

# PART II

February 9, 2000

# **Occupational Health and Fitness Program**

## **Purpose**

In order to manage the broad spectrum of park resources and to provide routine and emergency services to the visiting public, the NPS employs a diverse, multi-skilled work force. The NPS is committed to providing good stewardship to its human resources, including assisting all employees in attaining peak effectiveness in their jobs.

Mission success depends on high quality employee performance, which relates directly to individual physical and mental health. The Secretary of the Interior, in his memorandum of December 11, 1989, said that "engaging in a program of regular exercise reduces risk of disease, lowers health care costs and improves employee morale and productivity."

The NPS endorses health and fitness programs that effectively use our limited resources to help achieve a healthy and fit work force. All NPS employees are encouraged to participate in approved health and fitness programs and to take full advantage of the physical exercise facilities and equipment provided by the Service.

The NPS recognizes the business value of a healthy, physically fit work force and encourages individual employees to seek the means to achieve and maintain healthy, vigorous lives, both on and off the job. The Service's professionally developed employee health and fitness program will provide both a blueprint and vehicle for all NPS employees to achieve healthier lifestyles, which will enhance both individual and organizational effectiveness.

The Service recognizes that those employees who must meet mandatory medical standards and rigorous-duty physical fitness requirements, must have a fitness program. The Service will invest in enabling them to attain and maintain the health and fitness levels necessary for safe and efficient performance of their required duties. Rigorous-duty employees must be physically capable of performing their challenging duties in a safe and efficient manner.

## **Objectives**

The NPS has the following five objectives for its health and fitness program:

- Develop and maintain optimal employee effectiveness and job performance through increased fitness and health.
- Reduce work time lost through illness, disability, or job dissatisfaction.
- Increase each participating employee's mental alertness and ability to absorb emotional and physical stress and reduce workplace tension,
- Promote each participating employee's morale and personal well being through improved

health and fitness,

- Develop and maintain a work force capable of responding to the rapidly changing, increasingly difficult physical demands of emergency services work in parks by establishing and maintaining a vigorous law enforcement and firefighting work force as envisioned by Congress and demanded by the American public.

## **Legal Authority**

### Director's Order #57

#### Overall Authorities for Program

- 5 United States Code (USC), Section 7901, 7903 and 7904
- 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 792

Agencies have the authority to establish health service programs and to use appropriated funds to establish and operate physical fitness programs and facilities. The agency's program may include, but is not limited to, physical fitness, wellness, health awareness, prevention of illness and disease, smoking cessation, correction of alcohol and drug abuse, medical surveillance, mental and emotional well-being, and adoption issues.

#### Establishment of Medical and Physical Qualifications

- 5 CFR 339
- DM 446, Chapter 2.1 as amended

Medical determinations pertaining to employability, including procedures for establishing standards and physical requirements, medical evaluation programs, the events under which medical examinations are appropriate and how medical information may be used in making employment decisions.

#### Requirement for and Payment of Medical Examinations

- 5 CFR 339

Specific information on obtaining medical information and requiring and paying for medical examinations.

#### Use of Duty Time for Participation in the Health and Fitness Program

- 5 U.S.C. 7901

#### Use of Appropriated Funds to Purchase Exercise Equipment and Memberships in Fitness Centers

- 5 U.S.C. 7901
- 16 U.S.C., Section 1a-2(a)
- Public Law 91-383, dated August 18, 1970
- Comptroller General Decision B-227559, March 23, 1988

- Comptroller General Decision B-240371, January 18, 1991
- Comptroller General Decision B-243025, May 2, 1991

Agency authority to establish health service programs, including by contract, to promote and maintain the physical and mental fitness of employees. Included is the authority to purchase exercise equipment and, in cases where all other resources have been considered and are inappropriate, membership in fitness clubs.

***Important Note:*** The prohibition in 5 U.S.C. 5946 against using appropriated funds to pay the membership dues of a Federal employee in a society or association does not prohibit a Federal agency from using funds to purchase access for its employee to a private fitness center's exercise facilities.

