

# 2026 FIRE FIGHTER RECRUITMENT

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ ALL INFORMATION INCLUDED & RETURN REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO THE CITY'S HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

**YOUR APPLICATION PACKET CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**



- JOB ANNOUNCEMENT
- 2026 FIRE FIGHTER RECRUITMENT HIRING SCHEDULE
- WRITTEN EXAMINATION INFORMATION
- CANDIDATE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST (CPAT) INFORMATION INCLUDING:
  - CANDIDATE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST, ORIENTATION & PRACTICE SESSION GUIDE
  - CPAT CANDIDATE PREPARATION GUIDE
  - LINK TO CPAT ORIENTATION VIDEO
- FIRE FIGHTER PHYSICAL CONDITIONING WAIVER FORM – Must be completed, submitted to and received by Human Resources no later than 4:00 p.m. CT on April 10, 2026 (Friday following the application deadline).
- STATEMENT CONCERNING YOUR EMPLOYMENT IN A JOB NOT COVERED BY SOCIAL SECURITY – Must be completed, submitted and received by Human Resources no later than 4:00 p.m. CT on April 10, 2026 (Friday following the application deadline).
- ONLINE APPLICATION – Must be completed and submitted at [DSM.city/joinDMFD](http://DSM.city/joinDMFD) by 4:00 p.m. CT on April 6, 2026. You will receive a confirmation email once your application has been successfully submitted online. If you do not receive email confirmation, contact the Human Resources as soon as possible, but no later than the application deadline.

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## OTHER REQUIRED INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED

**YOUR APPLICATION MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE BY 4:00 P.M. CT ON APRIL 6, 2026 (YOU WILL RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION EMAIL ONCE YOUR APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY SUBMITTED).**

**ALL ITEMS LISTED BELOW MUST BE ATTACHED TO YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION OR SUBMITTED SEPARATELY TO AND RECEIVED BY HUMAN RESOURCES NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M. CT ON APRIL 10, 2026 (FRIDAY FOLLOWING THE APPLICATION DEADLINE) OR IT WILL BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE AND NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PROOF OF SUBMISSION:**

1. Photocopy of driver's license
2. Certified state driving record for applicants with a driver's license outside the state of Iowa
3. High school transcripts, diploma, GED, or other proof of high school graduation (graduation date required)
4. Fire Fighter Physical Conditioning Waiver
5. Statement Concerning Your Employment in a Job Not Covered by Social Security

**\*\*All of the above documents must be legible.\*\***

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION MAY BE EMAILED, FAXED, HAND DELIVERED, OR MAILED TO HUMAN RESOURCES.

**EMAIL TO:** [humanresources@dmgov.org](mailto:humanresources@dmgov.org)

**FAX TO:**  
(515) 237-1680

**HAND DELIVER or MAIL TO:**  
City of Des Moines  
Human Resources Dept.  
Municipal Service Center  
1551 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy.  
Des Moines, IA 50317

## 2026 Fire Fighter Recruitment Hiring Schedule

<b>January 5, 2026</b>	Initial Job Posting
<b>April 6, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CT</b>	Online applications due ( <b>Application Deadline</b> )
<b>April 10, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. CT</b>	All additional items due APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE AND WILL <u>NOT</u> BE ACCEPTED UNLESS ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS ARE SUBMITTED TO AND RECEIVED BY HUMAN RESOURCES BY 4:00 P.M. CT
<b>April 20th-22nd</b>	Written Examinations
<b>*May 12, 2026-July 11, 2026</b>	CPAT Orientation & Practice Sessions (8 weeks) <i>(Two orientation and two timed practice sessions are mandatory unless waived by the applicant by signing applicable waiver form – see additional information on following pages)</i>
	Fire Department Administration Building 2715 Dean Ave. Des Moines, Iowa
<b>*July 13th-July 17th, 2026</b>	Candidate Physical Ability Tests (CPAT) Fire Department Administration Building 2715 Dean Ave. Des Moines, Iowa
<b>*September 2026</b>	Fire Department Interviews
<b>*September 2026</b>	Conditional Job Offers
<b>*October 2026</b>	Pre-employment Physical, drug screen, background check and MMPI
<b>*November 2026</b>	Final Job Offers
<b>*January 2027</b>	Basic Fire Academy Begins

*\*These are tentative dates and are subject to change.*

## **SPECIAL NOTES**

1. Applicants must complete each section of the application/selection process as scheduled. Failure to submit required information or failure to appear and complete any part of the process as scheduled will result in automatic disqualification from the selection process.
2. Due to the large number of applicants expected, and the requirements for special facilities and support personnel, it may not be possible to accommodate requests for alternative examination dates.
3. Applicants may be removed throughout the examination and selection process based on such things as sub-standard testing performance, driving record and/or background that do not meet City standards, or findings from the pre-employment offer medical examination.
4. If at any time, you wish to remove your name from further consideration, or if you have questions, please contact the City's Human Resources office at (515) 283-4213 for assistance.

## **FIRE FIGHTER WRITTEN EXAM INFORMATION**

All qualified Fire Fighter applicants must take the written examination. The written exam covers a wide range of skills, abilities, and aptitudes.

The passing score for the written examination is 70%. Passing the written exam does not guarantee that an applicant will proceed in the process.

To access the written exam study guide, visit the recruitment page at [DSM.city/joinDMFD](https://DSM.city/joinDMFD)

## **CANDIDATE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST (CPAT) INFORMATION**

Fire Fighter applicants with the highest scores will be invited to complete the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). CPAT orientation and timed practice sessions are offered for eight weeks allowing candidates to familiarize themselves with the CPAT requirements and the Des Moines Fire Department course layout. Those invited to participate will be notified of the scheduled dates, times, and location for the CPAT orientation and practice sessions. Two orientation and two timed practice sessions are mandatory unless waived by the applicant by signing the applicable waiver form at their scheduled CPAT. Candidates must attend two orientation sessions prior to completing timed practice runs.

Candidates shall wear long pants, shirt, and athletic shoes (no open toe or heel) to complete the CPAT (including attending the orientation and practice sessions). Jewelry is not to be worn. All candidates will be provided with 50-pound weight vest, work gloves, and hard hat with chin strap at the exam.

Use link below to view the CPAT orientation video to learn more about the CPAT.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqeVJPclOy0>

**See additional information regarding the CPAT and preparing for the exam in the pages to follow.**

# **FIRE SERVICE JOINT LABOR MANAGEMENT WELLNESS-FITNESS INITIATIVE**

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## **CANDIDATE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST, ORIENTATION & PRACTICE SESSION GUIDE**

This candidate physical ability test (CPAT) consists of eight separate events. The CPAT is a sequence of events requiring you to progress along a predetermined path from event to event in a continuous manner. This test was developed to allow fire departments to obtain pools of trainable candidates who are physically able to perform essential job tasks at fire scenes. This is a pass/fail test based on a maximum total time of 10 minutes and 20 seconds.

As a condition of hire test, the fire department utilizing CPAT must ensure that all candidates are provided full and equal access to a CPAT orientation and practice program. The orientation and practice program must commence at least eight (8) weeks before commencement of the official CPAT test date. This program is composed of two phases.

The fire department will provide each candidate a full and equal opportunity to perform at least two (2) orientation sessions during which candidates will receive "hands-on" familiarity with the CPAT test equipment. These required orientation sessions will be provided by certified Peer Fitness Trainers, fitness professionals and/or CPAT-trained fire fighters (proctors). These individuals will familiarize each candidate with each CPAT task and the test equipment. They will advise all candidates concerning specific conditioning regimens and techniques to help each candidate prepare for the CPAT test.

The fire department will provide each candidate a full and equal opportunity to perform at least two (2) timed practice runs of the CPAT, using CPAT apparatus. These required practice runs must occur within thirty (30) days before the commencement of the official CPAT test dates. Following each practice session, certified Peer Fitness Trainers, fitness professionals, and/or CPAT-trained fire fighters (proctors) shall help the candidates understand the test elements and how they can improve their performance and conditioning.

