

# **Firefighter Physical Ability Test**

**De Beque Fire Protection District**

**Candidate Orientation Guide**

# **Physical Ability Test Candidate Orientation Guide**

This manual has been developed to introduce you to the De Beque Fire Protection District's Physical Ability Test (PAT). The test consists of a series of tasks designed to assess important physical abilities necessary for effective job performance as a firefighter. These tasks were developed to mirror real situations that firefighters encounter on the job. These tasks represent basic skills that do not require training or previous experience as a firefighter to successfully complete.

The selection process for firefighters is very competitive. The more prepared you are, the more likely you are to pass the test.

There are five job-related physical ability test components that are timed in a continuous series. Following is an overview of the components/stations of the PAT:

- Charged line advance
- Arduous Physical Test - NWCG
- Equipment carry simulation
- Ladder Carry/Raise
- Stair Climb

The following points should help to familiarize you with what will take place on the day of the test.

Applicants must wear a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), excluding the face piece, for all components of the PAT with the exception of the arduous testing. The SCBA weighs approximately 25 pounds.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to wear athletic shoes (sneakers) and appropriate clothing for physically demanding work (long pants). You will be performing physical acts that demonstrate strength, agility, and endurance, and it is important to be outfitted in attire that does not hinder your performance. During the PAT, you may get dirty and/or from maneuvering through the exercises. Plan your dress accordingly.

A safety helmet will be provided at the test site for your use. Protective gloves are optional and it is the candidate's choice whether or not to use gloves. You may bring your own gloves, kneepads, etc. to use; however, the testing authority reserves the right to inspect all equipment, and to disallow equipment, to ensure that its use does not affect the fair and impartial administration of the PAT.

**All components of the PAT will be timed in a series. The test has a cutoff time and failure to complete the course in the allowed time will result in disqualification.**

**You must not run during the test.** Running is not permitted on a working fireground, and it will not be allowed during this test. Failure to heed a first warning not to run will result in disqualification. Running is defined as any time both feet are off the ground at the same time while you are advancing on the course. You may move as fast as you like, while remaining safe, on the hose drag station as it is not technically possible to run during these components.

Test monitors will be assigned to time you while on the course. It is acceptable to ask the test monitor questions concerning course rules and layout prior to beginning the course and while on the course.

You will be allowed as much time as needed to complete each individual component of the PAT within the maximum allotted time. Pay careful attention to the instruction of the test monitor and ask for clarification when needed.

Unnecessarily dropping, throwing or other **intentional misuse** of any of the testing props will be grounds to disqualify a candidate. If a candidate is observed by any of the test administrators misusing the test props, the candidate will be immediately escorted from the test site and registered as having failed the test.

It is the expectation of the De Beque Fire Protection District that this orientation guide will provide you with sufficient information to prepare for and succeed in the PAT. The events that compose the Physical Ability Test are outlined for you on the following pages, along with suggestions for preparing for each event.

*Please note that suggestions regarding preparation activities are simply suggestions intended to offer the candidate a means of practicing for the PAT. These are only suggestions. The De Beque Fire Protection District cannot be held responsible for injuries or expenses incurred during preparation for the PAT.*

## **Charged Line Advance**

### **Station Description:**

One hundred and fifty feet of 1 1/2 inch line will be connected to the water supply source. The candidate will be required to pull the charged hoseline for 90 feet. The candidate will complete this station when both feet cross the marked line.

### **Preparation:**

This station assesses your leg strength and overall cardiovascular endurance. You can prepare for this event by dragging a weighted object across the ground using a rope for a distance of 90 feet. You may want to begin with lesser weights and build up to a total weight similar to that used in the hose drag station. Total weight of a charged 100' section of 1 1/2 hose line is 109lbs. Take into consideration that you will be dragging the charge line across a paved, flat surface area.

## **Equipment Carry**

### **Station Description:**

The candidate will carry a hydraulic spreader tool weighing 44 pounds for a total distance of 100 feet. The candidate will carry the tool for 50 feet, walk to a line on the walking path, and then walk back another 50 feet to place the tool back down where it was retrieved from.

### **Preparation:**

This station assesses core body strength, grip strength and overall cardiovascular endurance. You may prepare for this event by carrying a 44 pound object for a distance of 100 feet.