Several of these authorities are unique to the NPS and permit the agency to purchase recreational equipment, facilities and services for use by employees and their families located in isolated areas.

#### Incentives

- 5 U.S.C. 4501
- 5 CFR 451
- NPS and NPS Supplements to OPM guidance/regulations
- Section 201 of the Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act of 1991 (FEPCA), OPM Interim Regulations published on May 3, 1991

Incentive and award programs improve Government efficiency, economy and effectiveness by motivating employees. Variations on the traditional awards program may include, but are not necessarily limited to, on-the-spot or fast track awards, time off awards, and honorary recognition (plaques, trophies, etc.).

#### Office of Workmen's Compensation Programs (OWCP) Claims

- Federal Employees Compensation Act, 5 U.S.C. 8101, et. seq., as amended by P.L. 93-416
- 20 CFR, Employee Benefits

Provisions under which employees injured as a result of participation in the NPS Health and Fitness Program will be covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA). Also included are the procedures to be followed in filing claims.

### **Program Organization**

The health and fitness program for NPS employees is recognized as a critical component of a high quality public service program. It also is a critical component of the Service's commitment to provide the best possible stewardship to our employees. The NPS Health and Fitness Program contains two major components:

**Mandatory Program** - All employees who perform rigorous and/or hazardous duties are required to participate in the NPS physical fitness program and any associated fitness testing

programs, in order to perform satisfactorily in their position. Mandatory participation positions include positions whose duties include performing "emergency services:"

- ▶ Lifeguard
- ▶ SCUBA diver
- ▶ Law enforcement
- ▶ Search and rescue (SAR)
- ▶ Wildland and structural firefighter (arduous duty positions only) and
- ▶ Emergency medical services responders

**Voluntary Program** - All non-emergency service employees, especially employees performing physically challenging duties or working in environmentally challenging locations, are encouraged to participate in a voluntary health and fitness program. The Service will provide support, encouragement, information, and guidance to all those interested in participating in such a program.

### **Mandatory Fitness Program**

5 CFR 339.203 authorizes agencies to establish physical requirements for positions with physically rigorous duties. The NPS has established the following criteria for its *mandatory participation* health and fitness program and fitness testing for all emergency service personnel:

- The continual maintenance of the physical fitness level required to safely perform rigorous duties is a responsibility of the individual employee.
- All employees who are assigned rigorous duties are *required* to participate in an individual fitness program.
- Prior to beginning a physical exercise/physical fitness program and prior to any physical fitness testing, employees must be cleared to participate by the MRO via the medical examination program.
- The assessment instrument and the acceptable fitness level for each emergency service (specific physical task ability) will be described in the appendix to this manual if and when they are developed and approved. Individual parks may identify and validate specific physical fitness measures that are accurate, task-related measures of specific tasks required within their park emergency operations, for those employees who must perform such duties with concurrence by the human resources program manager for the region.
- The basic physical fitness measurement tool for employees performing emergency services is the PEB of tests and the Work Capacity Test Series. The PEB and Work Capacity Test Series will be used as a basic individual fitness benchmark for all emergency services employees, to provide individuals with a means of assessing their own fitness and to provide a means of developing and measuring the success of individual and park fitness programs.

**NOTE:** No personnel action may be based solely on the results of the PEB. The PEB is not an approved, validated task standard. Supervisors should view unsatisfactory results in the PEB as an indication that individual performance capability may need improvement and should logically pay closer attention to actual on-the-job performance. Park fitness coordinators should help employees unable to pass the PEB modify their exercise programs, provide advice on diet modifications, rest and relaxation techniques, and other means of encouraging and assisting employees to achieve fitness.

However, the Work Capacity Test Series tests are approved, work-validated standards and personnel actions may be based on the results of those tests. Persons failing those tests, at the appropriate fitness level for identified positions, should be reassigned to other less-arduous positions for which they meet fitness and qualification standards.