This two-phased orientation and practice program is a mandatory condition for candidates taking the CPAT test. However, it is recognized that some individuals may be capable of passing CPAT without participation in these programs. These individuals may excuse themselves from this mandatory condition upon the receipt by the fire department of a written and signed waiver, acknowledging that the fire department made available these programs on an equal basis and that the candidate knowingly and voluntarily waived participation in the orientation and practice sessions.

In these events, you wear a 50-pound (22.68-kg) vest to simulate the weight of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and fire fighter protective clothing. An additional 25 pounds (11.34 kg), using two 12.5-pound (5.67-kg) weights that simulate a high-rise pack (hose bundle), is added to your shoulders for the stair climb event.

Throughout all events, you must wear long pants, a hard hat with chin strap, work gloves and footwear with no open heel or toe. Watches and loose or restrictive jewelry are not permitted.

All props were designed to obtain the necessary information regarding your physical ability. The tools and equipment were chosen to provide the highest level of consistency, safety and validity in measuring your physical abilities. A schematic drawing of the CPAT is included in this orientation material; however, the course layout may vary in order to conform to the fire department's test area. The events and distances between events are always the same.

The events are placed in a sequence that best simulates fire scene events while allowing an 85-foot (25.91-m) walk between events. To ensure the highest level of safety and to prevent exhaustion, no running is allowed between events. This walk allows you approximately 20 seconds to recover and regroup before each event. If you run between events you will receive one warning. A second infraction constitutes a disqualification, the test time is concluded and you fail the test.

To ensure scoring accuracy by eliminating timer failure, two stopwatches are used to time the CPAT. One stopwatch is designated as the official test time stopwatch, the second is the backup stopwatch. If mechanical failure occurs, the time on the backup stopwatch is used. The stopwatches are set to the pass/fail time and count down from 10 minutes and 20 seconds. If time elapses prior to the completion of the test, the test is concluded and you fail the test.

### **EVENT 1 STAIR CLIMB**

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#### **EQUIPMENT**

This event uses a StepMill stair climbing machine. The machine is positioned with one side up against a wall and an elevated proctor platform on the side opposite the wall. A single handrail on the wall side is available for you to grasp while mounting and dismounting the StepMill. Additional steps are placed at the base of the StepMill to assist you in mounting the StepMill.

### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

This event is designed to simulate the critical tasks of climbing stairs in full protective clothing while carrying a high-rise pack (hose bundle) and climbing stairs in full protective clothing carrying fire fighter equipment. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, lower body muscular endurance and ability to balance. This event affects the aerobic energy system as well as the following muscle groups: quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, calves, and lower back stabilizers.

### **EVENT**

During this event, the candidate is required to wear two 12.5-pound (5.67-kg) weights on the shoulders to simulate the weight of a high-rise pack (hose bundle). Prior to the initiation of the timed CPAT, the candidate has a 20-second warm-up on the StepMill at a set stepping rate of 50 steps per minute [Level 3]. During this warm-up period, the candidate is permitted to dismount, grasp the rail or hold the wall to establish balance and cadence. If the candidate falls or steps off the StepMill during the 20-second warm-up period, the candidate is required to remount the StepMill and restart the entire 20-second warm-up period. The candidate is allowed to restart the warm-up period twice. There is no break in time between the warm-up period and the actual timing of the test. The timing of the test begins at the end of this warm-up period when the proctor calls out "START." For the test, the candidate is required to walk on the StepMill at a set stepping rate of 60 steps per minute [Level 4] for 3 minutes. This concludes the event. The two 12.5-pound (5.67-kg) weights are removed from the candidate's shoulders. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practices are allowed:

- The candidate is allowed to *briefly* touch the handrails or wall for balance
- The candidate is given up to two warnings for grabbing the handrails or bearing their body weight on the handrails / wall
- The candidate is allowed to restart the warm-up period twice

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate falls or voluntarily dismounts the Step Mill three times during the warm up.
- The candidate falls or voluntarily dismounts the Step Mill after the start of the test.
- The candidate receives a third infraction for grasping the handrails or bearing weight on the handrails / wall after the start on the test.

Reasons for failure:

- Falling demonstrates poor balance or muscular endurance and could cause injury to the candidate.
- Using the handrails or wall for weight bearing gives the candidate a mechanical advantage that may not be available to them on the fire ground or demonstrates poor balance, conditioning or muscular endurance.

### **EVENT 2 - HOSE DRAG**

#### **EQUIPMENT**

This event uses an uncharged fire hose with a hoseline nozzle. The hoseline is marked at 8 feet (2.24 m) past the coupling at the nozzle to indicate the maximum amount of hose you are permitted to drape across your shoulder or chest. The hoseline is also marked at 50 feet (15.24 m) past the coupling at the nozzle to indicate the amount of hose-line that you must pull into a marked boundary box before completing the test.

### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

This event is designed to simulate the critical tasks of dragging an uncharged hoseline from the fire apparatus to the fire occupancy and pulling an uncharged hoseline around obstacles while remaining stationary. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, lower body muscular strength and endurance, upper back muscular strength and endurance, grip strength and endurance, and anaerobic endurance. This event affects the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems as well as the following muscle groups: quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, calves, lower back stabilizers, biceps, deltoids, upper back, and muscles of the forearm and hand (grip).

### **EVENT**

During this event, the candidate grasps an automatic nozzle attached to 200 feet (60 m) of 1 3/4-inch (44-mm) hose. The candidate places the hoseline over the shoulder or across the chest, not exceeding the 8-foot (2.44-m) mark. The candidate is permitted to run during the hose drag. The candidate drags the hose 75 feet (22.86 m) to a prepositioned drum, makes a 90° turn around the drum and continues an additional 25 feet (7.62 m). The candidate then stops within the marked 5 foot x 7 foot (1.52 m x 2.13m) box, drops to at least one knee and pulls the hoseline until the hoseline's 50-foot (15.24-m) mark is across the finish line. During the hose pull, the candidate must keep at least one knee in contact with the ground and knee(s) must remain within the marked boundary lines. This concludes the event. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practices are allowed:

- The candidate is given one warning to keep one knee down.
- The candidate is given one warning to keep the knees in bounds.
- The candidate is given one warning for taking one step out of the box.
- The candidate is permitted to run during the hose drag

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate fails to go around the drum.
- The candidate travels outside of the marked path.
- The candidate takes two steps out of the back of the box
- The candidate receives a second infraction for not keeping one knee in contact with the ground.
- The candidate receives a second infraction for the knees being outside of the marked boundary.

Reasons for failure:

- Running beyond the marked path gives the candidate a mechanical advantage by decreasing the distance required to pull the hose by hand. This advantage may not be available on the fire ground. This demonstrates a lack of upper body strength by using lower body strength to compensate.
- By not keeping their knee on the floor a candidate could compensate for a deficiency in grip and upper body strength by standing up.

### **EVENT 3 EQUIPMENT CARRY**

#### **EQUIPMENT**

This event uses two saws and a tool cabinet replicating a storage cabinet on a fire truck.

#### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

This event is designed to simulate the critical tasks of removing power tools from a fire apparatus, carrying them to the emergency scene and returning the equipment to the fire apparatus. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, upper body muscular strength and endurance, lower body muscular endurance, grip endurance, and balance. This event affects the aerobic energy system as well as the following muscle groups: biceps, deltoids, upper back, trapezius, muscles of the forearm and hand (grip), glutes, quadriceps, and hamstrings.

#### **EVENT**

During this event, the candidate removes the two saws from the tool cabinet, one at a time, and places them on the ground. The candidate then picks up both saws, one in each hand, and carries them while walking 75 feet (22.86 m) around the drum, then back to the starting point. The candidate is permitted to place the saw(s) on the ground and adjust the grip. Upon return to the tool cabinet, the candidate places both

saws on the ground, then picks up each saw one at a time, and replaces the saw in the designated space in the cabinet. This concludes the event. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practice is allowed:

- The candidate is given one warning for running.
- The candidate is allowed to set the tools on the ground to adjust and re-establish the grip.

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate drops either saw during the carry.
- The candidate receives a second infraction for running with the saws.

Reasons for failure:

- Dropping the saws could injure the candidate and demonstrates poor grip strength or muscular endurance.
- Running with saws could cause injury if the candidate trips.

