



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE Independence, MO Fire Department

Number	<u>180</u>
Effective Date	<u>8/19/2003</u>
Revised	<u>3/22/2023</u>

WELLNESS PROGRAM

I. Purpose

To implement a Wellness-Fitness Program for uniformed employees of the Independence Fire Department.

II. Scope

The Wellness-Fitness Program applies to all uniformed Fire Department employees. Guidance for the Wellness Fitness Program is provided by review of the most current edition of both “The Fire Service Joint Wellness Fitness Initiative” and “NFPA 1582” by reference only.

III. Definitions:

The following words and phrases, when used in this procedure, will have the meanings set out herein:

1. **UNIFORMED FIRE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES/PERSONNEL** means uniformed employees of the Independence Fire Department.
2. **INTERVENTION THROUGH MEDICAL PRACTICE STANDARDS** means that, while the Wellness – Fitness Program is non-punitive, medical practice standards may be used to remove employees deemed to have an immediate life threat from regular duty status when results indicate that lifesaving intervention is required.
3. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL INFORMATION** means that all information obtained from medical and physical evaluations is confidential.
4. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS** means that all medical records will be maintained in files separate from all other personnel files. The confidentiality of medical records is a critical aspect of the Wellness – Fitness Program. The unauthorized release of personal details which may be recorded as part of a medical evaluation can and does cause legal, ethical, and personal problems either for the employee, the City, and the examining physician (A *third-party vendor* will maintain these files at its facilities).
5. **WELLNESS** means to ensure, through a physician, that the employee has an assessment of physical, emotional, and mental well-being with no immediate life threats.

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6. INDIVIDUALIZED FITNESS ASSESSMENT means the feedback provided by the doctor and the physical specialist to program participants regarding the assessment of each individual's physical capacity pertaining to his job-related wellness ().

7. PERSONALIZED FITNESS PRESCRIPTION means the exercise prescription suggested for program participants by the doctor and the physical specialist ().

8. FITNESS ASSESSMENT means testing the physical capacity of each individual pertaining to his job-related wellness determined through (1) Aerobic Capacity Options; (2) Flexibility testing; (3) Muscular Strength testing; and (4) Muscular Endurance tests. The goal of the evaluation is solely for personal fitness improvement ().

9. INTERNATIONAL WELLNESS/FITNESS DATABASE means the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) database ()

IV. Policy

It is the policy of the Independence Fire Department to ensure that all personnel have an understanding of the use of the Wellness Program.

V. Procedure

A. Wellness – Fitness Program

The Wellness – Fitness Program is intended to be a long-term stable program which, for valid reasons, may be modified following discussions between the City and the representatives of IAFF Local 781

Any changes to the Wellness – Fitness Program shall be included in a revised Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure written by Fire Administration and negotiated with the Union, at a minimum, prior to any contract negotiations.

1. In order to maintain the Wellness – Fitness Program, the Fire Chief shall request in his annual budget the funds necessary to provide initial physical examinations for all volunteers admitted to the program, participation in the Missouri Firefighters Critical Illness Trust and thereafter annually for all current employees.

B. Components of the Wellness – Fitness Program

Medical Component: The purpose of the Medical Component is to ensure the employee has no immediate life threats. Beginning July 1, 2023, all uniformed

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employees shall participate in a mandatory, non-punitive, and confidential medical assessment.

The medical component shall consist of the following:

1. Physical Examination: The medical component will be determined by means of an annual physical examination.
 - a. All exams should be completed within a one-month window immediately preceding or following the annual due date.
 - b. All exams may include, but not limited to: body composition, lab tests, vision tests, hearing evaluation, Spirometry, EKG, cancer screening, immunizations and infectious disease screening, referrals, and data collection. Assessment of blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and respiratory rate (labored and un-labored variations must be noted). Blood pressure shall be a part of the baseline and periodic examination.
 - c. All medical records and medical information obtained shall be confidential. *A third-party* vendor shall keep such records at their facility.
 - d. Employees may utilize their personal physician as the primary medical doctor for the purposes of participating in the joint Wellness – Fitness Initiative program. **Employees utilizing their personal physician must have attestation of the Wellness Program-Fitness Assessment form (attachment A) signed by a licensed physician and submitted to the Fire Chief. This form is direction to the physician to complete a similar physical as identified on the form. The form will be placed in the employees file and will remain confidential.** All costs associated with personal physicians and testing outside of the system provided for by the City shall be borne by the employee.

C. Scheduling

To the extent possible the Department will publish the dates of all components one year in advance, but it will be the intent of the Department to publish the dates prior to the selection of vacation and Kelly Days.

1. One regular and one make-up day will be provided for the blood work and history portion of the Wellness Program.
2. The department will work with the provider to provide multiple shift opportunities for testing that could be in-house or locally scheduled.
3. The Shift commander will schedule on-duty personnel so that service levels are maintained. A tentative schedule is to be made up one month in

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advance but will be subject to change depending on staffing and service levels.

