



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# People & Development

## Physical Fitness of Operational Personnel Policy

Owner	Executive Director of People and Development
Responsible Person	Head of Occupational Health & Wellbeing
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What we must  
do well



How we support our  
communities



We value and support  
the people we employ



We efficiently manage  
the Service

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) will encourage a positive attitude to fitness by providing appropriate information and guidance on personal fitness and health by the provision of information, instructors, appropriate equipment and facilities together with a programme of assessment.

All operational personnel whose role map indicates an operational commitment will be expected to achieve and maintain a predetermined standard of cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and muscular endurance. This applies to all Full-Time, On-Call, day duty personnel and flexible duty system (FDS) personnel.

Physical fitness is a safety critical issue, and the main concept of the fitness management framework detailed here stems from the notion that without adequate physical fitness, physically demanding environments such as emergency responses, can place excessive strain upon the body. Such excessive strain gives considerable rise to risk of injury and more seriously, cardiac events, which are associated with over-exertion.

This policy is in line with the fitness management framework as outlined by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Firefit Steering Group and as such will be reviewed should that guidance be amended.

The framework follows a traffic light system (Figure 1), where:

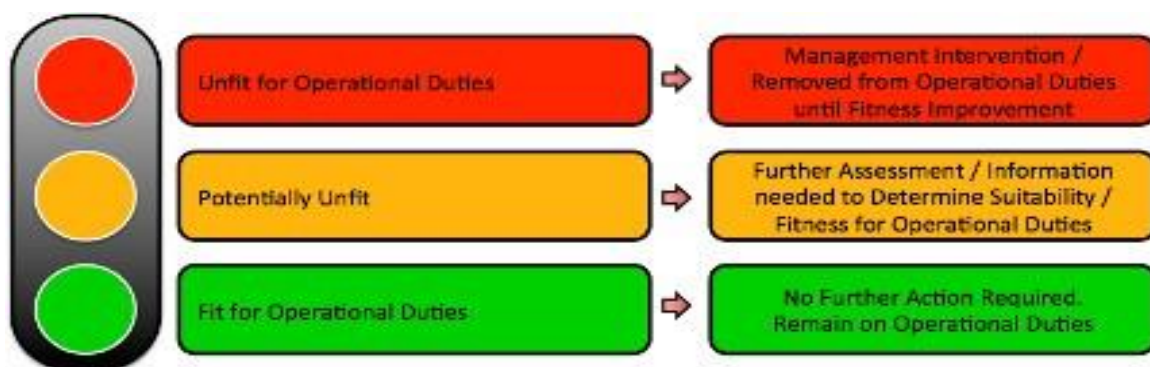
**GREEN = Highly likely to be fit for operational duties.**

**AMBER = May or may not be fit for operational duties following OH referral.**

**RED = Highly likely to be unfit for operational duties.**

The AMBER section reflects the variance that exists between individuals' abilities to cope with varied physically demanding firefighting duties.

**Figure 1.** Fitness management framework traffic light system.



## **Core Code of Ethics**

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do, therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

## **National Guidance**

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

## **2. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services nor in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

## **3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

This policy aims to provide guidance to employees and managers on the fitness standards and testing procedures and how this will be managed within HFRS.

## **4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- Equality Impact Analysis ([EIA/OD](#))
- Legal References  
There are no specific legislative requirements relevant to this policy.
- National Guidance  
[Firefit Steering Group Fitness Management Framework](#)

## **5. FITNESS STANDARD AND TESTING**

Fitness assessments will be undertaken twice a year during the months of March and September. The assessments will comprise of tests that measure cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and muscular endurance. Fitness assessments can only be conducted by the Fitness Manager or a Fitness & Wellbeing Adviser (FWA).