### **EVENT 4 LADDER RAISE AND EXTENSION**

#### **EQUIPMENT**

This event uses two 24-foot (7.32-m) fire department ladders. For your safety, a retractable lanyard is attached to the ladder that you raise.

#### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

This event is designed to simulate the critical tasks of placing a ground ladder at a fire structure and extending the ladder to the roof or window. This event challenges candidate's aerobic capacity, upper body muscular strength, lower body muscular strength, balance, grip strength, and anaerobic endurance. This event affects the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems as well as the following muscle groups: biceps, deltoids, upper back, trapezius, muscles of the forearm and hand (grip), glutes, quadriceps, and hamstrings.

#### **EVENT**

During this event, the candidate walks to the top rung of the 24-foot (7.32-m) aluminum extension ladder, lifts the first rung at the unhinged end from the ground, and walks it up until it is stationary against the wall. This must be done in a hand over hand fashion, using each rung until the ladder is stationary against the wall. The candidate must not use the ladder rails to raise the ladder. The candidate immediately proceeds to the pre-positioned and secured 24-foot (7.32-m) aluminum extension ladder, stands with both feet within the marked box of 36 inches x 36 inches (91.44 cm x 91.44 cm) and extends the fly section hand over hand until it hits the stop. The candidate then lowers the fly section hand over hand in a controlled fashion to the starting position. This concludes the event. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practices are allowed:

- The candidate is given one warning for missing any rung during the raise.
- The candidate is given one warning for a boundary violation during the ladder extension.

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate receives a second infraction for missing any rung during the raise.
- The candidate allows the ladder to fall to the ground during the raise.
- The candidate releases their grip on the ladder and the safety lanyard activates.
- The candidate receives a second infraction for not remaining within the marked boundary during the ladder extension.
- The candidate does not control the halyard in a hand over hand manner.
- The candidate allows the halyard to slip in an uncontrolled manner.

Reasons for failure:

- Skipping rungs would give a taller candidate an advantage over a shorter candidate and is therefore not permitted. It would also allow the candidate to throw the ladder up in the air which is both unsafe and unavailable to the candidate at a fire scene when the base of the ladder is not hinged to the ground.
- Failure to completely raise the ladder demonstrates poor grip and muscular strength.
- A candidate could gain an advantage by walking the halyard backward to compensate for poor upper body strength. This compensation is not available on the fire ground where the ladder is not bolted to the fire structure.
- Failure to control the ladder indicates poor grip strength as well as muscular strength and endurance.

## EVENT 5 FORCIBLE ENTRY

### EQUIPMENT

This event uses a mechanized device located 39 inches (1 m) off the ground that measures cumulative force and a 10-pound (4.54-kg) sledgehammer.

### PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This event is designed to simulate the critical tasks of using force to open a locked door or to breach a wall. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, upper body muscular strength and endurance, lower body muscular strength and endurance, balance, grip strength and endurance, and anaerobic endurance. This event affects the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems as well as the following muscle groups: quadriceps, glutes, triceps, upper back, trapezius, and muscles of the forearm and hand (grip).

### EVENT

During this event, the candidate uses a 10-pound (4.54-kg) sledgehammer and strikes the measuring device in the target area until the buzzer signal is activated. The candidate's feet must remain outside the toe-box. After the buzzer is activated, the candidate places the sledgehammer on the ground. This concludes the event. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practice is allowed:

- The candidate is given one warning for stepping inside the toe-box.

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate fails to maintain control of the hammer while swinging.
- The candidate receives a second infraction for stepping inside the toe-box.

Reason for failure:

- Failure to maintain control of the hammer indicates poor grip strength and muscular endurance and could cause injury to the candidate and proctors.

## EVENT 6 SEARCH

### EQUIPMENT

This event uses an enclosed search maze that has obstacles and narrowed spaces.

### PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This event is designed to simulate the critical task of searching for a fire victim with limited visibility in an unpredictable area. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, upper body muscular strength and endurance, agility, balance, anaerobic endurance, and kinesthetic awareness. This event affects the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems as well as the following muscle groups: muscles of the chest, shoulder, triceps, quadriceps, abdominals, and lower back.

### EVENT

During this event, the candidate crawls on hands and knees through a tunnel maze that is approximately 3 feet (91.44 cm) high, 4 feet (121.92 cm) wide and 64 feet (19.51 m) in length with two 90° turns. At a number of locations in the tunnel, the candidate navigates around, over and under obstacles. In addition, at two locations, the candidate crawls through a narrowed space where the dimensions of the tunnel are reduced. The movement is monitored/listened to as the candidate advances through the maze. If for any reason, the candidate chooses to end the event, the candidate calls out or raps sharply on the wall or ceiling and the candidate is then assisted out. Upon exit from the maze, the event is concluded. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practices are allowed:

- The candidate can return into the tunnel if they exit through the entrance.

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate requests assistance from the proctor requiring the opening of an escape hatch or the entrance/exit covers.

Reasons for failure:

- Failure to finish the event indicates a lack of confidence in dark or confined spaces.

### **EVENT 7 RESCUE**

#### **EQUIPMENT**

This event uses a weighted mannequin equipped with a harness with shoulder handles.

#### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

This event is designed to simulate the critical task of removing a victim or injured partner from a fire scene. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, upper and lower body muscular strength and endurance, grip strength and endurance, and anaerobic endurance. This event affects the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems as well as the following muscle groups: quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, abdominals, torso rotators, lower back stabilizers, trapezius, deltoids, latissimus dorsi, biceps, and muscles of the forearm and hand (grip).

#### **EVENT**

During this event, the candidate grasps a 165-pound (74.84-kg) mannequin by the handle(s) on the shoulder(s) of the harness (either one or both handles are permitted), drags it 35 feet (10.67 m) to a pre-positioned drum, makes a 180° turn around the drum, and continues an additional 35 feet (10.67 m) to the finish line. The candidate is not permitted to grasp or rest on the drum. It is permissible for the mannequin to touch the drum. The candidate is permitted to lower the mannequin to the ground to adjust their grip. The entire mannequin must be dragged past the marked finish line. This concludes the event. The candidate walks 85 feet (25.91 m) within the established walkway to the next event.

The following practices are allowed:

- The candidate receives one warning for grabbing or resting on the drum.
- The candidate is permitted to grab either one or both handles when dragging the mannequin
- The candidate is permitted to lower the mannequin to the ground to adjust their grip

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate receives a second infraction for grabbing or resting on the drum.

Reasons for failure:

- Use of the drum by either grasping or resting on it indicates a lack of muscular strength and endurance.

### **EVENT 8 CEILING BREACH AND PULL**

#### **EQUIPMENT**

This event uses a mechanized device that measures overhead push and pull forces and a pike pole. The pike pole is a commonly used piece of equipment that consists of a 6-foot long pole with a hook and point attached to one end.

#### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

This event is designed to simulate the critical task of breaching and pulling down a ceiling to check for fire extension. This event challenges the candidate's aerobic capacity, upper and lower body muscular strength and endurance, grip strength and endurance, and anaerobic endurance. This event affects the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems as well as the following muscle groups: quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, abdominals, torso rotators, lower back stabilizers, deltoids, trapezius, triceps, biceps, and muscles of the forearm and hand (grip).

#### **EVENT**

During this event, the candidate removes the pike pole from the bracket, stands within the boundary established by the equipment frame, and places the tip of the pole on the painted area of the hinged door in the ceiling. The candidate fully pushes up the 60-lb hinged door in the ceiling with the pike pole three times. The candidate then hooks the pike pole to the 80-lb ceiling device and pulls the pole down five times. Each set consists of three pushes and five pulls. The candidate repeats the set four times. The candidate is permitted to stop and, if needed, adjust the grip. Releasing the grip or slipping from pike pole handle, without the pike pole falling to ground, does not result in a warning or constitute a failure. The candidate may re-establish the grip and resume the event. If the candidate does not successfully complete a repetition (i.e. complete the up and down motion), the proctor calls out "MISS" and the candidate must push or pull the apparatus again to complete the repetition. The event and the total test time ends when the applicant completes the final pull stroke repetition as indicated by the proctor who calls out "TIME".