### **Continuing Implementation**

Mandatory participation in a physical fitness program has been required for all NPS emergency services personnel since 1992. In some individual situations, it may still be necessary to gradually phase in a regular exercise regime in consultation with the park physical fitness coordinator. Within 1 year of this release, every emergency services employee (and especially every 6c-covered employee), will develop and implement a personalized physical fitness program in consultation with their park fitness coordinator. No matter what an individual's current fitness level, the process of achieving fitness begins with the first step in the exercise program.

Medical science tells us that regular participation in a logically structured physical exercise program coupled with a good diet and adequate rest will achieve fitness and increase longevity. For all rigorous duty positions, individuals and supervisors must remain cognizant that it is the extreme physical challenge(s) presented by the duties of the position itself, not the standards of any test, that are the true pass/fail measures of fitness.

### **Law Enforcement Positions (Mandatory Participation)**

Employees nominated to attend the FLETC (to receive mandatory basic law enforcement training) must pass both the law enforcement medical examination/standard and the PEB **PRIOR** to being nominated to FLETC training. Individuals selected for law enforcement positions must demonstrate their ability to pass the PEB (after passing the medical examination). Parks will again administer the PEB 1 month preceding the start of FLETC training and must certify recent successful PEB completion to the NPS Superintendent of law enforcement training at FLETC before the candidate arrives there. All candidates are required to take a medical examination and the PEB shortly after arrival at FLETC. Failure to pass the medical examination or the PEB at that time will result in removal from basic law enforcement training and sent back to their original park. While attending law enforcement training, regular physical training is provided and all trainees are encouraged to improve their PEB scores prior to graduation. After FLETC graduation and commissioning, all law enforcement commissioned employees are enrolled in the mandatory physical fitness program and the medical surveillance program. Commissioned

employees are expected to maintain their physical fitness throughout their careers in law enforcement positions.

### **Other Emergency Services**

Employees in all the following emergency service positions are subject to the provisions of the mandatory program. The basic emergency services standard is the PEB along with the target levels developed by the FLETC. This instrument has not been task validated but will be used as a means of familiarizing participants with the assessment process. Ultimately, validated physical standards will be developed for a variety of occupations and all affected personnel will be required to meet them according to criteria set forth in each.

All emergency service personnel must adhere to this standard at minimum, along with those in their individual occupations/job functions that exceed it.

### **SCUBA Diving**

SCUBA Divers are subject to this chapter and Director's Order 4.

### **Structural Firefighting**

Structural firefighters are subject to this chapter.

### **Wildland Firefighting**

Wildland firefighters are subject to this chapter and Director's Order 18, Wildland Fire Management.

### **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

EMS responders who routinely respond to EMS incidents are subject to this chapter.

### **SAR**

NPS SAR personnel in positions requiring arduous and/or hazardous duties are subject to this chapter. Including but not limited to searchers, skiers, rope handlers, litter-bearers, swimmers, climbers, cavers, dog handlers, rappellers, field-team leaders. Park managers and/or Incident Commanders should identify which other local SAR positions will be covered by this chapter. Any positions exempted from fitness requirements should be identified ahead of time. The intent of this section is to help ensure the safety and efficiency of the individual, his or her co-workers, and the operation.

### **Lifeguards**

Lifeguards are subject to the requirements of this chapter and established local standards.

## **Incidental Responders**

Employees who assist only rarely with emergencies and who do not have emergency response requirements in their position descriptions (i.e., perform emergency duties *incidentally* or as an occasional collateral duty), are not included in the mandatory participation physical fitness program. Although they may occasionally act in an emergency operations role, their position's primary duties do not require them to provide emergency services, nor to serve as members of designated emergency teams, nor to possess special certifications, qualifications, training, or commissions, nor to regularly perform emergency response duties.

Although incidental responders are not required to participate in the mandatory fitness program, it is highly recommended they take part in the voluntary program. Park supervisors are encouraged to identify capable employees to serve as incidental responders as a part of their contingency planning. It is appropriate and recommended that parks have identified incidental responders participate in the PACK test, if they are likely to be called upon to perform an emergency function requiring stamina, endurance, high aerobic capacity, or a function subject to high stress. Such testing should take place regularly, not just immediately prior to call-out. Only persons with Work Capacity Test Series scores indicating an ability to perform arduous duties should be asked to perform arduous tasks.