The assessments used to determine cardiorespiratory fitness will be the Multi-Stage Fitness Test (MSFT) the Chester Treadmill Walk Test (CTWT), Chester Treadmill Run Test (CTRT), Wattbike Firefit Fitness Test (WFFT) or Drill Ground Fitness Assessment (DGFA). Individuals with specific health or fitness concerns affecting their suitability to undertake the aforementioned tests may request to undertake the Gas Analysis Test.

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On successful completion of the assessment, the individual will be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard of fitness at the time and the results will be recorded using the Pro Health Analytics platform. Individuals may request an electronic copy of their fitness test summary from the Fitness Manager or FWA.

**Firefighter (FF), Crew Manager (CM) and Watch Manager (WM)**

**Test 1: Cardiorespiratory Fitness**

FF, CM and WM\* employed in an operational role (or who's role map indicates an operational commitment) must achieve a cardiorespiratory fitness standard equal to or above an oxygen consumption of 42.3 millilitres of oxygen per kilogram of body mass per minute ( $\text{ml}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$ ) (**Test 1, Table 1**, also see **Figure 2**.) FF, CM and WM must also complete the Muscular Strength and Muscular Endurance Tests as outlined below.

\*Exceptions for WM: There may be some individuals who are risk assessed at the discretion of their line manager. Should a reasonable adjustment be agreed, these individuals will follow the SM and above fitness standard.

**Test 1: Cardiorespiratory Fitness Test Thresholds for FF, CM and WM**

	CTWT/CTRT	MSFT	Wattbike Fire Fit Test	Drill Ground Fitness Assessment	Gas Analysis Test
<b>Fit</b>	12 mins	level 8 Shuttle 8	> 70 points	< 11 mins, 11 secs	42.3 $\text{ml}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$ or above
<b>Potentially Unfit</b>	Between 10-12 mins	Level 6, shuttle 8 to level 8, shuttle 7	$\leq$ 30 points	> 11 min, 11 secs	35.6 to 42.3 $\text{ml}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$
<b>Unfit</b>	< 10 mins	Level 6, shuttle 7	=	=	Below 35.6 $\text{ml}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$

**GREEN**

- Should be considered physically fit for operational duties, having reached or exceeded the minimum acceptable level.
- Fitness re-tested on a six-monthly basis.