The following practices are allowed:

- The candidate receives one warning for dropping the pike pole on the ground.
- The candidate receives one warning for stepping out of bounds.
- The candidate is permitted to stop and to re-establish grip

The following practices constitute a failure:

- The candidate receives a second infraction for stepping outside of the boundary marked by the testing apparatus.
- The candidate receives a second infraction for dropping the pike pole.

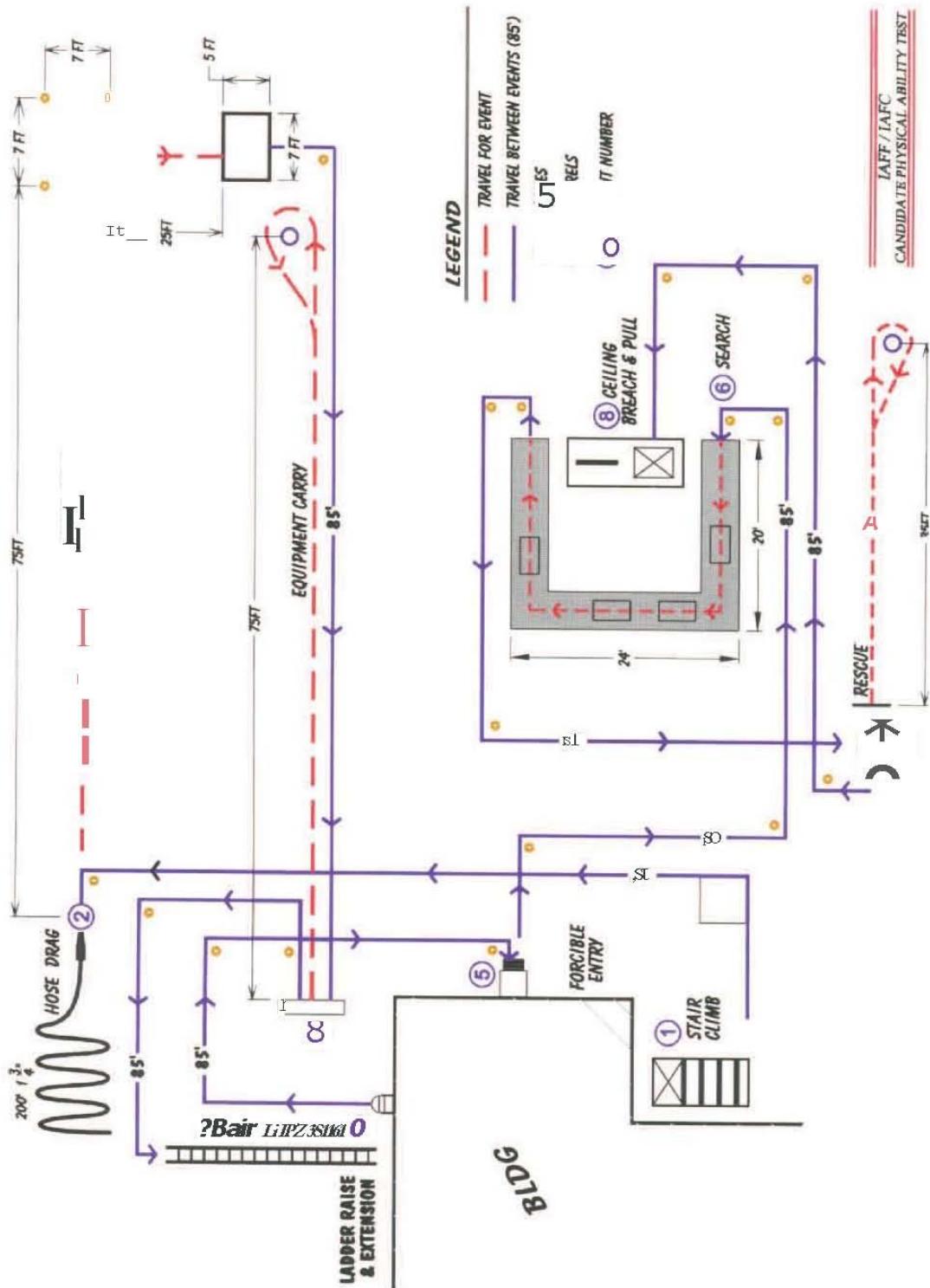
Reasons for failure:

- Stepping out of bounds creates an advantage that may not be available to the candidate on the fire ground, which would allow the candidate to compensate for poor upper body strength
- Failure to maintain control of the pike pole indicates poor grip strength and muscular endurance.

#### **TEST FORMS**

You must present valid identification and sign a number of forms before taking the CPAT. Prior to the start of the CPAT you must complete the Sign-in Form. You are provided an opportunity to review a video detailing the CPAT and the failure points. It is your responsibility to ask questions if you do not understand any parts of the test events or procedures. You are required to complete the Waiver and Release Form. At the conclusion of the CPAT, you must sign the CPAT Evaluation Form. Additionally, prior to leaving the rehabilitation area, you must complete and sign the Rehabilitation Form. If you fail to complete and sign any of these forms you fail the CPAT.●

## CPAT COURSE LAYOUT EXAMPLE



# CPAT CANDIDATE PREPARATION GUIDE

The job of a fire fighter is one of the most physically demanding jobs in North America. It requires high levels of cardiopulmonary endurance, muscular strength and muscular endurance. The Candidate Physical Ability Test consists of eight critical physical tasks that simulate actual job duties on the fireground. This test is physically demanding and requires that you be physically fit to be successful. This guide was developed to assist you with physically preparing yourself for the test.

## • What is physical fitness in the Fire Service?

Physical fitness is the ability to perform physical activities, such as job tasks, with enough reserve for emergency situations and to enjoy normal activities when off duty.

## • What are the major areas of fitness?

The major areas of physical fitness include:

- flexibility
- cardiopulmonary endurance
- muscular strength
- muscular endurance

Body composition is also considered an area of physical fitness. It should be noted that excess body fat increases the workload placed upon the body and decreases the body's ability to dissipate heat.

A proper physical fitness program should be specific for the job of a fire fighter. It should include all of the major areas of physical fitness mentioned above and be a total body program. Although this is best accomplished at a gym with an array of equipment, this guide also includes exercises that require little or no equipment.

## • Hydration

Proper hydration is critical. All candidates should drink water before exercise, during exercise and after exercise. Additionally, you should drink at least one liter of water one hour before your CPAT.

## • Warm-up & Flexibility

A warm-up serves several functions, including:

- increased blood flow to working muscles and joints
- decreased likelihood of injury
- decrease in pre-event tension
- possible improved performance
- improved flexibility

A proper warm-up should begin with a few of minutes of the same type of activity you are about to do at a very light exertion level. For example, if you are preparing to go running you should run in place or for a short distance at a very easy pace.

The next step is to stretch to improve flexibility and further your warm-up. There are two phases of stretching. The first phase is the easy stretch. In this phase, you should hold the stretch for 10 seconds in a range of motion that produces only mild tension. This prepares you for the second phase, the developmental stretch. In this phase, you should move slightly farther to the point where you feel a little more tension. This should be held for another 10 seconds.

## • Flexibility

When stretching follow these basic rules:

- Stretch slowly
- No bouncing
- No pain
- Stretching is not competitive
- Breathe slowly to help you relax
- Stretching should feel good

### 1. Knee to Chest

*Glutes, Low Back, Hamstrings, Quadriceps*

- Lay flat on back with knees bent.
- Grab under right thigh and pull knee toward chest until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then pull slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.



- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat with other leg.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.

### 2. Knee to Chest - Leg Straight

*Glutes, Low Back, Hamstrings, Quadriceps*

- Lay flat on back with knees bent.
- Grab under right thigh and straighten right leg. Do not lock knee.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then pull slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.



- Repeat with other leg.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.

**3. Knee to Chest — Diagonal**  
*Glutes, Low Back, Hamstrings, Quadriceps, Piriformis*

- Lay flat on back with knees bent.
- Grab under right thigh and pull right knee toward left chest until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then pull slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat with other leg.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.



