

COMDINST M6200.1A

CHAPTER 4: PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM

A. Introduction.

Coast Guard personnel have a duty to be operationally ready to respond to situations affecting public safety and/or national security. A physically fit member has a greater chance of successfully coping with physical requirements and higher stress levels placed upon them in operational and emergency situations. Although the Coast Guard does not currently require mandatory physical fitness testing for all members, Command and individual responsibilities with respect to physical fitness do exist and are covered in this chapter. Specific duty assignments including BTM, BO, LEDET, TACLET, MSST, MSRT, boat crew, and rescue swimmers do have mandatory physical fitness requirements not covered here.

B. Background.

1 Healthy People 2010. In 1990, following a three-year national study involving health professionals, the U.S. Public Health Service published a set of national health promotion and disease prevention objectives. This report, Healthy People 2000, recognized the need for people to develop healthier habits to improve their quality of life. According to Healthy People 2000, "physical activity and fitness," was recognized as the top health promotion priority. New information published in Healthy People 2010 confirmed the importance of regular physical exercise and activity, as perhaps the most significant variables associated with positive health.

2 Negative Effects. Research shows that a lack of frequent physical activity is clearly recognized as a major risk factor for heart disease, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, and depression. Additionally, a lack of physical activity has adverse effects on one's emotional health. It is linked to chronic stress and anxiety, thereby lowering an individual's ability to complete activities of daily living.

3 Positive Effects. Physical fitness improves physical and mental health, stamina, productivity, appearance, self-esteem and overall quality of life. A physically fit person can go from rest to intense activity, sustain that activity and recover faster than an unfit person. As a result, in emergency situations, unfit people present greater risks to themselves and others with whom they are working. Many jobs in the Coast Guard are physically demanding and require a high level of physical fitness for mission success. For these reasons, a regular physical training program is strongly advised for all Coast Guard members.

4 Weight/Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel. In 2004, Weight and Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series) was updated to mandate basic physical fitness plans for all Coast Guard military members. Monitored physical fitness activities, detailed personal fitness plans and monthly fitness testing are required for those found to be over their maximum allowable weight (MAW) and maximum allowable body fat standards.

C. Discussion

1. Personal Accountability. One of the cornerstones of health promotion is the concept of personal accountability. Individuals, rather than the medical and health promotion communities, are ultimately responsible for their own health and well being.

2. Components of Physical Fitness. There are five components of physical fitness: (1) body composition, (2) flexibility, (3) muscular strength, (4) muscular endurance, and (5) cardiorespiratory endurance.

3. Guidelines. Less than one-quarter of Americans engage in regular physical activity despite its potential benefits. A complete list of guidelines for developing a fitness program and completing a basic or detailed personal fitness plan can be found in Weight and Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series), Enclosure (7). According to the Center for Disease Control, to maintain good health, physical activity should be **moderate** or **vigorous** and add up to at least 30-60 minutes a day most days of the week. For successful weight management moderate or vigorous physical activity should be performed 60-90 minutes a day at least five days a week.

- a. Moderate Physical Activities.
 - (1) Walking briskly (about 3 ½ miles per hour).
 - (2) Hiking.
 - (3) Gardening/yard work.
 - (4) Dancing.
 - (5) Golf (walking and carrying clubs).
 - (6) Bicycling (less than 10 miles per hour).
 - (7) Weight training (general light workout).
- b. Vigorous Physical Activities.
 - (1) Running/jogging (5 miles per hour).
 - (2) Bicycling (more than 10 miles per hour).
 - (3) Swimming (freestyle laps).
 - (4) Aerobics.
 - (5) Walking very fast (4 ½ miles per hour).
 - (6) Heavy yard work, such as chopping wood.
 - (7) Weight lifting (vigorous effort).
- (8) Basketball (competitive).

4. Medical Clearance. Physical activity is important for people of any age and most can start a physical fitness program without medical clearance as long as they participate in regular medical examinations. However, before starting a new program, members are strongly encouraged to answer the short list of questions in the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PARQ), CG Form 6200. If they answer “yes” to any of the questions, a physician should be consulted before beginning an exercise program.

5. Use of Health Risk Assessment. Command leadership and individual members are strongly encouraged to participate in the Health Risk Assessment service provided by the Health Promotion Program. Results and feedback provided by this assessment can assist members in designing and implementing their own personal wellness plan. The UPHC or regional HPM may

administer a Wellsource PWP Health Risk Assessment. More information on the health risk assessment can be found in **Chapter 5**.

