a member meets the required physical abilities for the role performed by the member. If the District's medical provider determines that a member is not capable of performing any particular required task for a particular assignment, the member may be reassigned to a different operational assignment at the discretion of the Fire Chief.

The district's medical provider or other qualified health individuals shall ensure that an individual can satisfy the following requirements, subject to review and confirmation by the District's medical provider:

### **Interior firefighters**

- a. Wear 60 pounds of gear for up to two (2) hours.
- b. Climb a 24' ladder wearing such gear, carrying 15 pounds of equipment.
- c. Crawl for 30 minutes while wearing such gear.

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- d. Hear voices at a reasonable audible level from a distance of 15', though the use of a hearing aid is permissible
- e. Hear radio communications at a reasonable audible level of 6" from a radio speaker, though the use of a hearing aid is permissible
- f. See at least 100' without any significant impairment, though the use of corrective glasses is acceptable
- g. Drag a person of 175 pounds utilizing two arms
- h. Carry a 12' ladder by oneself and place such a ladder against a building
- i. Don an air pack and mask and breath through such mask while on air for 45 minutes
- j. Be physically and mentally capable of performing all of the above while wearing an air pack
- k. Bend, reach, and flex to be able to lift and place heavy objects
- l. Speak clearly to be understood
- m. Have the mental capacity to understand and competently deal with hazardous emergencies
- n. Be able to work for prolonged periods in the dark, heat, and confined spaces

### **Exterior firefighter /Scene Support**

- a. Wear 60 pounds of gear for up to two (2) hours
- b. Hear voices at a reasonable audible level from the distance of 15', though the use of a hearing aid is permissible
- c. Hear radio communications at a reasonable audible level of 6" from the radio speaker, though the use of a hearing aid is permissible
- d. See at least 100' without any significant impairment, though the use of corrective glasses is acceptable
- e. Drag a person of 175 pounds utilizing two arms
- f. Carry a 12' ladder by oneself and place such a ladder against a building
- g. Don an air pack and mask and breath through such mask while on air for 45 minutes
- h. Lift at least 50 pounds and hold such weight for at least 5 minutes
- i. Walk rapidly carrying 25 pounds of equipment for at least 15 minutes
- j. Pull a weight of 50 pounds for a distance of 100'
- k. Bend, reach, and flex to be able to lift and place objects
- l. Speak clearly to be understood
- m. Have the mental capacity to understand and competently deal with hazardous emergencies.

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### Fire Police

- a. Wear 30 pounds of gear for up to two (2) hours
- b. Drive and operate a motor vehicle weighing up to 10,000 pounds
- c. Fulfill all physical and mental fitness requirements for an operator of a motor vehicle
- d. Hear actual voices at a reasonable audible level from the distance of 15', though the use of a hearing aid is permissible
- e. Hear radio communications at a reasonable audible level of 36" from the radio speaker, though the use of a hearing aid is permissible
- f. See at least 100' without any significant impairment, though the use of corrective glasses is acceptable
- g. Lift at least 25 pounds and hold such weight for at least 5 minutes
- h. Walk rapidly carrying 15 pounds of equipment for at least 15 minutes
- i. Have the flexibility to bend to place cones and flares on the street
- j. Stand for at least 60 minutes
- k. Speak clearly to be understood
- l. Have the mental capacity to understand and competently deal with hazardous emergencies
- m. Possess the agility to be able to quickly avoid unexpected oncoming traffic

The following reflects the initial elements associated with the physical examination for each position:

### Interior Firefighter Physical

- Review and authorize OSHA Respirator Questionnaire
- Complete physical examination
- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Pulmonary function test
- Snellen vision exam
- Audiometric testing (OSHA)
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers, TB (offered but need not be accepted)
- EKG
- Urine Drug Testing

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- Lift Testing
- Spirometry
- PSA for members over 40 years of age or if it is medically necessary as determined by the District's vendor
- Interpretation by a physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up as needed

### **Exterior firefighter Physical**

- Complete physical examination
- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Pulmonary function test
- Snellen vision exam
- Audiometric testing (OSHA)
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- EKG
- Urine Drug Testing
- Lift Testing
- Spirometry
- PSA for members over 40 years of age or if it is medically necessary as determined by the District's vendor
- Interpretation by a physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up as needed

### **Fire Police Physical**

- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Snellen vision exam
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- EKG for members over 40 years of age or if it is medically necessary as determined by the District's vendor
- Urine Drug Testing

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- Interpretation by a physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up as needed

### **New Member Physical**

- Review and authorize OSHA Respirator Questionnaire
- Complete physical examination
- Medical and family health history
- Height, weight, blood pressure, resting heart
- Pulmonary function test
- Snellen vision exam
- Audiometric testing (OSHA)
- Urine dip and Hernia exam
- EKG
- Urine Drug Testing
- Lift Testing
- TB test
- Hepatitis B Vaccine or Hepatitis B Titers (offered but need not be accepted)
- PSA for members over 40 years of age or if it is medically necessary as determined by the District's vendor
- Interpretation by a physician of all clinical data
- Individualized follow-up

This policy is adopted on January 17, 2024, and supersedes all previous versions of this policy.

By order of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Endwell Fire District.

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Update to Section 2: statement indicating January 1 and March 31 of each year to be changed to annual.

Remove the last two sentences starting with the At the Board meeting in April.

This will be updated to "at the next meeting."

Reviewed and Adopted: January 10, 2024

No revisions

Adopted: March 23, 2023

Board of Fire Commissioner