## **AMBER**

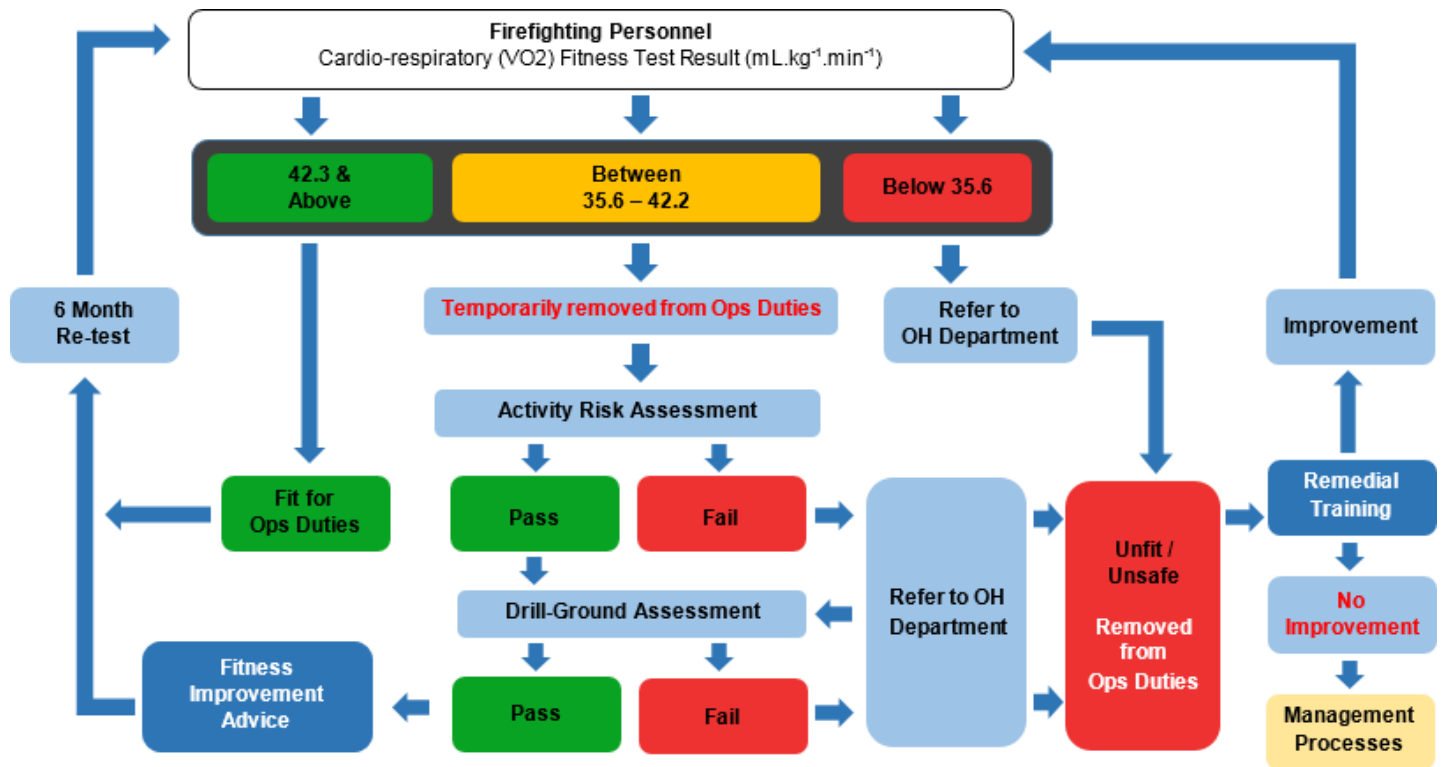
- Are considered possibly unfit for operational duties and will be temporarily removed from operational duties. This should be reported to the Fitness Manager and Occupational Health as soon as possible.
- Will undergo further assessment to determine their suitability for operational duties by performing the DGFA. In order to be considered safe to undertake a DGFA, individuals should successfully pass a physical activity risk assessment to be undertaken by an Occupational Health Advisor (OHA). **It is the individuals' responsibility to contact Occupational Health and make an appointment with an Occupational Health Adviser (OHA).**
- Where an individual fails a physical activity risk assessment, they will not be allowed to undertake the DGFA until they are safe to participate in vigorous intensity exercise. Those that are considered safe to undertake the DGFA by an OHA will then do so. **The individual should contact the Fitness Manager to make an appointment to undertake the DGFA.**
- Those that subsequently pass the DGFA should be considered fit and given appropriate exercise/fitness improvement advice to help prepare themselves for their next routine fitness assessment.
- Individuals that fail the DGFA will remain non-operational and be managed as the RED category described below.

## **RED**

- Should be considered unfit and be removed from operational duties.
- Be given a fitness improvement plan and retested at regular intervals until the individuals has reached the GREEN fitness category or successfully completed the DGFA.

Individuals are required to commit to a programme of improvement to achieve the cardiorespiratory fitness standard as soon as possible. Where there is no underlying medical issue, the period will be **no longer than one month**. Any medical issues that may be preventing a satisfactory fitness result will be assessed via a referral to Occupational Health. During the improvement period, individuals may be assigned to non-operational duties, where available, by their supervisory manager. In cases where there is an underlying medical or health issue, the period of non-operational duties may be extended, where deemed appropriate, to up to three months in total and in accordance with the Absence Management Policy.

**Figure 2:** Schematic representation of the cardiorespiratory fitness management framework for FF, CM and WM.



## Test 2: Muscular Strength Test

Repeated lifts of a 10.5 metre ladder at the ladder head. With the heel of a 10.5 metre extension ladder either footed or resting against a building, the ladder (housed and pawled) is first lifted to shoulder height. **The ladder must be raised to above head height (to almost full arm's length and not locking out the joints) and back to chest height 10 times.** On completion the ladder is placed back on the ground. The correct manual handling techniques should be used at all times.