## **Critical Incident Teams Stress Management**

There are specialized response teams trained and ready to respond to critical incidents involving law enforcement, search and rescue, wildland fire, and other emergencies. These teams may have written training standards, objectives, skill requirements, and mandatory competencies that are unique to their role and function. Active team members are subject to the mandatory participation physical fitness program. In addition, team members must also meet team membership requirements including any established, valid medical and physical fitness standards and measures. Team managers engaged in the development of specific, valid medical and/or physical fitness requirements will consult with WASO/RAD concerning those requirements.

## **Voluntary Fitness Program**

The voluntary physical fitness program is incentive based and goal-driven. All non-mandatory participation employees are encouraged to participate in this program. The personal health and wellness benefits to be gained by participation are immense, and the Service benefits as well. Managers are encouraged to support the program by means of flexible and alternative work scheduling, the granting of annual leave or leave without pay, disseminating information concerning community-based programs, offering in-house fitness and health education programs (at convenient times and locations), providing access to and use of Government-owned physical fitness facilities, and other appropriate means.

## **Program Elements**

The NPS voluntary program must include the first two of the following elements; the remaining three may also be included:



- ( Medical and physical fitness screenings to evaluate current health and fitness levels and to develop baseline fitness information necessary to prepare individualized health fitness program.
- ( A signed liability release. A release is required for all employees using NPS-owned facilities or equipment to conduct physical exercise activities.
- ( Assistance with the cost of medical screening if funds are available.
- ( Counseling, guidance and assistance in the development and maintenance of personnel health and fitness plans.
- ( Twice per year fitness tests.

### **Liability Waivers**

Voluntary program participants must sign a liability release waiver prior to entering the Government sponsored fitness program. Mandatory participants are involved in the program as part of their scope of employment, and do not need to sign a waiver.

### **Health Screening for Mandatory and Voluntary Participation Programs**

Basically, physical exercise is a safe and desirable activity for most individuals. But it is nonetheless highly advisable to have an appropriate level of medical screening prior to starting an exercise program or taking an exercise test. The cost of all required medical examinations/screenings for mandatory program participants will be borne by the Government, will take place on Government time, and will be in compliance with the national standards and procedures set forth herein. Park managers are authorized, but not required, to use park funds for medical screening or physical examinations for voluntary participants.

Prior to entering either the mandatory or voluntary fitness program or being tested for aerobic capacity or other physical conditioning, participants must undergo the following health screening:

#### **Employees in Positions having Specific Medical Standards**

All employees in positions having specific medical standards, who are required to participate in the health and fitness program must undergo and complete the prescribed medical examination for their position and be cleared by the MRO prior to participation in the health and fitness program. Employees currently participating in a mandatory fitness program at the time specific medical standards for their position are adopted may continue to participate, but should obtain the required medical examination as soon as practical.

#### **Employees in Positions without Specific Medical Standards**

Emergency services employees required to participate in the health and fitness program and all employees volunteering to participate in the health and fitness program must take the following

health screening:

- Employees 39 years or younger and *presently active*\* in an aerobic conditioning program, must take the Heart Disease Risk Profile (RISKO) and PAR Q evaluations (see Exhibits 1 & 2) prior to entering the fitness program or participating in any physical fitness testing.

If RISKO indicates a score of "Risk Moderate" (31 or less) and all answers on PAR Q are **no**, the employee may test and participate.

If RISKO indicates a score of "Greater Than Average - Dangerous" (32 or higher) and/or one or more answers on the PAR Q are yes, then the employee needs a physician's clearance prior to entering the testing or fitness program.

- Employees 39 years or younger but *not presently active*\* in an aerobics program, must obtain a physician's screening for arduous duties and a medical examination (including blood analysis) during the 18-month period prior to entering the required fitness program and must take the RISKO and PAR Q evaluations immediately prior to any aerobics test.

If RISKO indicates "Risk Generally Average" (24 or lower) and all answers on the PAR Q are **no**, the employee may test and participate.

