



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Physical Fitness Tests and Standards

Why be concerned with fitness?

- It relates to the ability of officers to perform essential functions of the job.
- It relates to minimizing the risk of excessive force situations.
- It relates to minimizing the known health risks associated with a career in law enforcement.
- It relates to meeting many legal requirements to avoid litigation and have a defensible position if challenged in court.

Are there strict guidelines, protocols, and/or norms for administering physical fitness assessments and tests?

- Yes, strict protocols, guidelines, and/or norms must be followed when administering assessments and tests to cadets because this ensures uniformity and fairness to all participants. All academies, Departments and testing organizations must ensure that protocols are strictly adhered to when testing cadets and/or prospective employees, or the testing results are invalid.

What physical fitness norms and protocols are mandated by MPOETC's rules and regulations?

- MPOETC uses the Cooper Health-Based norms and Cooper Health-Based protocols for assessment and testing of a cadet's physical fitness level.

Are the Cooper tests, norms and protocols defensible in court?

- The Cooper tests have scientific evidence for having construct and criterion validity as measuring job related factors and are defensible.
- The Cooper norms are scientifically valid norms based on general population and law enforcement samples. They are a representative cross-section of fitness levels among those populations.
- Absolute cut points for the Cooper tests have been found to be job related and defensible.
- The courts have upheld the use of normed standards because:
 - The tests are designed to assess general fitness rather than minimum standards for job performance.
 - The normed standards are used to expand the competitive pool of qualified applicants
 - Normed standards that appear different actually represent identical levels of underlying physical fitness.



What does MPOETC mandates as a fitness test battery?

- MPOETC’s rules and regulations mandate the following Fitness Test Battery, in the order outlined:
 - 300 Meter Run
 - 1 RM Bench Press
 - Sit-Ups
 - 1.5 Mile Run

What does the fitness test battery accurately measure? What is predictability of each event in measuring job tasks?

300 Meter Run ***	Anaerobic Power (sprinting ability)
1 RM Bench Press ***	Muscular Strength (upper body)
Sit-ups **	Muscular Endurance (core body)
1.5 Mile Run ***	Aerobic Capacity (cardiorespiratory)

*** Is highly predictive of performing job tasks in all cases
 ** Is predictive of performing job tasks in most cases

What is the minimum score a cadet needs to achieve to pass the physical fitness test battery?

- All applicants must pass the fitness test battery at the 30th percentile based on his/her age and gender, prior to entering the police academy.
- All cadets must pass the fitness test battery at the 50th percentile based on his/her age and gender, to successfully meet the minimum requirements to graduate from the police academy.

Why are the age and gender norms used by MPOETC?

- The Commission made a decision to open the employment pool to the largest number of applicants. “One standard fits all” has a disparate impact on women and older officers. In order to get the largest number of applicants, MPOETC uses age and gender norms. Cooper strives to maintain the most accurate standards, and on occasions updates these standards. The following chart outlines the most current minimum standards for the 30th and 50th percentiles, based on age and gender, (as of 2008).



Municipal Police Officers' Education & Training Commission

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30th Percentile Age & Gender Adjusted Rankings

Physical Fitness Test Battery

Entry Level Standards

Event	Age 20 to 29		Age 30 to 39		Age 40 to 49		Age 50 to 59		Age 60 +	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
300 Meter Run	62.1	75.0	63.0	82.0	77.0	106.7	87.0	n / a	n / a	n / a
Time measured in seconds.										
Bench Press	0.93	0.56	0.83	0.51	0.76	0.47	0.68	0.42	0.63	0.40
Six attempts to complete one repetition = Body Weight X Ratio.										
Sit-ups	35	30	32	22	27	17	21	12	17	4
Total number of repetitions performed in one minute.										
1.5 Mile Run	13:08	15:56	13:48	16:46	14:33	18:26	16:16	20:17	18:39	22:37
Time measured in minutes and seconds.										

Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission

50th Percentile Age & Gender Adjusted Rankings

Physical Fitness Test Battery

Graduation Standards

Event	Age 20 to 29		Age 30 to 39		Age 40 to 49		Age 50 to 59		Age 60 +	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
300 Meter Run	56.0	64.0	57.0	74.0	67.6	86.0	80.0	n / a	n / a	n / a
Time measured in seconds.										
Bench Press	1.06	0.65	0.93	0.57	0.84	0.52	0.75	0.46	0.68	0.45
Six attempts to complete one repetition = Body Weight X Ratio.										
Sit-ups	40	34	36	27	31	22	26	17	20	8
Total number of repetitions performed in one minute.										
1.5 Mile Run	11:58	14:15	12:25	15:14	13:05	16:13	14:33	18:05	16:19	20:08
Time measured in minutes and seconds.										



Why must the fitness test battery be given in a specific order?

- The fitness test battery is designed to measure the cumulative effect on the cadet. Therefore, the complete test battery must be given at one time, on a single day, in the order outlined within established test and safety protocols.

What if a cadet fails one event of the fitness test battery?

- All events are pass/fail. If a cadet (applicant) fails any one event, he/she fail the entire test, due to the cumulative nature of the fitness test battery. If the cadet fails one part of the fitness test battery, he/she cannot move on to the next event.

What if a cadet fails the fitness test battery?

- If a cadet fails the Final Physical Fitness Test he/she will have to re-take the entire Physical Fitness 42 hour block of instruction.

What if a cadet is sick on the day of the Final Physical Fitness Test?

