

The Use of Physical Ability and Fitness Testing for Law Enforcement Occupations

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Considerations for Physical Ability and Fitness Requirements

- Job relatedness of the actual requirement
 - Essential
 - Linearly valid
 - Preferred
 - Neither necessary nor useful
- Level of skill or ability
 - Content validity
 - Use of norms

Scale A: Importance and Skill Level

5	Officer must be able to perform this task at a <i>high level</i> to ensure the safety of the public or the officer
4	Performance of this task at a <i>high level</i> is necessary to meet the minimum requirements of the job
3	Performance of this task at a <i>high level</i> , though not required, will result in an officer receiving a higher performance appraisal
2	Performance of this task at a <i>minimal level</i> is required to ensure safety or the proper performance of the job
1	Performance of this task would be useful, but is not essential not will it result in higher performance ratings
0	This task is not performed in our department

Considerations for Physical Ability and Fitness Requirements

- The time at which the skill must be present
 - Time of testing
 - Time of hire
 - Start of the academy
 - Start of field training
 - After promotion or reassignment
 - Never

Scale B: When Skill Must be Present

4	At the time of hire
3	At entry into the academy
2	Upon academy completion and before the start of field training
1	After promotion or reassignment
0	Never

Considerations for Physical Ability and Fitness Requirements

- Availability of alternatives resulting in less adverse impact
 - Job redesign
 - Push bumpers on patrol cars
 - Increased use of pepper spray
 - Pretesting interventions
 - Practice tests
 - Physical fitness programs

Physical Ability

- Measurements
 - Job simulation
 - General ability measures (e.g., sit-ups, pushups)
- Job-Related Purpose
 - Catching fleeing suspects
 - Self-defense
 - Firing a weapon
 - Moving victims to safety
 - Changing tires

Physical Fitness or Wellness

- Measurements
 - Cardiovascular/aerobic fitness
 - Body fat norms
 - Flexibility norms
- Job-Related Purpose
 - Officer safety following a pursuit
 - Decreased health costs
 - Increased public image

Example of a Task Inventory

Rating		Task
Importance	When Needed	
		Pushing a car to the side of the road
		Changing a flat tire
		Dragging an accident victim to the side of the road
		Dragging a handcuffed, resisting suspect to the patrol car
		Lifting a handcuffed, resisting suspect into a patrol car
		Pulling one person away from another to stop them from fighting
		Pulling the slide on a weapon to chamber a round
		Accurately firing a handgun
		Accurately firing a shotgun
		Quickly loading ammunition into a clip
		Pursuing and catching a fleeing suspect on foot
		Pursuing and staying within eyesight of a fleeing suspect on foot
		Accurately firing a handgun after a long chase
		Audibly communicating after a long chase
		Climbing over walls in pursuit of a suspect
		Crawling through windows to enter a building
		Sitting in a patrol car for long periods of time
		Carrying an equipment belt for the duration of a shift