If the RISKO indicates "Risk Moderate" and/or one or more of the answers on the PAR Q are **yes**, then the employee needs a physician's clearance prior to entering the testing or fitness program.

**\*NOTE:** For the purposes of health screening, the words *presently active* refer to the American College of Sports Medicine's definition of "physically active." Under that definition, a person who is active is someone who participates in vigorous exercise (jogging, skiing, walking, swimming, stair climbing, etc.) for a minimum of 20 minutes per day at least 3 days per week, and has done so far the immediate past 2 months or more.

- Employees, 40 years or older, *must* obtain a medical examination (including blood analysis), and obtain a physician's clearance to participate immediately prior to entering the required fitness program.

After being cleared to enter the program, employees in this category (4) must take a medical examination every 3 years. The NPS MRO is authorized to require and/or permit medical examinations more often than every three years for those in high-risk medical categories, i.e., employees who have high-blood pressure or heart trouble, who have an inactive lifestyle, who are pregnant, or who have short or long-term physical/medical problems. Managers can obtain the criteria to initiate a request for such a determination under the provisions provided in FPM 339.

- These required medical examinations are not intended to satisfy the medical examination requirement for occupations that have specific approved medical standards as a condition of employment. If and when specific medical standards are approved for a position, the medical examination results must be forwarded to the NPS MRO for a medical determination as to whether or not the applicant/employee meets medical standards. Through the use of a centralized MRO program, duplication of medical exams will be avoided.

### **Medical Screening Examinations**

The health and fitness coordinator (HFC), or the supervisor, or servicing personnel office for those smaller areas without a HFC, must ensure required medical examinations are completed.

The HFC or program participant must inform the examining doctor of the purpose of the examination in order to assure a proper, thorough evaluation.

### **Examination and Documentation**

- The HFC or person to be examined must provide the examining physician with the standard Department of the Interior Medical Surveillance Program Medical History and Examination Form and a letter requesting a medical examination. An SF-78 has also been developed for arduous and hazardous duty that covers all other emergency services.
- A blood analysis for cholesterol, LDL, triglycerides HDL, glucose, urea, lipids, and CBC should be requested as part of each examination. Voluntary screening for Lyme disease, HIV, and hepatitis may be conducted if an employee submits a written request for such test.
- The completed Medical History and Examination Form should be forwarded to an approved NPS MRO for all *mandatory* participants. Examining physicians may issue a clearance to participate in physical fitness programs or physical testing for all voluntary participants.
- Personnel and medical files and information must be handled in accordance with the Privacy Act standards.

### **Individual Health and Fitness Programs**

#### **Assessment**

Once an employee has passed the health screening process, he or she is eligible to enter a park-sponsored Individual Health and Fitness Program. This begins with a physical fitness assessment comprised of the fitness tests developed for the activity to be performed (PEB or Work Capacity Test Series test) or locally developed general physical conditioning measures.

Participants should be tested by an employee trained and certified to administer physical fitness tests (the park HFC) twice a year. The HFC may administer tests more often if needed for motivational or confidence-building reasons. The results of the tests should be recorded on a "Fitness Test Results"

form and kept in the employee's fitness file. It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to ensure this test is completed. All fitness files must be maintained in accordance with the Privacy Act (section 6311 of Title 5 of U.S.C.).

### **Personalized Program Development**

Based on the results of the first test, the employee and the HFC should develop and agree upon an "Individual Health and Fitness Plan" (IHFP) to assist the participant in achieving higher fitness goals. Once an interim target goal is met, the IHFP should be updated to either a maintenance and/or improvement program. The written IHFP should be kept in the employee's fitness file.

The employee, his or her supervisor, and the HFC should identify activities to be accomplished during on-duty time. These can be physical work-related activities such as foot, ski, or kayak patrols; trail clearing; and so on; or a regular program of specific physical exercises, including such things as running, swimming, calisthenics, or weight lifting to be included in the IHFP.

In addition to on-duty activities, the employee and HFC should identify those fitness-related activities undertaken on off-duty time that will result in improvements in the targeted areas.

All the fitness activities to be undertaken should be outlined on the employee's IHFP.