**4. Leg Cross**

*Piriformis, Glutes, Low Back*

- Lay flat on back with knees bent.
- Place your right outer ankle on the top of right left thigh.
- Grab under left thigh and pull left knee toward chest until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then pull slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat with other leg.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times



**5. Side Quadricep Stretch**

*Quadriceps, Hip Flexors, Abdominals*



- Lay on left side.
- Grab right shin, just above your right ankle.
- Slowly pull right foot toward right buttocks while pushing right hip forward.
- At the same time, push right hip forward.
- Hold for 10 seconds, and then pull slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat with other leg.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.

**6. Butterfly Stretch**  
*Groin, Low Back*

- Sit upright with the bottoms of feet touching each other.
- Bend forward at the waist to a position where you feel mild tension.
- Elbows can be used to push down on thighs if you want more stretch.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then pull slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.



**7. Straddle Stretch**

*Groin, Hamstrings, Low Back*

- Sit upright with legs straight.
- Spread legs as far as you can comfortably can.
- Keeping legs straight, but not locking knees, bend forward at the waist.
- Hold for 10 seconds then push down slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Return to starting position.
- Repeat sequence, but this time take chest toward left knee.
- Return to the starting position and repeat sequence toward right knee.
- Repeat entire sequence 2 or 3 times.



**8. Cross Over Stretch**  
*Glutes, Iliotibial Band*

- Sit with legs straight in front of you.
- Bend right leg and cross it over so you can grab around the outside of right thigh.
- Slowly pull bent right leg toward chest until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds then push slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Return to starting position and switch legs.
- Repeat sequence on opposite leg
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.



- **9. Calf Stretch**

*Calves*

- Squat down on ground with right foot slightly in front of left.
- Grasp right shin and rock forward until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then push slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat sequence on opposite leg.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.



- **10. Upper Back Stretch**

*Upper back, Posterior Deltoids*

- Sit with legs straight in front.
- Twist your upper back crossing left arm across chest and place right hand on the floor.
- Slowly twist until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then twist slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Return to starting position and twist to the left side.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.



- **11. Chest Stretch**

*Chest, Shoulders, Biceps*

- Stand with right shoulder against a wall.
- Place right palm on the wall.
- Slowly turn your body away from the wall until you feel mild tension.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then twist slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Return to starting position and repeat sequence with left arm.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.



- **12. Triceps Stretch**

*Triceps, Posterior Deltoids*

- Stand upright and extend right arm over head.
- Grab right elbow with left hand and place right hand on right shoulder blade.
- Slowly push right elbow backward until mild tension is felt.
- Hold for ten seconds, then



push slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.

- Return to starting position and repeat sequence with left arm.
- Repeat sequence 2 or 3 times.

- **13. Forearm Stretch**

*Forearms*

- Stand upright and grab right fingers with left hand.
- Slowly fold right wrist backwards until mild tension is felt.
- Hold for ten seconds, then push slightly farther until you feel slightly more tension.
- Repeat sequence, this time folding wrist forwards.
- Return to starting position and repeat sequence with left arm.
- Repeat entire sequence 2 or 3 times.



## General Principles of Exercise

To maximize the results from your training program, several exercise principles should be understood.

- **Adaptation**

Adaptation means that the body can adjust to any overload as long as it is done in small increments. The amount of progress the body can make depends on adequate rest, consistency of workouts, adequate nutrition, and genetic makeup.

- **Overload**

Overload, in exercise training programs, means that a training program causes the body to adapt only when the demands are greater than what the body is accustomed to doing. This does not mean that the overload is greater than your maximum; rather overload is generally greater than 75% of your maximal effort.

- **Progression**

The principle of progression states that as the body adapts to the exercise program you must gradually increase the overload to continue to adapt. It is critical that all progressions are gradual and small in nature to prevent over loading the body's ability to recover.

- **Specificity**

Specificity of training is the principle that your body will adapt to whatever exercises you perform. This means that if you only perform bench presses, your body will not adapt to sit-ups. It may, therefore, be beneficial for you to alter your training to prepare for the Candidate Physical Ability Test.

- **Over-Training**

Over-training addresses the body's need for adequate rest and nutrition following exercise to recuperate before the next exercise session. If recuperation is not adequate, over-training will occur. Signs of over training include: increased injury rate, increased resting heart rate, muscle soreness that does not subside after 48 hours, apathy, insomnia, loss of appetite, lack of adaptation to exercise, and loss of strength. Over-training must be avoided.

- **Balance**

When developing a strength training program, it is important to balance muscle development by including exercises that train all major muscles groups of the body. This means that if the chest is trained so must the back; similarly if the upper body is trained so must the legs. When this principle is not followed, joints become imbalanced, and injuries occur.

- **Cardiopulmonary Endurance Program**

Cardiopulmonary endurance is the ability of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems to deliver oxygen to working muscles. It consists of both aerobic and anaerobic energy systems.

- **Aerobic Fitness**

During aerobic activities, the intensity of the exercise is low enough for the cardiopulmonary system to meet the oxygen demands of the working muscles. Aerobic activities include bicycling, hiking, swimming, climbing stairs, and running when performed at a low enough intensity.

- **Anaerobic Fitness**

During anaerobic activities, the intensity of exercise is so high that the working muscle's demands for oxygen exceed the cardiopulmonary system's ability to deliver it. Because adequate oxygen is not available, waste products accumulate. This type of intense activity can only be short in duration. An example of an anaerobic activity is sprinting.

- **The CPAT Training Program**

The CPAT Training program consists of two training programs. The first program is the aerobic training program and the interval program. Both of these programs complement each other and improve your aerobic and anaerobic fitness specific to the Candidate Physical Ability Test.

- **Aerobic Training**

The cardiopulmonary endurance program should begin at a level that is considered "moderately difficult" but not "difficult." Your intensity should not be so high that you cannot speak during the exercise. The program below consists of a series of progressive levels. As you adapt to each step, you should move up to the next level. This program should be done 3 to 5 days per week.

- **Interval Training**

Interval training involves a repeated series of exercise activities interspersed with rest or relief periods. This is an excellent tool for improving both aerobic and anaerobic endurance. In this program running intervals are performed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is important that interval days have at least one day of slow easy running between them. This provides the recovery necessary to prevent over training.

## Phase One

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Level 1</b>	Run 1 mile at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 30 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 30 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 1 mile.	Run 1 mile at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 30 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 30 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 1 mile.	Run 1 mile at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
<b>Level 2</b>	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 30 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 30 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 1.5 miles.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 30 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 30 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 1.5 miles.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
<b>Level 3</b>	Run 2 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 60 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 60 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 2 miles.	Run 2 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 60 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 60 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 2 miles.	Run 2 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
<b>Level 4</b>	Run 2.5 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 60 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 60 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 2.5 miles.	Run 2.5 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 60 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 60 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 2.5 miles.	Run 2.5 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
<b>Level 5</b>	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 90 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 90 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 3 miles.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run 90 seconds at a somewhat hard pace then walk for 90 seconds. Repeat this for a total of 3 miles.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.

## Phase Two

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Level 1	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 1 minute.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 1 minute.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
Level 2	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 90 seconds.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 90 seconds.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
Level 3	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 2 minutes.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 2 minutes.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
Level 4	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 2 minutes and 30 seconds.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 2 minutes and 30 seconds.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.
Level 5	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 3 minutes.	Run 1.5 miles at an easy pace.	Run at an easy pace for 3 minutes then run stairs moderately hard for 3 minutes.	Run 3 miles at an easy pace. Be able to talk the entire time.

### • Muscular Strength/Endurance Program

This is a resistance program designed to improve your total body strength and endurance. This is not a bodybuilding or a power-lifting program. It is designed to prepare you specifically for the Candidate Physical Ability Test. If you are not familiar with lifting programs, have any joint pain or feel uncomfortable performing these exercises, you should seek the advice of a professional trainer.

This program is designed to be performed three days a week. This means that you will not be lifting 4 days a week. These rest days are just as important as your workout days. A critical mistake made by some applicants is over training when preparing for the Candidate Physical Ability Test. If you feel you are over training, refer back to the exercise principles, slow down your progression, reduce your overload, and allow for adequate rest between workouts.

