



Officers Section

POSITION STATEMENT

Physical Fitness

Problem Statement

The majority of fire related line of duty deaths are physical fitness related.

Firefighting is a physically strenuous activity, and physical fitness program will increase firefighter productivity and reduce firefighter mortality.

Recommendations

The International Association of Fire Chiefs Volunteer & Combination Officers Section encourages all emergency service leaders and managers to review existing practices regarding entrance exams and yearly physical fitness testing. If the department does not have these practices as standard operating procedures, it is highly recommended that they institute them immediately. This will ensure the protection of their firefighters and avoid a possible tragedy. A recommended guideline for the development of these practices is NFPA 1582.

Physical examinations should be given to firefighters according to age as outlined in NFPA 1582 to insure that they do not have any limiting physical problems. These physicals may and have exposed life-threatening problems. Fire departments should administer a job related annual physical fitness test to all firefighters. This test should not be designed to exclude individuals, but should be used to help determine if personnel have the proper fitness level to safely perform the assigned tasks.

Departments should incorporate a physical fitness plan into their organizational culture as well as incorporate physical fitness into the department's regular training program.

Most importantly, fire departments should develop a system for levels of participation based on fitness requirements. This will insure that as firefighters get older and no longer have the physical ability to handle the stress of interior attack firefighting, they can remain as active and well-respected members of the fire department.

Category: Health & Safety

Proposed by: VCOS Staff

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