Those employees having difficulty in meeting any of the minimum fitness goals should be monitored and assisted by the supervisor, HFC, or other relevant specialists. The employee is encouraged to re-test and modify his or her IHFP as often as necessary.

### **Official Government-time Fitness Activities**

#### **Mandatory Participation Program**

Managers and supervisors may provide up to 3 hours per week of official duty time, in reasonable blocks of time, for mandatory-participation program employees to perform physical exercise. Pursuant to Director's Order 18, those wildland firefighters whose full-time duties are 100 percent arduous duty-related (such as helitack, hotshot, engine, prescribed fire, smokejumper crews) will normally be provided 1 hour per day for fitness training. This Government contribution of paid time for physical exercise is to assist the employee in meeting the fitness requirements of the position. Fitness time may be scheduled on various workdays throughout the workweek, as recommended by the park health and fitness coordinator. A single long-duration activity conducted on 1 day, such as a ski or hiking patrol, may generally count for no more than 1 hour (of the 3 hours) of fitness time that week. A good physical conditioning regime requires various types of physical exercise to be performed.

The Service views physical exercise time as a major investment in park operations and in employee health. Local supervisors should expect to get a reasonable return on that investment in terms of employee productivity. Employees must not view fitness time as "free time" and supervisors must not view fitness time as "wasted time."

When feasible, mandatory fitness program time should be officially scheduled, but it is recognized that there is also a need to maintain flexibility so exercise time does not interfere with either employee or service responsibilities. Because emergency-services employees must be available to respond whenever an emergency occurs, the use of portable radios, pagers, or other means to alert exercising employees to emergencies should be considered. Exercise programs should not be scheduled or performed during those times when the employee's absence from regular work assignments would interfere with the performance of duties of co-workers. Overtime is not authorized for fitness training, and overtime cannot be granted for work unfinished because of fitness training. "Unused" fitness time may not carry forward to the next week for any reason.

It is the responsibility of the employed to ensure that all physical activities are performed in a satisfactory manner on duty, e.g., proper use of equipment, environmental stressors.

*Reasonable* use of the designated exercise time toward achieving the goals of the program should be the objective of both supervisors and employees. Everyone should keep in mind that fitness time is regular duty time, fully under the control of supervisors and managers, who may direct the activities to be performed during such time. Each participant in a mandatory participation program must specify those types of physical training he or she will engage in while on Government time and, if required document the use of fitness time to the satisfaction of supervisors.

### **Voluntary Participation Program**

Managers and supervisors cannot authorize the use of official duty time or administrative leave for voluntary fitness program activities except in cases of officially sponsored and approved programs or fitness events. OPM has mandated that the following policy apply for granting excused absences for participation in the voluntary health and fitness activities (FPM Letter 792-23):

- ( the activity should be officially administered, such as a Federal Fitness Day event or an agency sponsored health screening;
- ( the amount of excused absence in each instance should be a short period, and the activity for which excused absence is granted should be of a specific, fixed duration, such as annual health screenings, health and fitness fairs and exhibits, Federal Fitness Day, and health improvement activities involving a nutrition and smoking cessation program.
- ( an excused absence should not be granted for participation in an activity over an extended or indefinite period; the agency official approving the excused absence should determine that participation in the activity will likely benefit the organization; and
- ( the agency official approving the excused absence should ensure that the employee's absence will not interfere with the timely and effective performance of agency work and service to the public.

Managers and supervisors should accommodate, to the extent possible, flexible or alternate work

schedules for employees participating in the voluntary physical fitness program. Approving annual leave for employees taking part in officially sponsored and administered health and fitness programs is encouraged.

## **Fitness Files**

Each area should maintain a fitness file that should be kept by the HFC. The file should contain physical test results (not medical exam results), a copy of the IHFP, results of mandatory tests, and a record of utilized duty time (optional). The NPS MRO is responsible for maintaining employee medical records pertaining to medical standards. The HFC should refer questions and medical information to the NPS MRO. The examining doctor should forward all necessary medical records to the NPS MRO.