This workout should follow the previously mentioned warm-up and stretching program. This program is designed to be a circuit workout. Circuit training has been proven to be a very effective and efficient way to improve muscular strength, muscular endurance and cardiovascular endurance. Once you begin this workout, you will lift at each station for 10 repetitions and then move on to the next exercise. Rest between exercises should not exceed 30 seconds unless you are experiencing some discomfort. For safety purposes, it is recommended that you lift with a partner and spot each other when necessary.

### General Safety Tips While Performing Resistance Training

- Always lift with a partner.
- Ask for help from an expert if you don't know what you are doing.
- Progress slowly to avoid injuries.
- Never show off by attempting to lift more weight than you normally lift.
- Use proper lifting technique when lifting weight plates and dumbbells.
- Never drink alcohol or take medications that may cause drowsiness prior to lifting weights.
- Do not lift too quickly; always control the weights.
- Always use strict form. Proper technique is more important than the amount of weight lifted.
- Keep head in a neutral position, looking straight ahead and not upwards or downwards.

### • Progression

Unless you are an experienced weightlifter, it is recommended that you begin by doing one complete cycle through this circuit. After the first week, if you are not still getting muscle soreness 24 to 48 hours after your workouts, you can progress to two cycles through the circuit. After the second week, if you are not still getting muscle soreness 24 to 48 hours after your workouts, you can progress to three cycles through the circuit. Although it is not critical, it is recommended that you follow the exercises in order. If, after progressing to the next level, you feel very sore, you may want to decrease the weights and the number of times you complete the circuit.

- **Weight Training Circuit Workout**

- **1. Seated Leg Press**

*Quadriceps,  
Hamstrings, Glutes,  
Calves*

CPAT Events: Stair Climb,  
Hose Drag, Ladder Raise,  
Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling  
Breach and Pull



Set appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Place feet flat on push platform about shoulder width apart and toes pointed slightly outward.
- Adjust seat so knees are flexed at 90 degrees.
- Push weight up while exhaling.
- Stop just short of locking your knees.
- Keep knees in alignment with feet.
- Keep head in neutral position.

- **2. DB Military Press**

*Deltoids, Triceps, Trapezius*

CPAT Events: Ladder Raise, Search,  
Ceiling Breach and Pull



Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Raise two dumbbells to height of shoulders.
- With palms facing forward, alternate pressing each dumbbell upward toward the ceiling, one at a time.
- Exhale while lifting.
- Keep head in neutral position.
- Using slight leg push is acceptable.
- Repeat with other arm.

- **3. Lat Pull Down**

*Latissimus dorsi, Rhomboids,  
Posterior Deltoids, Biceps*

CPAT Events: Hose Drag, Ladder  
Extension Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling  
Breach and Pull



Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Adjust seat and leg hold to allow full range of motion.
- Hold bar in chin up grip with hands close together and palms toward face.
- Pull bar straight down to just below the chin.
- Exhale while pulling weight down.
- Return to starting position.



- **4. DB Split-Squats**

*Glutes, Quadriceps, Hamstrings,  
Calves*

CPAT Events: Stair Climb, Hose  
Drag, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry,  
Search, Rescue Ceiling Pull and  
Breach



Pick a light weight (many people can start with no weights at all). Do not start with more than 10 lbs.

- Stand with feet together than step backward with one foot about 26".
- Keep back straight and arms down at side with head neutral, slowly bend both legs.
- Lower yourself slowly until your left knee barely touches the floor.
- Forward leg should remain vertical throughout motion with knee directly over ankle. If knee tends to move forward over the toes, adjust back foot further backward.
- Return to the starting position.
- Inhale while lowering and exhale while pushing back up into upright position.
- Repeat with opposite leg.



- **5. Bench Press**

*Pectorals, Deltoids, Triceps*

CPAT Events: Ladder  
Raise, Forcible Entry,  
Search, Ceiling Breach and  
Pull



Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Lie on bench, feet flat on floor.
- Hold bar with arms shoulder width apart or slightly wider.
- Lower bar to middle of chest.
- Push bar up to starting position.
- Inhale while lowering and exhale while pushing back up.

- **6. DB Row**

*Latisimussdorsi, Rhomboids,  
Posterior Deltoids,  
Trapezius, Biceps*

CPAT Events: Hose Pull, Ladder Extension, Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling Breach and Pull

Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Standing to right of bench, place left knee on bench and support upper body with left (nonlifting) arm.
- Keep head in neutral position.
- Pull DB from ground into waist area with right arm.
- Lower DB back to starting position.
- Avoid twisting at waist.
- Inhale while lowering weight and exhale while lifting weight.
- Repeat sequence on opposite side.



- **7. Leg Extension**

*Quadriceps*

CPAT Events: Stair Climb, Hose Pull, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Rescue

Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Adjust machine so that backs of knees are against pad and back pad is supporting lower back.
- Extend knees stopping just before the knees lock.
- Slowly lower weight to starting position.
- Exhale while pushing weight and inhale while lowering weight.



**Note:** This exercise should not be performed by individuals who have undergone reconstructive knee surgery.

- **8. Leg Curl**

*Hamstrings*

- CPAT Events:  
Stair Climb, Hose Pull, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Rescue



Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Lie flat on machine with top of knees just off the pad and ankle roller situated above the heels.
- Flex the knee until ankle roller reaches the buttocks. Keep hips down and stomach in contact with pad throughout the motion.
- Slowly lower weight to starting position.
- Inhale while pulling weight up and exhale while lowering weight down.

- **9. DB Curl**

*Biceps Forearms*

CPAT Events: Hose Drag, Ladder Extension, Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling Breach and Pull

Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Stand up with knees slightly bent.
- Begin with arms down at sides.
- Bend right elbow bringing the dumbbell toward right shoulder.
- Slowly lower dumbbell to starting position.
- Exhale while raising weight and inhale while lowering weight.
- Repeat sequence on opposite side.



- **10. Tricep Extension**

*Triceps*

CPAT Events: Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Ceiling Breach and Pull

Pick appropriate weight to overload above muscles but not so heavy as to cause injury or failure.

- Stand up with knees slightly bent.
- Place hands on bar about 6" apart.
- Keeping upper arms at sides, extend the elbows until arms are almost straight and bar is at mid-thigh.
- Slowly return bar to an elbow flexed position at mid-chest level. Upper arms should remain in contact with sides. Do not allow elbows to move forward, away from body.
- Exhale while pushing bar down and inhale while returning bar back up.



- **11. Abdominal Curls**

*Abdominal Muscles*

CPAT Events: All Events



- Sit on ground with knees bent at 90 degrees.
- Keeping feet flat on floor and hands at your side, slowly curl your torso so chin approaches your chest.
- Do not raise torso to more than a 45-degree angle off the floor.
- Slowly return to slightly above your starting position, keeping tension on abdominal muscles at all times.
- Exhale while curling up and inhale while lowering torso back down.

- **12. Swimmers**

*Erector Spinae (Lower back), Glutes*

CPAT Events:

All Events



- Lie face down on ground with feet together.
- Place arms straight out in front.
- Move the right arm and left leg up at the same time.
- As you return the right arm and left leg, move the left arm and right leg up at the same time.
- Continue alternating in a moderate cadence.

- **13. Wrist Rollers**

*Forearm muscles*



CPAT Events: Hose Drag, Equipment Carry, Ladder Extension, Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling Breach and Pull

- Stand erect
- Set machine to “somewhat difficult” resistance
- Grab machine with both palms facing the floor
- Alternately roll each wrist towards the ceiling
- Repeat with palms upward when done

- **14. Hand Grippers**

*Forearm muscles*



CPAT Events: Hose Drag, Equipment Carry, Ladder Extension, Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling Breach and Pull

- Stand erect
- Set machine to “somewhat difficult” resistance
- Grab machine with both hands
- Alternately close grip to squeeze machine

- **Exercises without Weights**

Although it is easier to improve muscular strength and endurance with weight equipment, it is also possible to accomplish this with some simple exercises. These exercises require minimum equipment and can be done almost anywhere. Perform these exercises in a circuit. Move from one exercise to the next with minimal rest. Initially, work in the somewhat hard range. This means do not exercise to failure. Start by going through the circuit one time and then gradually progress until you can complete this circuit three times in a row.

