



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

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Policy Memorandum 14-03

To: All Employees
From: Director 
Subject: Employee Fitness – Interim Policy

Background

As originally issued on March 1, 1999, Director's Order #57 addressed both (1) occupational medical standards, and (2) employee fitness. Since that time, the decision has been made to address the two topics in two separate Director's Orders. [Director's Order #57A: Medical Standards](#) was approved by the Director on January 9, 2014. It superseded the earlier 1999 Director's Order. Accordingly, there is a need for interim guidance as regards employee fitness.

Purpose

This memorandum establishes an interim policy on employee fitness for National Park Service (NPS) employees until such time as a new Director's Order #57B: Employee Fitness can be developed.

The NPS will fulfill its public trust responsibility to provide effective, efficient law enforcement and fire fighting services by fielding a well-trained, physically conditioned workforce. Beyond those who perform the rigorous duties¹ of law enforcement and fire fighting services, a healthy and physically fit workforce is the key to avoiding lost work time due to injury and illness. Accordingly, the Service's voluntary (optional) health and fitness program extends to all employees, regardless of their job duties.

Authority

The general authority to issue this Policy Memorandum is contained in the National Park Service Organic Act (16 USC 1 through 4) and part 245 of the Department of the Interior Manual. The specific authorities and requirements applicable to employees performing physically rigorous duties covered by this Policy Memorandum are found in:

Law

[5 USC 3301](#)

Regulation

[5 CFR part 300-Employment \(General\)](#)

5 CFR part 339-Medical Qualification Determinations ([section 339.203](#))

OPM Requirements

OPM Qualification Standards for Series [0081 \(Fire Protection\)](#) and [0083 \(Police\)](#)

Departmental Policy

[Departmental Manual part 446, chapter 2](#)

Policies and Procedures

1. The Service will provide opportunities for designated employees to develop and maintain their physical fitness. The general goal is to establish, encourage, promote, and maintain an efficient work force. The more specific goal is to ensure that all employees assigned law enforcement, fire fighting, and other physically rigorous duties are capable of performing the rigorous duties required of their position and able to complete strenuous physical training.
2. The Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, will oversee the Service's Fitness Program, and will promulgate and review and revise as necessary any reference manuals, training courses and materials, certifications, and other necessary materials and documents to implement and operate this program consistent with the policies, procedures and authorities contained in this Memorandum.
3. The Service will use the Physical Efficiency Battery (PEB) of measurements developed at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), as the mandatory physical fitness test for initial appointment to a position whose duties are primarily law enforcement. The Service will use the applicable Work Capacity Test Series as the physical fitness test of appointment to designated fire fighting positions.
4. The PEB and the Work Capacity Test Series will be threshold tests and baseline fitness measures. The Service will not place persons failing to pass the PEB or the Work Capacity Test Series in law enforcement or firefighter training that requires the regular performance of rigorous duties.² Physical fitness plans administered by agency physical fitness instructors are used to assist employees in successfully achieving PEB or Work Capacity Tests.
5. For current employees performing law enforcement and/or fire fighting duties, the PEB and the Work Capacity Test Series will serve to identify if an individual has satisfied the minimum physical ability requirements. The NPS has established a level of physical fitness necessary to

ensure that law enforcement and/or firefighters are capable of performing the rigorous duties of the position and performing strenuous physical training. The Service may require those employees who do not successfully meet the PEB or Work Capacity requirements to participate in a health and fitness program focused on positive improvement and achieving fitness results.

6. All parks and units with employees assigned law enforcement, fire fighting, or diving duties—or otherwise designated as mandatory participants in the health and fitness program—may provide each such employee up to three (3) hours of mandatory-participation physical fitness exercise time per work week. The Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection or his/her designee will issue guidance on approved fitness activities. Pursuant to Director’s Order #18: Wildland Fire Management, those wildland firefighters whose fulltime duties are 100 percent arduous duty-related (such as helitack, hotshot, engine, prescribed fire, smokejumper crews) will normally be provided one (1) hour per day for fitness training. Parks and units may provide or make available appropriate and safe facilities and equipment for mandatory-participation employees to maintain adequate physical conditioning to perform the rigorous duties assigned. Park managers may develop on-site fitness facilities and/or provide for employee participation in fitness facilities within a reasonable distance from the park or office.

7. The Service will continue to invest in the health and physical well-being of all its employees, regardless of job series or duties, as authorized by [5 USC 7901](#) and [16 USC 1a-2\(b\)](#). Service managers are encouraged to support voluntary fitness programs to promote the physical and mental fitness of employees under their supervision. Managers may utilize flexible and alternative work schedules, grant annual leave or leave without pay, disseminate information concerning community-based programs, offer in-house fitness and health education programs, and use other appropriate means to support employee health and fitness goals.

----- *End of Policy Memorandum* -----

¹ “‘Rigorous position’ means a position, the duties of which are so rigorous that employment opportunities should, as soon as reasonably possible, be limited (through establishment of a maximum entry age and physical qualifications) to young and physically vigorous individuals whose primary duties are” fire fighting or law enforcement. ([5 CFR 842.802](#).)

² Human Resources Bulletin Number 13-03 explicitly states that “[a]pplicants for law enforcement and fire fighter positions must . . . meet physical fitness standards prior to appointment. For law enforcement positions, applicants must pass the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) Physical Efficiency Battery (PEB). For fire fighter positions, applicants must pass the Work Capacity Test (Pck Test).”