## **Roles and Functions**

### **Occupational Health and Fitness Program Manager**

The Occupational Health and Fitness Program Manager, Ranger Activities, Washington Office, is the contact point for all aspects of the NPS occupational health and fitness program.

Specifically, the manager will serve as the central authority for all program and policy determinations; the central point of contact for all external agency issues; and as the central clearing-house for the Occupational Health and Fitness Program.

The Occupational Health and Fitness Program Manager, designated by the Associate Director, Park Operations and Education, in conjunction with the NPS FLETC Superintendent and NIFC Program Manager, is responsible for:

- Implementing Director's Order 57 and occupational medical and fitness standards and programs.
- Providing general medical, health and fitness information to field offices.
- Approving qualifications and protocols for HFCs.
- Representing the NPS on the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.
- Coordinating occupational medical, health and fitness management activities with the Department of the Interior, FLETC, NFIC and various outside agencies, committees, and other organizations.
- Providing a clearing-house on training techniques and equipment.

## **Regional Health and Fitness Program Managers**

Regional health and fitness program managers designated by the respective regional directors, are responsible for:

- ( Developing, implementing, and coordinating a regionwide program which meets the requirements of the Occupational Health and Fitness Program.
- ( Managing the central office medical, health and fitness program, with an emphasis on providing assistance and technical support to individuals.
- ( Disseminating all medical, health and fitness releases, policy statements, and related materials to parks and service centers.
- ( Maintaining liaison with the medical, health and fitness community.

The regional office HFC should possess knowledge, skills, and abilities commensurate with the behavioral objectives of exercise leader certification, as defined by the American College of Sports

Medicine. In order to be qualified, a coordinator must have a working knowledge of screening programs, monitoring, test administration, corrective actions, resources, advanced guidance, and safety.

## **Park Health and Fitness Program Managers or Coordinators**

In general, each park must have a health and fitness program and every participant must have access to a designated trained HFC. Therefore, every park will need to designate a qualified employee to serve as HFC. However, because parks vary in size, complexity, isolation, and resource demands, some parks may not need a local designated HFC. Parks are encouraged to cooperate with one another so the necessary HFC services can be provided in the most cost-effective fashion. This assistance may come from consolidating areas under one HFC, using a HFC from an adjoining area, etc. It is recommended that parks with more than 10 employees participating in the health and fitness program designate one or more HFCs.

Park HFCs will not replace medical professionals or professional consultants. They are to act as an extension of such services and merely provide a first level focal point of lay assistance to the park and/or participating employees regarding basic fitness concerns and activities. They should be able to identify and contact sources for further guidance.

Park managers are responsible for the health and fitness programs within their park areas.

The designated park HFC is responsible for:

- ( Examining and determining the park's occupational medical, health and fitness program needs.
- ( Developing, implementing, maintaining and/or evaluating an internal park occupational medical, health and fitness plan. A committee approach is encouraged and recommended.
- ( Providing assessments and fitness testing for both voluntary and mandatory program

participants.

- ( Recommending exercise and nutrition guidance for program participants, including goal setting, motivation, and fitness educational material.
- ( Maintaining individual health and fitness plans and logs for program participants.

### **Qualifications of Park HFCs**

The key positions in the NPS Health and Fitness Program are at the park level. The entire program rests upon the competency and dedication of the employees designated to coordinate the program at the park level. At a minimum, all park HFCs must attend and be certified under the physical fitness coordinator training program offered regularly at the FLETC and also be qualified as Work Capacity Test series Administrators..

In addition, HFCs should possess knowledge, skills, and abilities commensurate with the behavioral objectives of exercise leader certification, as defined by the American College of Sports Medicine. This approximately 40-hour training may be accomplished through several nationally recognized programs. This training should be completed immediately before appointment whenever possible.

Nominees for these positions must:

- possess an interest in health and fitness;
- be able to pass the PEB, and/or PACT Test
- serve as positive role models for participants;
- be active in all facets of the health and fitness program;
- be able to demonstrate proper fitness protocols; and
- acquire and share the knowledge and information necessary to assist employees in meeting their health and fitness goals.