- **Calisthenics Circuit Workout**

- **1. Chair Squats**

*Glutes, Quadriceps, Hamstrings*



CPAT Events: Stair Climb, Hose Drag, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Rescue Ceiling Pull and Breach

- Stand in front of a sturdy and stable chair with legs shoulder width apart and toes pointing slightly outward.
- Hold arms out straight in front of you.
- Slowly lower your buttocks into the chair.
- As soon as you feel the slightest contact with the chair, slowly stand back up to the starting position.
- Keep your head in a neutral position.
- Inhale while lowering yourself and exhale while standing up.

- **2. Push Ups**

*Pectorals, Deltoids, Triceps, Abdominals,*



CPAT Events: Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Ceiling Breach and Pull

- Place hands on ground shoulder width apart or slightly more.
- Keep feet together and back straight throughout the exercise.
- Lower the body until the upper arms are at least parallel to the ground.
- Push yourself up to the initial position by completely straightening arms.
- Inhale while lowering and exhale while pushing.

### • 3. Split-Squats

*Glutes, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Calves*

CPAT Events: Stair Climb, Hose Drag, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Rescue, Ceiling Pull and Breach

- Stand with feet together then step backward with foot about 26" behind left foot.
- Keep back straight and arms down at side with head neutral, slowly lower right knee straight down onto the floor.
- Inhale while lowering and exhale while pushing back up into upright position.
- Forward leg should remain vertical throughout motion, with knee directly over ankle. If knee tends to move forward over the toes, adjust back foot further backward.
- Repeat with other leg.



### • 4. Chin Ups

*Latissimus dorsi, Rhomboids, Posterior Deltoids, Biceps*

CPAT Events: Hose Drag, Ladder Extension, Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling Pull and Breach

- Grasp horizontal bar with palms facing you and hands 6" apart.
- Hang from bar with arms fully extended.
- Pull yourself upward until your chin is above the bar.
- Do not kick or swing your legs.
- Return to the starting position.
- Inhale while lowering yourself and exhale while pulling yourself up.
- If unable to complete 3 chin ups, elevate yourself to the bar with a stool or a partner, and slowly lower yourself down in a slow and controlled fashion.



### • 5. Bench Steps

*Glutes, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Calves*

CPAT Events: Stair Climb, Hose Drag, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Rescue, Ceiling Pull and Breach



This requires good balance, so initially set the step next to a wall or use a partner for safety.

- Use a step or bench 6" to 18" high.
- Place right foot flat on the bench with the left foot flat on the floor.
- Push down with the foot on the bench and step up until both legs are straight.
- Slowly lower yourself back down to the starting position.
- Exhale while pushing up and inhale while lowering down.
- Repeat entire sequence with other leg.
- Start with a smaller step and progressively increase the height. Do not exceed 18" high.

### • 6. Dips

*Pectorals, Deltoids, Triceps*

CPAT Events: Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search, Ceiling Pull and Breach



- Place hands behind you on dip bar or chair with feet straight in front.
- Bend arms and lower body in a controlled manner until the upper arms are parallel with the floor.
- Straighten the arms to return to the starting position.
- Legs can be bent to keep feet from touching the floor.
- If unable to perform 3 dips, use a stool or a partner to help you up and then lower yourself down slowly.
- Inhale while lowering yourself and exhale while pushing up.

### • 7. Squat Thrusts

*Pectorals, Deltoids, Triceps, Abdominals, Glutes, Quadriceps*

CPAT Events: Stair Climb, Hose Pull, Ladder Raise, Forcible Entry, Search



- Stand erect with feet together.
- Quickly bend knees until palms touch the floor just slightly in front of you.
- Supporting weight with arms, tighten your abdominal muscles, and throw your feet backwards until you are in the push up starting position.
- Reverse sequence until you are back at the starting position. This is one repetition.
- Inhale and exhale evenly throughout the exercise



- **8. Abdominal Curls**

*Abdominal Muscles*

CPAT Events: All Events



- Sit on ground with knees bent at 90 degrees.
- Keeping feet flat on floor and hands at side, slowly curl torso so chin approaches your chest. Do not raise torso to more than a 45-degree angle off the floor.
- Slowly return to slightly above your starting position, keeping tension on abdominal muscles at all times.
- Exhale while curling up and inhale while lowering torso back down.

- **9. Swimmers**

*Erector Spinae (Lower back), Glutes*

CPAT Events:

All Events



- Lie face down on ground with feet together.

- Place arms straight out in front of you.
- Move the right arm and left leg up at the same time.
- As you return the right arm and left leg, move the left arm and right leg up at the same time.
- Continue alternating in a moderate cadence.

- **10. Hand Grippers**

*Forearm muscles*

CPAT Events: Hose Drag, Equipment Carry, Ladder Extension, Forcible Entry, Rescue, Ceiling Breach and Pull



- Stand erect
- Place tennis ball in palm of hand
- Slowly squeeze hand compressing tennis ball
- Repeat with other hand

## Supplemental Task-Specific Exercise Training

### INTRODUCTION

The supplementary exercise program presented in the following sections not only makes use of the overload principle of training but also applies the all-important principle of training specificity. Exercise training specificity means that performance improvements occur most readily when training closely resembles the specific physical activity for which improved performance is desired. When training for specific activities requiring high levels of muscular strength and muscular power (e.g. hose drag and pull from kneeling position, ladder raise and extension, sledge hammer swing, dummy drag, and ceiling breach and pull) task-specific muscular overload should accompany a general strength training program. Practice

and training in the specific activity becomes crucial because much of the improvement in muscular strength/power performance depends upon skill learning and new muscular adaptations (i.e., coordination of specific muscle actions) required for the physical task. In most instances, training in the actual task proves most effective.

The following program provides examples for applying your general training program to actually performing CPAT tasks. As with your other preparation training, you must progressively upgrade the duration, frequency, and intensity of exercise to continually improve your performance. This will maximize your improvement in performing the CPAT.

In the beginning phase of this training, progress slowly so that you can safely learn the skill and coordination required for the movements. As you become confident in your ability to successfully complete a specific exercise task with relative ease, redirect your training energies to those activities that pose the greatest difficulty. For many people, the stair climb with full weights, forcible entry, and rescue prove the most difficult.

### • Stair Climb

#### *Exercise*

You can readily modify aerobic training to more closely resemble the 3-minute stair climb in the CPAT by performing actual stair-stepping exercise on any conveniently located first step of a staircase, preferably at least 8 inches in height. Step at a rate that permits completion of 24 complete stepping cycles within a one-minute period. A stepping cycle consists of stepping up with one foot, then the other and down with one foot, then the other in a rhythm "up-up, down-down." Strive to complete two stepping cycles within a 5-second period.

#### *Progression*

Begin training by stepping continuously (unweighted) for 5 minutes. As your fitness improves, complete a second and then third 5 minute exercise bout interspersed with several minutes of recovery. Once you can complete three intervals of 5-minutes of stepping, add weight to your torso in the form of a knapsack to which weights, sand, dirt or rocks have been added. Continue to perform three 5-minute intervals of stepping; progressively add weight to the knapsack as your fitness improves so that you can step with 50 pounds of additional weight. (This 50-pound knapsack and work gloves should be worn in training for all subsequent events of the CPAT.) In addition, carry 10-15 pounds (dumbbell, sand filled plastic container) in each hand while stepping. The total weight carried (knapsack plus handheld weights) should equal approximately 75 pounds. At this stage, reduce the duration of the exercise interval to 3 minutes. This task-specific training not only improves aerobic fitness for continuous stepping but it also improves your leg power for stepping in the weighted condition, which represents a unique component of this CPAT item.

- **Hose Drag**

*Exercise*

Attach 50 feet of rope to a duffel bag to which weight has been added. Tires or cement blocks can also be used for resistance. Choose an initial resistance that enables you to perform 8 to 10 repetitions (2-minute recovery between repetitions) of the exercise sequence. This generally represents an effort that you would rate as feeling "somewhat hard."

