

Freedom of Information request reference number: FOIA2053.1

Date of response: 6 January 2015

Request and response:

Part 1 – Aerobic fitness for frontline personnel

1. *Does your Authority have a VO2 Max aerobic fitness standard for frontline personnel? Please answer 'Yes' or 'No'. (If 'No', please go to question 6.)*
 Yes.

2. *Please indicate what level of VO2 Max your Authority requires frontline personnel to maintain for active duty.*

All operational members of staff have their cardiovascular fitness assessed at their routine periodical medical. These occur every three years. To be successful at this part of the medical they are required to achieve a "Good" level of cardiovascular fitness for their age and sex as defined by the Chester step test VO2 max norms (table below). Operational members of staff can remain on full duty with a fitness rating of "Average" but are assessed on a monthly basis by the London Fire Brigades Fitness Advisors until they achieve a "Good" fitness rating. Fitness training programmes and advice are offered to help them in this regard.

	Males					Females				
Fitness rating	Age 15-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50+	Age 15-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50+
Excellent	60+	55+	50+	46+	44+	55+	50+	46+	43+	41+
Good	48-59	44-54	40-49	37-45	35-43	44-54	40-49	36-45	34-42	33-40
Average	39-47	35-43	34-39	32-36	29-34	36-43	32-39	30-35	28-33	26-32
Below Average	30-38	28-34	26-33	25-31	23-28	29-35	27-31	25-29	22-27	21-25
Poor	<30	<28	<26	<25	<23	<29	<27	<25	<22	<21

3. *Please indicate the minimum level of VO2 Max below which your Authority classifies frontline personnel as 'at risk'.*

Front line personnel can remain on full operational duty with a fitness rating of "Average" or above for their age and sex. Personnel with an "Average" fitness rating or lower are provided with training programmes. All staff have access to gymnasiums on station. They are then retested every month until they achieve a "Good" standard of fitness.

4. *Please indicate the minimum level of VO2 Max below which your Authority requires frontline personnel to undertake remedial training.*

If operational staff record a fitness level of "Average" or below for their age and sex they are referred to our fitness advisors for further testing and fitness advice. The Chester Step Test is the primary cardiovascular assessment as the routine medical. As it is a submaximal cardiovascular test it relies on progressive heart rate readings to derive the VO2 max value. Sometimes it records a value that is artificially low for that member of staff at the medical. If after being referred to the Fitness Advisors for further testing the VO2 max is rated as "Below Average" or "Poor" for their age and sex the member of staff will be given a period of time to improve their fitness (usually 3 months). If after that period their fitness does not improve they will be removed from full duties and placed on light duties.

5. *Please indicate the minimum level of VO2 Max for frontline personnel, below which your Authority will initiate disciplinary proceedings.*

If placed on light duties for having a low fitness rating the member of staff will be offered one to one personal training by the Fitness Advisors and will be retested more frequently. To be returned to full duties they have to reach a minimum fitness level of "Average" for their age and sex. No operational members of staff have undergone discipline proceedings for physical fitness being the sole reason.

6. *What percentage of frontline personnel currently have a VO2 Max standard of 42 or above?*

This information is not recorded. A VO2 max of 42 exceeds the minimum "Good" fitness level to remain on full duties for all females firefighters over the age of 20, and all male firefighters over the age of 30.

7. *What percentage of frontline personnel currently have a VO2 Max standard of between 35 and 42?*

This information is not recorded. A VO2 max value of 35 is considered a "Good" level of fitness for all male firefighters over the age of 50, and all female firefighters over the age of 40.

8. *What percentage of frontline personnel currently have a VO2 Max standard of below 35?*

This information is not recorded. A VO2 max value of 34 is considered a "Good" level of fitness for all female firefighters aged 40 – 49. A VO2 max value of 33 is considered a "Good" level of fitness for all female firefighters over the age of 50.

Part 2 – Aerobic fitness for senior officers

9. *Does your Authority have a VO2 Max aerobic fitness standard for senior officers? Please answer 'Yes' or 'No'. (If 'No', please go to question 14.)*

Yes

10. *Please indicate what level of VO2 Max your Authority requires senior officers to maintain for active duty.*

The VO2 max values stated above are for all operational staff regardless of their rank or the role they perform.

11. *Please indicate the minimum level of VO2 Max below which your Authority classifies senior officers as 'at risk'.*

Same procedure as in part 1.

12. *Please indicate the minimum level of VO2 Max below which your Authority requires senior officers to undertake remedial training.*

Same procedure as in part 1.

13. *Please indicate the minimum level of VO2 Max for senior officers, below which your Authority will initiate disciplinary proceedings.*

Same procedure as in part 1.

14. *What percentage of senior officers currently have a VO2 Max standard of 42 or above?*

Same response as in part 1.

15. *What percentage of senior officers currently have a VO2 Max standard of between 35 and 42?*

Same response as in part 1.

16. *What percentage of senior officers currently have a VO2 Max standard of below 35?*

Same response as in part 1.

Part 3 – Additional fitness standards

17. *Does your Authority carry out any other additional fitness tests for either frontline personnel or senior officers? Please answer 'Yes' or 'No'. (If 'No', please go to question 22.)*

No.

18. *Please provide further details of the additional fitness tests your Authority carries*

N/A.

Part 4 – Fitness and capability dismissal

19. *Since financial year 2010/11, against how many frontline personnel has your Authority initiated disciplinary proceedings on grounds of unsatisfactory fitness levels?*

Nil.

20. *Since financial year 2010/11, against how many senior officers has your Authority initiated disciplinary proceedings on grounds of unsatisfactory fitness levels?*

Nil.

21. *Please provide any documents or minutes of meetings which discuss firefighter fitness standards.*

Report [FEP2368](#) refers to the consultation exercise undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on this issue and sets out the Authority's proposed response.

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