It is important that managers select a park HFC who is interested in health and fitness, but who at the same time does not give the appearance of being a "health zealot" to others.

### **Attaining Fitness, Overcoming Negativity**

The Health and Fitness Program is a positive incentive-filled program designed and intended to encourage and motivate participation and success. Parks are encouraged to provide support and helpful encouragement to all employees in their pursuit of healthy lifestyles and physical fitness. The program is intended to educate and stimulate participation and the attainment of individual goals. Only in the most severe situations should supervisors have need to resort to the mandatory aspects of the program in order to overcome negativity and recalcitrance.



Mandatory participants in the fitness program are required to take the assessment instrument (PEB and/or PACK Test) as prescribed and to participate fully in an individual fitness program designed to assist them in attaining fitness goals. Regardless of an employee's present physical condition, fitness can and will inevitably be attained through regular participation in the health and fitness program.

A mandatory participant who cannot take the assessment instrument or cannot participate in his/her individual fitness program due to physical or medical reason(s), must inform his/her supervisor. Supervisors must then confirm the medical basis for non-participation through medical documentation provided by the employee and reviewed by the MRO.

Should a mandatory participant demonstrate inability physically to perform the full range of his/her duties safely, those performance shortcomings should be documented and may be used as the basis for personnel actions or a Performance Improvement Plan. Personnel sanctions are available in cases of refusal to participate in the prescribed manner, however, the basis for this action is conduct, not performance.

**NOTE:** Personnel actions regarding medical/physical standards **MUST** be based on approved validated standards. The basis for this action will be the medical opinion and advice of the MRO as approved by a senior NPS official, the specific job requirements, the safety of the individual and others, and the agency responsibility to mission accomplishment.

### **Fitness Equipment and Exercise Facilities**

A clean, safe, appropriate, cost-effective location should be provided for employees to perform physical exercise. Exercise facilities should contain at least a minimum of fitness equipment to enable individuals to attain and maintain fitness. Ideally, exercise facilities would be located in or near all parks and near park employee work areas. Parks may provide equipment and facilities directly or employees may use local health clubs or facilities at nearby military installations, colleges, or other institutions. The decision about which facilities will be used, whether or not the park will invest in equipment, the type of equipment provided, and so on is a park management decision.

Voluntary program participants may be permitted to join, at their own expense, a group membership in a health club (if one is established for individuals in the mandatory program). Voluntary program participants may be permitted to use NPS-owned facilities and equipment, if authorized by the superintendent.

Voluntary program participants, their immediate families, and any others in the community who are authorized by the superintendent to use NPS equipment and facilities must request in writing from the superintendent or designee permission to use the NPS fitness facilities.

Federal procurement regulations require fitness equipment be purchased exclusively from the GSA Purchase Schedule, section 78I-A. Exceptions require agency justification, and applications for waivers must go to GSA through the NPS procurement process.

Exercise equipment donated to the Service or acquired from other agencies is the property of the Government. Such property is controlled and accounted for per Federal Property Management Regulation 410 DM 114-60 and applicable NPS guidelines and directives.

Each area with a workout center is responsible for ensuring that adequate safety and emergency plans and procedures exist for the facility, and that equipment is maintained in a safe condition.

Both the Public Health Service and GSA may be contacted to develop fitness facilities in a Government-owned or leased building. These agencies have already established standards for the development and maintenance of such facilities

### **Health Club Memberships**

The HFC should check the possibility of using other low-cost alternatives to Government-owned facilities. In areas where it is not feasible to provide either a military or civilian exercise facility, persons in the mandatory participation program may utilize a private fitness center. If a health club is chosen, certain standards should be met. The club should:

- have shower and locker room facilities, aerobic training machines, and equipment to work the major muscle groups;
- provide services that are cost-effective in comparison with the alternatives; and
- be geographically desirable.

Agreements must be made in the name of the NPS and not the individual using the membership. Procurement and contractual obligations must be in compliance with Director's Order 62.

### **Appendices**

#### **Physical Standards**

#### **PEB**

#### **Forms**

- PARQ
- RISKO