*Progression*

Progressively increase the resistance to 60 to 80 pounds as fitness improves. Place the rope over your shoulder and drag the resistance a distance of 75 feet. (You should run during this phase of the event.) Immediately drop to one knee and steadily and briskly pull the rope hand-overhand to bring the resistance into your body. A parking lot, school yard, driveway, or sidewalk can be used for training on this event.

- **Equipment Carry**

*Exercise*

Use two dumbbells or plastic containers filled with sand so that each weighs approximately 30 pounds. Place the weights on a shelf four feet above ground level. Remove the weights, one at a time, and place them on the ground. Then pick up the weights and carry them a distance of 40 feet out and 40 feet back and replace them on the shelf.

*Progression*

If the initial weight feels too heavy, choose a lighter weight for your initial practice. Continue to practice this test item until it can be performed with 30 pounds with relative ease.

- **Ladder Rise and Extension**

*Exercise*

Ladder Raise. The ideal training for this task requires an actual 12-foot aluminum extension ladder. If this size ladder is unavailable, you can use a single ladder or smaller extension ladder to practice the skill required raising the ladder. Practice of the ladder raise sequence requires the assistance of two adults to "foot" the ladder at its base to prevent it from sliding forward and/or falling during the raise. In practicing this component (as described in the test directions) it is important to initially move slowly so as to develop the skill and confidence to safely complete the required movements. Be sure to use each rung when raising the ladder to develop the coordination and timing necessary on the CPAT.

*Exercise*

Ladder Extension. Task-specific training of the muscles required in the ladder extension can be provided by attaching a rope to a weighted duffel bag or knapsack. Place the rope over a tree branch (or horizontal bar support above a row of playground swings) eight to ten feet above the ground. With hand-over-hand movements steadily raise

the bag to the top of the branch or bar and then slowly lower it to the ground.

*Progression*

Start with a weight that you would rate as feeling "somewhat hard," and perform eight to ten repetitions of the movement. Rest two minutes and repeat the exercise-rest sequence two more times. As your strength improves progressively add more resistance until you can exercise with 40 to 50 pounds of weight.

- **Forcible Entry**

*Exercise*

Borrow or purchase a ten-pound sledgehammer. Wrap padding around a large tree or vertical pole at a level of 39 inches above the ground with a circular target in the center. Stand sideways and swing the sledgehammer in a level manner so the head strikes the center of the target area. Focus on using your legs and hips to initiate the swinging motion.

*Progression*

The initial phase of this task-specific training should focus on learning the coordinated movement of your arms and legs to accurately hit the target. Repeat the swing 15 times and rest for two minutes. Repeat this exercise-rest sequence twice again. Strive to increase the velocity (power) of each swing without sacrificing accuracy as your comfort level and skill on this test item improve.

- **Search**

*Exercise*

Practice crawling on hands and knees (wearing sweat pants and/or kneepads) at least 70 feet while making several right angle turns during the crawl. For the major portion of the crawl keep low enough so as not to contact an object three feet above the ground. Periodically, drop your stomach and crawl ten feet along the ground.

*Progression*

Once you are comfortable crawling as above repeat the sequence with a knapsack on. Gradually increase the weight within the knapsack until it equals 50 pounds.

- **Rescue**

*Exercise*

Attach a short handle to a duffel bag to which rocks, sand, or other appropriate weight can be progressively added. Start with a weight that feels "somewhat heavy." You can grasp the handle with (a) one hand and drag the "victim" in a cross-over, side-stepping manner, or (b) two hands while facing the "victim" and moving directly backwards while taking short, rapid stagger steps. Drag the weight 35 to 50 feet in one direction turn around and drag it back to the starting point. Complete eight to ten repetitions of this task with a two-minute rest interval between each trial.

*Progression*

Gradually increase the resistance until you can successfully complete 4 repetitions (with rest interval) with 165 pounds.

• **Ceiling Breach and Pull**

*Exercise*

Ceiling Breach. Tie a rope to a dumbbell or weighted knapsack placed between your legs, shoulder width apart. Grasp the rope, arms slightly away from the body with one hand at upper-thigh level and the other hand at chest level. Lift upwards and out from the body in an action that simulates thrusting a pole through an overhead ceiling. Use a resistance that feels “somewhat hard,” yet enables you to complete three sets of eight repetitions with two minutes of rest between sets.

*Progression*

Continually add weight as strength improves. Practice co-ordinating upward arm movements with an upward extension of the legs to provide a more powerful thrusting action.

*Exercise*

Ceiling Pull. The training set-up for this simulation is the same as that used in training for the ladder extension. However, unlike the hand-over-hand movement that is required for the ladder extension the ceiling pull requires exerting power in single, repeated downward thrusts. Grasp the rope attached to the weighted knapsack or duffel bag with hands spaced about one-foot apart and the bottom hand at chin level. In a powerful movement simultaneously pull arms down and lower your body to raise weight several feet above the ground. Repeat eight to ten consecutive repetitions of the movement with a resistance that feels “somewhat hard.” Complete three sets with a two-minute recovery interval interspersed.

*Progression*

Progressively add resistance as fitness improves.

As your fitness improves you should begin to link the various test components. For example, immediately upon finishing the stair climb move directly to the hose drag and then to the equipment carry. Eventually you will be able to simulate all of the task components in the CPAT in a continuous exercise sequence. •

**CITY OF DES MOINES**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**  
**FIRE FIGHTER PHYSICAL CONDITIONING WAIVER**  
**MUST BE RETURNED WITH APPLICATION**

**I,** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

hereby waive all causes of action for any personal injuries and/or damages which may exist against the City of Des Moines and its employees or agents as a result of my voluntary participation in the physical fitness test (Candidate Physical Ability Test) for the position of Fire Fighter with said City of Des Moines.

I am aware that the exercises may be strenuous and I accept full responsibility for any injuries or damages that may occur by their performance.

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
*SIGNATURE* *DATE*

**Note: Must be returned to the City of Des Moines Human Resources Dept. by 4:00 p.m. CT May 2, 2025**

## **Statement Concerning Your Employment in a Job Not Covered by Social Security**

**Employee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Security #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer Name:** City of Des Moines

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

Your earnings from this job are not covered under Social Security. When you retire, or if you become disabled, you may receive a pension based on earnings from this job. If you do, and you are also entitled to a benefit from Social Security based on either your own work or the work of your husband or wife, or former husband or wife, your pension may affect the amount of the Social Security benefit you receive. Your Medicare benefits, however, will not be affected. Under the Social Security law, there are two ways your Social Security benefit amount may be affected.

### **Windfall Elimination Provision**

Under the Windfall Elimination Provision, your Social Security retirement or disability benefit is figured using a modified formula when you are also entitled to a pension from a job where you did not pay Social Security tax. As a result, you will receive a lower Social Security benefit than if you were not entitled to a pension from this job. For example, if you are age 62 in 2013, the maximum monthly reduction in your Social Security benefit as a result of this provision is \$395.50. This amount is updated annually. This provision reduces, but does not totally eliminate, your Social Security benefit. For additional information, please refer to Social Security Publication, "Windfall Elimination Provision."

### **Government Pension Offset Provision**

Under the Government Pension Offset Provision, any Social Security spouse or widow(er) benefit to which you become entitled will be offset if you also receive a Federal, State or local government pension based on work where you did not pay Social Security tax. The offset reduces the amount of your Social Security spouse or widow(er) benefit by two-thirds of the amount of your pension.

For example, if you get a monthly pension of \$600 based on earnings that are not covered under Social Security, two-thirds of that amount, \$400, is used to offset your Social Security spouse or widow(er) benefit. If you are eligible for a \$500 widow(er) benefit, you will receive \$100 per month from Social Security (\$500 - \$400=\$100). Even if your pension is high enough to totally offset your spouse or widow(er) Social Security benefit, you are still eligible for Medicare at age 65. For additional information, please refer to Social Security Publication, "Government Pension Offset."

### **For More Information**

Social Security publications and additional information, including information about exceptions to each provision, are available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). You may also call toll free 1-800-772-1213, or for the deaf or hard of hearing call the TTY number 1-800-325-0778, or contact your local Social Security office.

**I certify that I have received Form SSA-1945 that contains information about the possible effects of the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset Provision on my potential future Social Security Benefits.**

**Signature of Employee** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_