## Test 3: Muscular Endurance Test

One length of 70 millimetre hose to be carried in each hand over a distance of 100 metres at a brisk walking pace. **Once picked up, the hose should not be placed down again until the test has been completed.** The exercise must be carried out using the correct manual handling and lifting technique.

## Test 2 and 3: Fitness Management Process

The fitness management process will follow the **GREEN, AMBER, RED** system as outlined below and in **Figure 3**.



## GREEN

- Should be considered physically fit for operational duties, having reached or exceeded the minimum acceptable level.
- Fitness re-tested on a six-monthly basis.

## AMBER

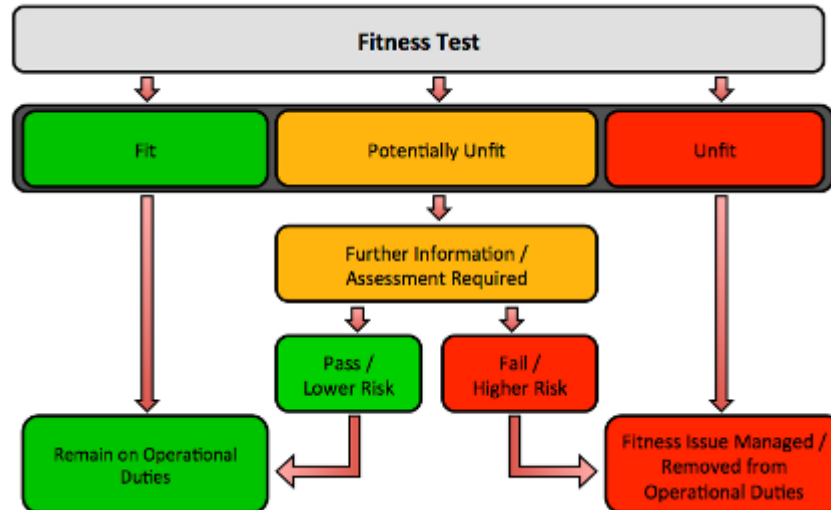
- Are considered possibly unfit and will be temporarily removed from operational duties. This should be reported to the Fitness Manager and Occupational Health as soon as possible.
- Will undergo further assessment to determine their suitability for operational duties. In order to be considered safe to undertake a re-assessment, individuals should successfully pass a physical activity risk assessment to be undertaken by an Occupational Health Advisor. **It is the individuals' responsibility to contact Occupational Health and make an appointment with an OHA.**
- Where an individual fails a physical activity risk assessment, they will not be allowed to undertake re-assessment until they are safe to engage in vigorous intensity exercise. Those that are considered safe to undertake the re-assessment by an OHA will do so. **The individual should contact the Fitness Manager to make an appointment to undertake Test 2 and/or Test 3, respectively.**
- Those that subsequently pass Test 2 and/or Test 3 should be considered fit and given appropriate exercise/fitness improvement advice to help prepare them for their next routine fitness assessment.
- Individuals that fail Test 2 and/or Test 3 will remain non-operational and then be managed as the **RED** category described below.

## RED

- Should be considered unfit and be removed from operational duties.
- Be given a fitness improvement plan and re-tested at regular intervals until the individuals has reached the **GREEN** fitness category (successful completion of Test 2 and/or Test 3).
- Individuals are required to commit to a programme of improvement to achieve the muscular strength and muscular endurance standard as soon as possible. Where there is no underlying medical issue, the period will be **no longer than one month**. Any medical issues that may be preventing a satisfactory fitness test result will be assessed via a referral to Occupational Health. During the improvement period, individuals may be assigned to non-operational duties by their supervisory manager, where available. In cases where there is an underlying medical or health issue, the period of non-operational duties may be extended, where deemed appropriate, to up to three months in total and in accordance with the Absence Management Policy.