D. Responsibilities. This section contains fitness specific responsibilities in addition to those contained in Chapter 1, Section E of this Manual.

1. Health Promotion Division (CG-1111).

- a. Provide professional oversight for physical fitness initiatives, ensuring the scientific and operational validity of program content.
- b. Establish curriculum and provide instruction and course materials for the Unit Health Promotion Coordinator Course.
- c. Devise educational and promotional initiatives for improving the physical fitness of Coast Guard members and beneficiaries.

2. Commanding Officers and Officers in Charge. As an important factor in mission readiness and an essential component of total wellness, physical fitness should be strongly encouraged at all levels of the command. Commanding Officers and Officers in Charge shall:

- a. Enroll a qualified Coast Guard member in the Unit Health Promotion Coordinator Course to serve as a health promotion advocate and resource for unit personnel and family members. According to Weight and Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series), the CO or OINC must designate this individual, in writing, to the Regional HPM.
- b. Empower and encourage the unit Health Promotion Coordinator to implement innovative and effective unit physical fitness programming.
- c. Promote and support efforts of members to improve personal fitness and physical readiness for duty.
- d. **Strongly encourage** members to complete the PARQ before participating in any physical fitness program or testing.
- e. Ensure members are completing Personal Fitness Plans in accordance with requirements in Weight and Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series).
- f. Ensure supervisors are addressing the existence of and adherence to the annual fitness plan during a member's performance evaluation period.
- g. **Allow time during the workday (a minimum of three hours per week) for military personnel and to carry out their Personal Fitness Plans.**
- h. **Allow civilian personnel flexibility in their work hours to encourage fitness activity. It is expected that civilian employees will participate during non-duty hours, including lunch periods, when engaging in health and fitness activities for an extended or indefinite period of time.**
- i. **Grant excused absences for civilian employees to take part in one-time or occasional programs that are of short duration. Examples of these include activities such as: An officially sponsored Federal Fitness Day Event; an agency sponsored health screening; a**

fitness center orientation and a smoking cessation program consisting of several brief classes. Any additional questions regarding the use of official duty time in health and fitness activities and its applicability to civilians should be directed to the local Command Staff Advisor.

j. Ensure that monthly physical fitness testing and monitored fitness activities for those members found to be over their Maximum Allowable Weight (MAW) take place in accordance with Weight and Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series).

3. Regional Health Promotion Manager (HPM) shall:

- a. Provide professional guidance for physical fitness initiatives, ensuring the safety and scientific validity of program content
- b. Provide on-site unit fitness training when requested.
- c. Provide technical support and assistance for unit physical fitness assessments.
- d. Devise educational and promotional initiatives for improving the physical fitness of Coast Guard members and beneficiaries in their AOR.

4. Unit Health Promotion Coordinator (UHPC). Designated Unit Health Promotion Coordinators shall:

- a. Be innovative and flexible in promoting physical fitness. Potential tools that can be used include: all-hands training, awards programs, on-duty workout time, unit challenges and educational e-mails or newsletters.
- b. Schedule appropriate fitness-related activities and events for unit members and family members.
- c. Assist CO or OINC in **strongly encouraging** members to fill out the PARQ before beginning a physical fitness program or testing.
- d. Assist members in development of useful and appropriate Personal Fitness Plans (CG6049).
- e. Monitor the physical fitness activities of those found to be over their MAW and body fat standards.
- f. Assist the command, as necessary, with requirements related to physical fitness in Weight and Physical Fitness Standards for Coast Guard Military Personnel,

5. Coast Guard Active Duty Members and Reservists shall:

- a. Be in compliance with MAW/Body fat standards at all times and adhere to the regulations outlined in Weight/Physical Fitness Standards for Military Personnel COMDTINST M1020.8 (series).
- b. Complete and adhere to a Personal Fitness Plan (Form 6049) which has been approved by immediate supervisor and submitted during the performance evaluation period for review.
- c. Be strongly encouraged to take advantage (operations permitting) of allowed voluntary workout hours in accordance with Weight/Physical Fitness Standards for Military Personnel, COMDTINST M1020.8 (series).
- d. Strive to be an example of a physically fit and healthy Coast Guard member.

6. Coast Guard Employees (Civilian and Auxiliarists) shall use all available resources to implement health and well-being into their everyday lives.