## **Ladder Carry/Heel**

### **Station Description:**

The candidate will carry a 24-foot extension ladder with assistant. Candidate can select high shoulder, low shoulder or suitcase carry. Carry the ladder to the designed section and place the ladder against the wall. The candidate will raise a 24-foot extension ladder by 'walking it up' using a hand-over-hand technique. The ladder will be lowered in the reverse manner. An assistant will "heel" the ladder but will not assist in raising the ladder. Assistant will ensure that candidate does not lose control of the ladder during the test.

The candidate must 'walk' the ladder all the way to a vertical position. The candidate must not drop the ladder or grasp the rails of the ladder at any time.

### **Preparation:**

This station assesses basic coordination and upper body strength. You may prepare for this exercise by 'heeling' a ladder up against the side of a fixed structure.

## **Ladder Raise/Lower**

### Station Description:

The candidate will raise the fly section of a 24-foot extension ladder using the halyard. The candidate will use the hand over hand technique to extend the fly section of the ladder beyond the red line marked on the side of the ladder. The candidate will then lower the fly section down using the hand under hand technique and lower the ladder to the ground using the reverse method.

### Preparation:

To simulate the ladder raise exercise, you can tie a rope securely to a weighted bag and place the rope over a sturdy horizontal bar that is eight to ten feet above the ground. Then you can use the same movements as you would in the ladder raise to bring the weight to the top of the bar and slowly lower it back to the ground.

## **Arduous Test (Pack Test)**

### Station Description:

The Pack Test is a 4.83-km (3-mile) hike over level terrain carrying a 20.5kg (45 pound) pack. To qualify for arduous fireline work, you must complete the pack test in 45 minutes or less. Tests taken at altitude are adjusted for an additional 45 seconds. Total test time is 45:45.

Jogging during the test is not permitted. A score of 45 minutes correlates with a step test score of 45 or a 1.5 mile-run time of 11 minutes 40 seconds, the previous standard for wildland firefighters. The Pack Test is not a competition; it is pass/fail only.

The energy cost of the Pack Test is similar to fireline work. Pack Test performance relates directly to muscular fitness. Because of the test distance, the Pack Test is an excellent indicator of the capacity to perform prolonged arduous work under adverse conditions with a reserve to meet unforeseen emergencies.

Candidates will be provided a rated weight vest. Candidates should wear appropriate fitting shoes and clothing for the test. Candidates are monitored during the test. The test is performed on a section of asphalt road. Candidates cannot run during the testing process. If candidates feel they cannot finish the testing or experience any physical problems during the test, they should notify the station monitors. Candidates should be consulting with their physician before testing.

## **Stair Climb**

### Station Description

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The candidate will climb up and back down a three story staircase. The candidate will ascend to the top platform and back to the ground floor.

The candidate will carry a hose pack containing two sections of bundled 1 ½ inch hose hoseline weighing approximately 30 pounds.

Once the candidate exits the stairs, he/she will place the hose pack back in the designated location. You may carry the hosepack in any manner that is comfortable. You must carry the hosepack at all times. You must not drag the hosepack at any time.

Preparation: This station assesses muscular and cardiovascular endurance. You may practice for this station by ascending and descending two flights of stairs while carrying approximately 55 pounds of weight (SCBA plus hose pack).

### Station progression:

15 minutes mandatory preparatory time for conditioning and stretching.

### Station #1: Pack test

Candidates will be given 20 minutes rehab time before continuing testing.

### Station #2: Hose Drag

### Station #3: Equipment Carry

### Station #4: Ladder carry/raise

### Station #5: Stair Climb

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ SS# (Last 4): XXX - XX - \_\_\_\_\_

### **AUTHORIZATION FROM PHYSICIAN**

**FOR APPLICANT TO COMPLETE THE PHYSICAL ABILITY EXAMINATION AS OUTLINED IN THE DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST ORIENTATION GUIDE.**

I have read and understand the De Beque Fire Protection District Physical Ability Orientation Guide. **This form is void if altered in anyway.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that \_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Name Applicant's Name

is physically fit to perform the testing process as outlined herein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Signature Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Name (printed) Physician's Telephone

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