**Figure 3:** Schematic representation of the fitness management process for muscular strength (**Test 2**) and muscular endurance (**Test 3**).



An employee who fails to meet the fitness standard at any time is liable to action under the Performance and Capability Policy. Informal action is at the discretion of line management. Formal stages may be applied following a Management Case Review meeting chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Office and Director of People and Development. This will not apply on returning to work from long-term sickness / injury absence or where there is a short-term medical or health issue.

### Station Manager (SM) and above

HFRS encourages staff at all levels to achieve the same level of physical fitness as a firefighter. However NFCC guidance is such that the levels by which SM and above are removed from operational duties are at a lower threshold. Nevertheless, the Fitness Manager and FWAs will provide programmes to support all staff groups at the higher level if they are followed.

Those in a Management role of SM or above will have their cardiorespiratory fitness tested, categorised and managed using the following framework (Table 2 and Figure 3).

**Table 2:** Cardiorespiratory Fitness Testing Thresholds for SM and above.

	Chester Treadmill Walk or Run Test	Multi-Stage Fitness Test	Gas Analysis Test
Fit	10 mins, 15 secs	Level 7, shuttle 1	36.8 ml·kg <sup>-1</sup> ·min <sup>-1</sup> or above

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Potentially Unfit	Between 8 mins and 10 mins 14 secs	Level 5, shuttle 5 to level 7	31.4 to 36.7 ml·kg <sup>-1</sup> ·min <sup>-1</sup>
Unfit	< 8 mins	Level 5, shuttle 4	Below 31.4 ml·kg <sup>-1</sup> ·min <sup>-1</sup>

## GREEN

- Should be considered physically fit for operational duty, having reached or exceeded the minimum acceptable level for their role.
- Fitness re-tested on a six-monthly basis.