4. Anyone not present for their scheduled time (unless it is due to a duty related emergency situation) will be given one opportunity to make up the missed portion of the test on duty. If the make-up appointment is missed for any reason (other than a duty related emergency) the Department will cover the cost of the missed portion at the vendor's facilities, however no on-duty time will be utilized and under no circumstances will compensation be paid for the completion of the missed portion except on the make-up date. Should the employee's scheduled time and make-up time be missed solely due to an employment related reason, such as responding to an alarm, the Department will provide on-duty time for the employee to travel to the vendor's site for the missed portion of the program.

D. Intervention Through Medical Practice

When an employee is deemed to have an immediate life threat, and lifesaving intervention through medical practice standards is necessary, the employee shall be immediately removed from regular duty status and placed in a non-suppression function and/or light duty.

1. Medical leave shall be pursuant to the existing work agreement.
2. Employees placed in Light Duty assignments for the purpose of treatment or rehabilitation, will follow current guidance as determined in SOP 112 "Light Duty Assignments".
3. Should an employee desire to enter into a Wellness – Fitness Program other than that provided by the City, he may do so but only after the rehabilitation program has been approved by the *third-party* Wellness – Fitness medical doctor, and the employee acknowledges his responsibility for payment. Costs incurred for such programs or rehabilitation treatment by an employee's own physician will be borne by the employee.
4. The rehabilitation program shall be designed by a medical doctor specifically for the individual affected.

E. Fitness Component

Research shows the need for high levels of aerobic fitness, muscular endurance, and muscular strength to perform safely and effectively in firefighting disciplines. Physical fitness is critical to maintaining the wellness of uniformed personnel. Thus, fitness is to be incorporated into the overall philosophy of the Fire Union, Fire Department, and the City.

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1. All uniformed employees participating to the Wellness – Fitness Program, beginning January 1, 2024, shall participate in a mandatory, non-punitive, and confidential fitness assessment.
2. The Labor Management Committee will establish a Wellness Committee and develop appropriate fitness programs for each individual to help them meet fitness goals. The Wellness Committee shall confer and coordinate with fitness professionals on development of programs.
3. On duty exercise time will be provided for uniformed employees working 24-hours on duty followed by 48-hours off duty; however, exercise shall not interfere with nor take precedence over other duties assigned or required by the Fire Department. While scheduling may vary due to calls, training, inspections, and other duties, 60 to 90 minutes of every 24-hour work shift should be made available by the company captain for exercise by Wellness-Fitness Program participants. No Light-duty personnel should workout while under direction of their physician and physical therapist.
4. The Fire Department recognizes that the purchase and installation of adequate exercise equipment is necessary to a well-balanced Wellness – Fitness program. All equipment selected, furnished, and purchased by the City shall be at the sole discretion of the City in consultation with the *third-party* physician. The Fire Department’s Safety Committee may review and recommend the purchase of exercise equipment to the Fire Chief. The Fire Department may create a Wellness Committee for this purpose.
5. The City is not responsible for accidents resulting from the use of unauthorized exercise equipment, unauthorized exercise, or from the use of authorized equipment by unauthorized employees. Non-employees are not to use City equipment.
6. The use of outdoor alternative facilities such as tracks, schools and parks may be secured by the company captain and approved by the responsible shift commander for use by the company for authorized exercise programs. When companies leave the station to participate in authorized exercise programs, all members of the company will accompany the exercising employees(s) including employees who may not be participants in the Wellness – Fitness Program.
7. The company’s captain is responsible for arranging the company’s work schedule to provide adequate exercise time prior to 8 p.m., and for the health, safety, and training of the crew. Non-suppression uniformed personnel (not on light duty) on a 40-hour workweek are authorized to exercise twice, at 60 minutes apiece, weekly while on-the-clock. This exercise must have prior approval from their supervisor, be at city facilities, and not affect their division’s

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work schedule. It is critical that company officers understand the purpose, health, scope and implementation of the Wellness – Fitness Program.

F. Behavioral Health Component

The City currently provides this component through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP). There will be no changes to the current EAP as a result of the Wellness – Fitness program.

1. The Union and the Department will work collaboratively in establishment and use of a Peer Support Health team. This program will assist personnel with Behavioral health issues using recognized peer support training techniques.

G. Data Collection

This component includes the storage and analysis of detailed case information related to medical condition (exam/laboratory data), fitness, rehabilitation, and behavioral health.

1. All personal data collected from the Wellness – Fitness Program is confidential. Individual identities are not to be submitted by the employer to database for any job history, annual medical and fitness evaluation, or injury.

H. Missouri Fire Fighters Critical Incident Trust

The Missouri Fire Fighters Critical Illness Pool was created to aid the state's fire professionals and agencies to contain the human and financial burdens created by serious health issues by providing cancer benefits to the state's firefighters. The City of Independence will participate in the Critical Incident Pool as part of the over addressing of Wellness and Cancer support and maintain all related SOP's to its participation requirements.

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AUTHORITY

From and after its effective date, this procedure shall be in full force and effect and shall set forth all of the rights and duties of the Fire Service Wellness Fitness Program of the City of Independence, Missouri Fire Department with respect to the subject matter thereof, and shall replace any and all previous procedures or understandings, whether written or oral, related thereto.



Douglas Short
Fire Chief

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