

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Physical Fitness Tests & Standards



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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Physical Fitness Tests and Standards

Why be concerned with fitness?

- It relates to the ability of police officers to perform essential functions of the job.
- It relates to minimizing the risk of excessive force situations.
- It relates to minimizing the known health risks associated with a career in law enforcement.
- It relates to meeting many legal requirements to avoid litigation and have a defensible position if challenged in court.

Are there strict guidelines, protocols, and/or norms for administering physical fitness assessments and tests?

- Yes, strict protocols, guidelines, and/or norms must be followed when administering assessments and tests to cadets because this ensures uniformity and fairness to all participants. All academies, Departments and testing organizations must ensure that protocols are strictly adhered to when testing cadets and/or prospective employees, or the testing results are invalid.

What physical fitness norms and protocols are mandated by Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission's (MPOETC's) rules and regulations?

- MPOETC uses the Cooper Health-Based norms and Cooper Health-Based protocols for assessing and testing of a cadet's physical fitness level.

Are the Cooper tests, norms and protocols defensible in court?

- The Cooper tests have scientific evidence for having construct and criterion validity as measuring job related factors and are defensible.
- The Cooper norms are scientifically valid norms based on general population and law enforcement samples. They are a representative cross-section of fitness levels among those populations.
- Absolute cut points for the Cooper tests have been found to be job related and defensible.
- The courts have upheld the use of normed standards because:
 - The tests are designed to assess general fitness for police training.
 - The normed standards are used to expand the competitive pool of qualified applicants.
 - Normed standards that appear different actually represent identical levels of underlying physical fitness.

What does MPOETC mandate as a fitness test battery for entrance into a police academy?

- Title 37 § 203.11 Qualifications, mandates the following Fitness Test Battery, in the order outlined, and receive a score no lower than the 30th percentile of the Cooper standards must be achieved by a recruit prior to acceptance into a police academy:
 - 300 Meter Run
 - 1 RM Bench Press
 - 1 Minute Sit-Up
 - 1.5 Mile Run
- Police academies may use the One Minute Push-Up physical fitness test in addition to the entrance testing established in Title 37 Section 203.11 Qualifications. If a police academy elects to use the One Minute Push-Up physical fitness test, this test must be done after the completion of the physical fitness test for entrance into the academy, according to Title 37 Section 203.11 Qualifications.

What does MPOETC mandate as a fitness test battery for the basic police curriculum and for the final physical fitness test?

- 1 Minute Sit-Up
- 300 Meter Run
- 1 Minute Push-up
- 1.5 Mile Run

What does the fitness test battery accurately measure? What is the predictability of each event in measuring job tasks?

Sit-ups **	Abdominal Muscular Endurance
300 Meter Run ***	Anaerobic Power (sprinting ability)
Push-ups***	Muscular Endurance (upper body)
1.5 Mile Run ***	Aerobic Capacity (cardiorespiratory)

*** Is highly predictive of performing job tasks in all cases

** Is predictive of performing job tasks in most cases

What is the minimum score a cadet needs to achieve to pass the physical fitness test battery?

- All applicants must pass the fitness test battery at the 30th percentile based on his/her age and gender, prior to entering the police academy.
- All cadets must pass the fitness test battery at the 50th percentile based on his/her age and gender, to successfully meet the minimum requirements to graduate from the police academy.

Why are the age and gender norms used by MPOETC?

- The Commission made a decision to open the employment pool to the largest number of applicants. “One standard fits all” has a disparate impact on women and older officers. In order to get the largest number of applicants, MPOETC uses age and gender norms. Cooper strives to maintain the most accurate standards, and on occasions updates these standards. The following chart outlines the most current minimum standards for the 30th and 50th percentiles, based on age and gender, (as of 2013).

Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission

30th Percentile Age & Gender Adjusted Rankings

Physical Fitness Test Battery Norms

Academy Entry Level Standards

<u>Event</u>	<u>Age 20 to 29</u>		<u>Age 30 to 39</u>		<u>Age 40 to 49</u>		<u>Age 50 to 59</u>		<u>Age 60 +</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sit-ups	35	30	32	22	27	17	21	12	n/a	n/a
Total number of repetitions performed in one minute.										
300 Meter Run	62.1	75.0	63.0	82.0	77.0	106.7	87.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Time measured in seconds										
Push-ups	26	13	20	9	15	7	10	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of repetitions performed in one minute.										
1.5 Mile Run	13:15	15:46	13:44	16:42	14:34	17:29	15:50	19:10	n/a	n/a
Time measured in minutes and seconds.										

Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission

50th Percentile Age & Gender Adjusted Rankings

Physical Fitness Test Battery Norms

Academy Graduation Standards

<u>Event</u>	<u>Age 20 to 29</u>		<u>Age 30 to 39</u>		<u>Age 40 to 49</u>		<u>Age 50 to 59</u>		<u>Age 60+</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sit-ups	40	35	36	27	31	22	26	17	n/a	n/a
Total number of repetitions performed in one minute.										
300 Meter Run	56.0	64.0	57.0	74.0	67.6	86.0	80.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Time measured in seconds.										
Push-ups	33	18	27	14	21	11	15	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of repetitions performed in one minute.										
1.5 Mile Run	11:58	14:04	12:24	14:34	13:12	15:34	14:23	17:19	n/a	n/a
Time measured in minutes and seconds.										

Why must the fitness test battery be given in a specific order?

- The fitness test battery is designed to measure the cumulative effect on the cadet. Therefore, the complete test battery must be given at one time, on a single day, in the order outlined within established test and safety protocols.

What if a cadet fails one event of the fitness test battery?

- All events are pass/fail. If a cadet (applicant) fails any one event, he/she fails the entire test, due to the cumulative nature of the fitness test battery. If the cadet fails one part of the fitness test battery, he/she cannot move on to the next event.

What if a cadet fails the fitness test battery?

- According to MPOETC rules and regulations, if a cadet fails to achieve a 50th percentile on any one event during the Final Physical Fitness Test, he/she fails the entire test. If the cadet fails the Final Physical Fitness Test he/she will have to re-take the entire Physical Fitness block of instruction.

Scoring the fitness test battery.

- All scores obtained by a cadet during any assessment and/or fitness test must be recorded on MPOETC form “MP PhysEval 01-2014”.
- The scores for either assessments or tests must be documented by placing the actual number (score) achieved in addition to pass or fail. (Example: if a cadet runs the 300 Meter Run at 47 seconds, “47 seconds” as well as a “Pass” should be recorded on the form.)

What is the difference between “assessment” and “fitness test”?

- *Assessment:* The goal of the assessment is to measure an individual’s absolute fitness level. The cadet must perform a maximum effort on each event of the fitness test battery. This will allow academy staff to determine the fitness level of the cadet and if they are responding to training.
- *Fitness Test:* The goal of the fitness test is to determine if a cadet can pass the academy standards. Once the cadet has achieved the minimum cut off point (based on their age and gender) he/she must stop that fitness test battery event.

What about exercise safety?

- MPOETC utilizes generally accepted and national standards for safe exercise testing. These guidelines include:
 - Employing certified personnel
 - Medical screening of all cadets (applicants)
 - Avoid testing in extreme weather environments (heat, cold, etc.)
 - Proper testing equipment
 - Having safety equipment on site and readily available
 - Following established testing protocols
 - All test proctors should be familiar with safety standards when conducting physical training and testing in extreme weather conditions

Who are Certified Personnel (Physical Fitness Instructor)?

- A Physical Fitness Instructor is a person that is certified in the discipline of physical fitness by a nationally recognized entity such as American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), FitForce, National Strength Conditioning Association (NSCA), and/or Cooper Institute or holds a degree in a health-related field. Fitness Instructors must also maintain current qualifications in the fitness area. MPOETC will have the final determination in deciding if a person is qualified to be a Physical Fitness Instructor.
- All physical fitness instructors must have current certifications in Basic First Aid, CPR, and the use of Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).
- All trainers, test facilitators, test proctors, and law enforcement instructors that teach at a certified police academy (school) must be certified by MPOETC.

Can academies use non-trained individuals to assist in administering the fitness test battery?

- MPOETC's protocols states that only physical fitness instructors are allowed to be test proctors. This includes all starters, timers, counters, spotters and holders.
- MPOETC recognizes this could be labor intensive, but failure by the academy to follow these protocols could expose the school to liability issues. (i.e. by using an untrained individual to hold legs during the sit-up test, the participant could claim that the untrained holder failed to hold the legs properly, that being the reason he/she failed). Using certified personnel avoids these arguments.
- Cadets, in the same academy class, must never be used as starters, timers, counters, spotters and holders, for assessments and tests.

What about using non-trained individuals for pre-employment testing?

- MPOETC does not regulate individual police department's pre-employment testing. MPOETC's regulations state that an individual must achieve the 30th percentile on the fitness test battery prior to entry into the academy and the 50th percentile to graduate from the academy. It has been proven that applicants that cannot meet the 30th percentile will have an extremely difficult time to achieve 50th percentile on the Final Physical Fitness Test. It is the responsibility of the police department, law enforcement agency, or other organization to ensure the applicant meets the minimum entrance standards for the academy. MPOETC does not assume any liability or responsibility for pre-employment testing.