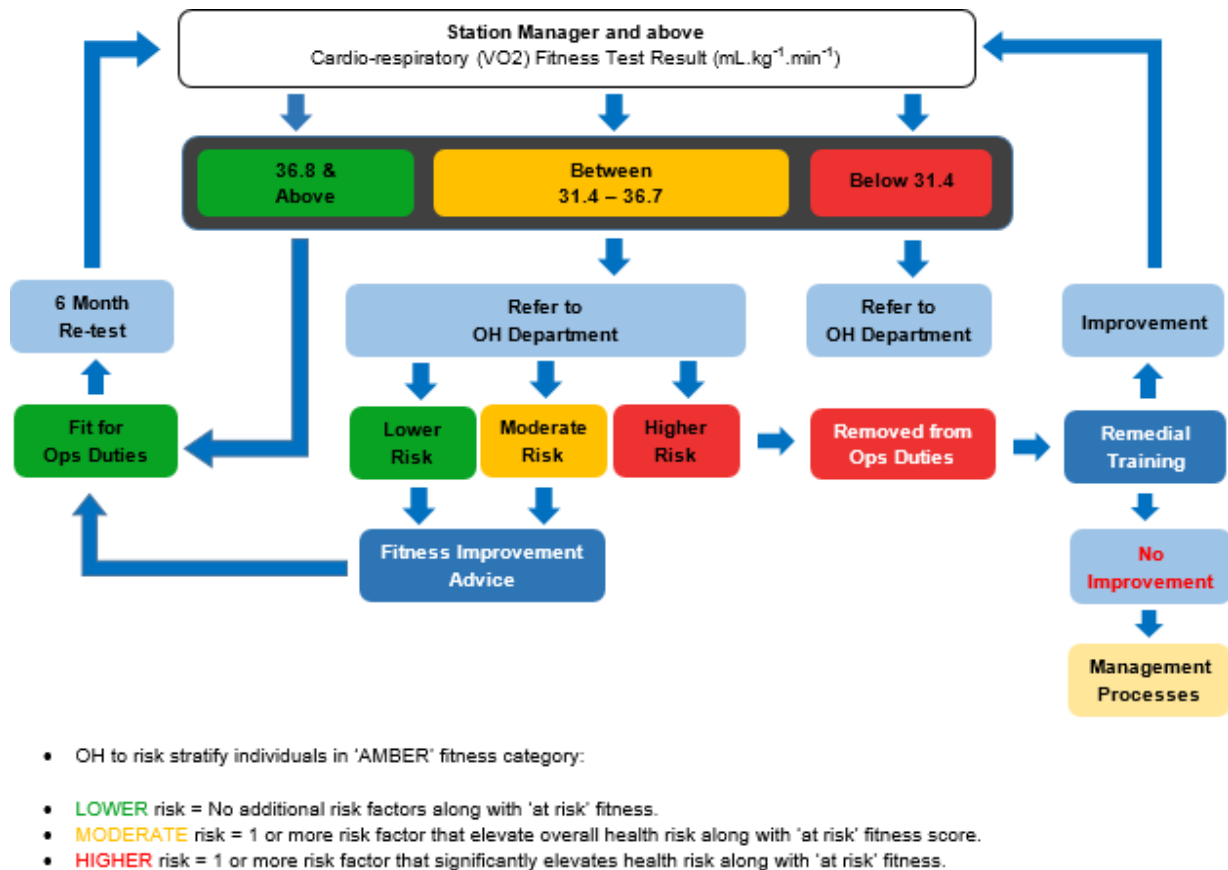
## AMBER

- Should undergo a physical activity risk assessment by an OHA and categorised as low, moderate or high risk, based on a possible low level of fitness and other medical risk factors. **It is the individuals' responsibility to contact Occupational Health to make an appointment with an OHA.**
- Those considered low or moderate risk should be considered fit for operational duties and be given exercise advice.
- Those that are considered high risk should be considered unfit for operational duties, be removed from operational duties, and given a fitness improvement plan and retested at suitable intervals until the individual has reached the **GREEN** fitness category or the **AMBER** fitness category and considered low or moderate risk by an OHA.

## RED

- Should be considered unfit and removed from operational duties. The Fitness Manager and Occupational Health should be informed as soon as possible.
- Individuals will need a physical activity risk assessment to be undertaken by an OHA. **It is the individuals' responsibility to contact Occupational Health and make an appointment.**
- Be given a fitness improvement plan and re-tested at suitable intervals until the individuals has reached the **GREEN** fitness category or the **AMBER** fitness category and considered low or moderate risk by an OHA.

**Figure 4:** Schematic representation of the cardiorespiratory fitness management framework for SM and above.



## Return to Work Fitness Tests

In accordance with the Absence Management Policy, all operational personnel absent for 28 days or more (excluding annual leave and other periods of 'fit' leave) should contact Occupational Health to arrange a return to work fitness test with the Fitness Manager before they are permitted to resume operational duties and/or risk critical training. The return to work fitness test will include Tests 1, 2 and 3 for FF, CM and WM and a test of cardiorespiratory fitness for SM and above.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers will be informed of potentially unfit/unfit outcomes of any fitness assessment. Individual employees, along with their managers are responsible for arranging physical activity risk assessments with an OHA or reassessment by the Fitness Manager in accordance with the above framework. They must do this by contacting Occupational Health.

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The Fitness Manager and FWAs will provide individually focused advice and fitness plans to help facilitate improvements.

### **Individuals**

All operational personnel are individually responsible for their own level of fitness and for ensuring assessment is undertaken within the specified assessment periods of March and September each year. Individuals on dual role contracts, both Full-Time and On-Call, should undertake their fitness test at their Full-Time station. Individuals should consider taking regular physical activity whilst off duty and should not wait until the six-monthly fitness assessment period to confirm what they already believe or know is their level of fitness. Individuals can contact their station FWA or the Fitness Manager if they require assistance with any issues they may have. Station-based personnel are required to participate in physical training at work.

### **Managers**

Managers are responsible for ensuring the delivery of the fitness assessment program of all operational personnel under their control **and** take appropriate action within the terms of this Policy and follow appropriate guidance if individuals fail to achieve and maintain the minimum standard.

Opportunities for physical training should be provided to individuals, and managers should allocate time that supports both participation and quality/effectiveness.

### **Fitness Manager and Fitness & Wellbeing Advisors**

The Fitness Manager is responsible for the coordination of the Service fitness assessment programme, training, and maintaining the competence of the FWAs. The Fitness Manager will also undertake any Gas Analysis Testing and Return to Work Fitness Tests of those returning to work after illness/injury, or those requiring programmes of improvement. Results of assessments undertaken will be issued to appropriate managers and meaningful statistical information in relation to the performance and progress of the fitness testing programme will be provided. Where individuals are removed from operational duties and this has the potential to impact on immediate crewing or an engine being taken off the run, the Fitness Manager or FWA will inform the individual's line manager. FWAs will be minimum level 3 Personal Training Instructor Qualified. They will be available to deliver fitness training sessions and offer advice on health / wellbeing where their professional qualification allows. The FWAs will promote fitness and wellbeing, offering support prior to, and where required after, routine fitness testing. The FWAs will provide documentation to record personal training sessions with individuals to the Fitness Manager.

The Fitness Manager and FWAs will conduct routine fitness testing at their allocated stations in accordance with the Fitness Standard and Testing procedure above and report all results using the Pro Health Analytics platform. Where appropriate, information will be reported to the correct management member.

## **Equipment**

Only personnel who have undertaken an induction and completed an LD1 form for 'PT equipment in the workplace' will be allowed to use fitness equipment. Only a member of the Fitness and Wellbeing Team can carry out these inductions. Under no circumstances should personnel use fitness equipment without first receiving induction training. Inductions will be recorded on the Pro Health Analytics platform.

Equipment owned by station Social Clubs or the Sports and Welfare Association may be used but must be approved by the Fitness Manager. A suitable risk assessment and safe system of work shall be completed by the Fitness and Wellbeing Team under the direction of the FM. Equipment deemed unfit for use will be labelled accordingly and removed from the workplace. No personal fitness equipment will be used.

All personnel will visually inspect any fitness equipment prior to use for its suitability. Any item found to be faulty or unsafe for use will be clearly labelled, immediately taken out of use and reported to the Fitness Manager who will advise as to the correct course of action to be taken. Weekly equipment standard checks and cleaning will be carried out in accordance with local station routines. Managers are responsible for auditing the standard checks and cleaning of equipment.

The Fitness Manager will manage, monitor and review the maintenance of fitness equipment and will be the direct point of contact, having authority for all equipment requirements relating to fitness training. The Fitness Manager will arrange for all equipment to receive a maintenance check by a reputable service provider.

## **Planning**

Prior to the fitness testing months of March and September the Fitness Manager and/or FWAs will contact their allocated stations and book a mutually convenient time for the testing to take place. Line managers must inform all personnel in their span of control when and where testing will take place.

Employees will normally be assessed in groups where possible, although consideration of individual assessment may be given where appropriate. The assessment may be carried out in any order at the direction of the Fitness Manager or FWA.

Other considerations will include:

- Employees will wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- The assessor will be responsible for the employees being familiar and competent to undertake the assessment and use the protocol.
- The assessor will observe the employee throughout the test and will be responsible for the safety of the employee and be prepared to interrupt the activity to prevent an accident or injury occurring.
- **A suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be completed on**

**all equipment, weather and ground conditions by the assessor before tests are undertaken.**

- **The assessor will ensure that suitable first aid equipment is provided at a nearby location should it be required.**
- Managers will be informed of non-attendance and appointment cancellation.

**For further guidance / information relating to this document, please contact  
Occupational Health and Wellbeing.**