- MPOETC strongly recommends that departments use certified test proctors and follow MPOETC's physical fitness protocols, when conducting the 30th percentile Academy Entrance Test, to avoid civil liability issues.

If a cadet (applicant) asks for a pacer, should a pacer be provided?

- MPOETC protocols allow applicants and cadets to request a trained pacer for the 300 Meter Run and the 1.5 Mile Run events. A “trained pacer” is an individual certified by MPOETC as a Physical Fitness Instructor. The trained pacer is also an individual that has experience regarding running. The trained pacer must be able to complete the event in the acceptable time for that cadet. Remember, the trained pacer must set a pace that will give the cadet every opportunity to pass this event. The pace must be timely enough for the cadet to pass, if able, yet not too fast to cause the cadet to prematurely become exhausted.
- Pacers may not physically assist the cadet during the event.
- Cadets or other applicants must not be used as pacers. This will avoid issues that the pacer did not set a proper pace because they were not trained.

What type of surface should the cadet run on for the 300 Meter Run and the 1.5 Mile Run?

- MPOETC protocols recommend that these events be conducted on a standard 440 yard oval track.
- Reasons:
 - This will allow the proctor to keep all cadets in view for safety reasons.
 - The cadets will be running on the same surface for the entire event.
 - This will eliminate having cadets walk the course prior to the event for familiarity purposes.

What is an “Experienced Spotter” or “(Spotter)”?

- Spotter and experienced spotters are interchangeable terms.

What is the reason that cadets (applicants) cannot be used as spotters, pacers, holders, starters, and timers?

- Only Physical Fitness Instructors must be used in assessments and tests to ensure fairness, accuracy, standardization, safety, and completeness during the fitness test battery.
- Using cadets and applicants could result in civil liability to the police academy or police department. Civil liability issues are only limited to the imagination of the cadet that failed and his/her attorney.

- Cadets can be used for spotters, holders, etc., at the discretion of the academy director during non-assessment and non-testing aspects of physical fitness training.

What if a cadet is feeling ill or sick of the day of the Final Physical Fitness Test?

- MPOETC recognizes that on the day of the Final Physical Fitness Test a cadet might not be feeling well. The cadet must inform the physical fitness instructor that he/she is not feeling well, and may choose not to take the Final Physical Fitness Test on that date. Again, this can only be for not feeling well (illness and/or sickness) on that day. MPOETC will allow a cadet who is ill or sick to forgo the Final Physical Fitness Test on that day, and take the Final Physical Fitness Test within seven (7) calendar days. If the cadet starts the Final Physical Fitness Test, and fails, the cadet cannot ask to re-take the Final Physical Fitness Test, but must re-take the entire physical fitness block of instruction again. Physical fitness instructors shall ask all cadets if they are feeling well and are ready to take the Final Physical Fitness Test. If a cadet has an injury which precludes them from taking the Final Physical Fitness Test the cadet will need a doctor's statement allowing them to participate in the Final Physical Fitness Test.

What if a cadet gets injured during the Final Physical Fitness Test?

- When an injury occurs during the Final Physical Fitness Test that precludes the cadet from continuing with the testing process, the Academy Director or designee shall ensure the cadet is directed to obtain medical treatment and a written diagnosis of the injury for inclusion with the injury report.
- When a cadet is injured while participating in the Final Physical Fitness Test the injury and circumstances surrounding the injury will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if the cadet failed the Final Physical Fitness Test, or will be given an Incomplete on the Final Physical Fitness Test. The review and final determination will be conducted by the Academy Director or (designee) and MPOETC staff. The Executive Director of MPOETC reserves the right to review and amend the determination as appropriate.
- A determination of “**Fail**” will result in the cadet receiving a failing grade and be required to re-take the physical fitness block of instruction.
- If the cadet is given an “**Incomplete**” for the Final Physical Fitness Test, the cadet will be given the opportunity to re-take the Final Physical Fitness Test within seven (7) days of being cleared by a medical doctor to participate in physical fitness training and/or testing. The cadet must provide the police academy a medical clearance stating the cadet is allowed to participate in physical fitness training and/or testing. The cadet must obtain the medical clearance and present it to the police academy director within 90 days of the injury that occurred during

the Final Physical Fitness Test to be given an Incomplete. If the cadet does not obtain and present the medical clearance to the police academy director within 90 days, the cadet will receive a failing grade and be required to re-take the entire physical fitness block of instruction again.