- MPOETC recognizes that a cadet on the day of the Final Physical Fitness Test could be sick (not feeling well) and might not be able to take the test. The cadet must inform the academy's Physical Fitness Instructor that they are not feeling well and wish to postpone taking the test. MPOETC will allow the cadet that is sick (not feeling well) take the test within seven (7) calendar days of the original date of the Final Physical Fitness Test. An injury does not fall into this category.

Scoring the fitness test battery.

- All scores obtain by a cadet during any assessment and/or fitness test must be recorded on MPOETC form "MP PhysEval 09-2008".
- The scores for either assessments or tests must be documented by placing the actual number (score) achieved in addition to pass or fail. (Example: if a cadet runs the 300 Meter Run at 47 seconds, "47 seconds" as well as a "pass" should be recorded on the form.)

What is the difference between "assessment" and "fitness test"?

- *Assessment:* The goal of the assessment is to measure an individual's absolute fitness level. The cadet must perform a maximum effort on each event of the fitness test battery. This will allow academy staff to determine the fitness level of the cadet and if they are responding to training.
- *Fitness Test:* The goal of the fitness test is to determine if a cadet can pass the academy standards. Once the cadet has achieved the minimum cut off point (based on their age and gender) he/she must stop that fitness test battery event.



Universal Dynamic Variable Resistance (DVR) Bench Press Machine versus Free Weights.

- The Cooper Institute protocols are based on the DVR bench press machine. MPOETC recommends that a DVR bench press machine be used when testing cadet for the 1 repetition bench press event.
- If an academy does not have a DVR bench press machine MPOETC allows and highly recommends the use of free weights for the 1 repetition bench press event. Free weights are most closely aligned with the DVR bench press machine.
- MPOETC has established protocols for the use of both the DVR bench press machine and free weights.
- In the event a cadet fails the 1 RM Bench Press event using free weights, MPOETC recommends that academies retest the cadet using a DVR machine. Retest means that the cadet must re-take the entire physical test battery. This retest will be completed prior to instructing the cadet to repeat the entire 42 hour Physical Fitness block.

What is the formula for converting 1 RM free weight bench press to the estimated 1 RM Universal bench press score?

- Males: Estimated 1 RM Universal = $(1.016 \times \text{free weight 1 RM}) + 18.41$
- Females: Estimated 1 RM Universal = $(.848 \times \text{free weight 1RM}) + 21.37$
 - Divide number of pounds pressed (lifted) by body weight to obtain ratio
 - Example: A male cadet's 1 RM for free weights is 200 lbs. He weighs 160 lbs. Estimated 1 RM Universal = $(1.016 \times 200) + 18.41$
Estimated 1 RM Universal = 221.6 lbs. $221.6/160 = 1.385$ Bench Press Ratio.

What if the weight the cadet needs to press (left) is not exactly repressed on the DVR Machine or by free weights?

- DVR: If no corresponding plate can be found on the right side of the DVR Machine's weight stack, you must round the standard weight down to the next lower plate.
- Free Weights: If no exact corresponding set of weight can be placed on the bar, it is permissible to round down to a set of weight that is closest to the weight the



cadet must press (left). Since the smallest free weight plate is 2.5 lbs. weight should not be rounded down by more the four (4) pounds.

Example: Acceptable rounding down (183 lbs to 180 lbs)

Unacceptable rounding down (185 lbs to 180 lbs)

What about exercise safety?

- MPOETC mandates that all academies and test proctors follow the American College of Sports Medicine (A.C.S.M.) guidelines for safe exercise testing. These guidelines include:
 - Employing certified personnel
 - Medical screening of all cadets (applicants)
 - Avoid testing in extreme environments (heat, cold, etc)
 - Proper testing equipment
 - Having safety equipment on site and readily available
 - Following protocols

Who are Certified Personnel (Physical Fitness Instructor)?

- A Physical Fitness Instructor is a person that is certified in the discipline of physical fitness by a nationally recognized entity such as ACSM, FitForce, National Strength Conditioning Association (NSCA), and/or Cooper Institute or held a degree in a health-related field. Fitness Instructors must also maintain current qualifications in the fitness area.
- All physical fitness instructors must have current certifications in Basic First Aid, CPR, and the use of Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).
- All trainers, test facilitators, law enforcement instructors must be certified by MPOETC.

Can academies use non-trained individuals to assist in administering the fitness test battery?

- MPOETC's protocols states that only physical fitness instructors are allowed to be test proctors. This includes all starters, timers, counters, spotters and holders.
- MPOETC recognizes this could be labor intensive, but failure by the academy to follow these protocols could expose the school to liability issues. (i.e. by using an untrained individual to hold legs during the sit-up test, the participant could claim that the untrained holder failed to hold the legs properly, that being the reason he/she failed). Using certified personnel avoids these arguments.
- Cadets, in the same academy class, must never be used as starters, timers, counters, spotters and holders, for assessments and tests.



What about using non-trained individuals for pre-employment testing?

- MPOETC does not regulate individual department's pre-employment testing. MPOETC's regulations state that an individual must achieve the 30th percentile on the fitness test battery prior to entry into the academy and the 50th percentile to graduate from the academy. It has been proven that applicants that cannot meet the 30th percentile, will have an extremely difficult time to achieve 50th percentile on the Final PT Test. It is the responsibility of the Department, agency or organization to ensure the applicant meets the minimum entrance standards for the academy. MPOETC does not assume any liability or responsibility for pre-employment testing.
- MPOETC strongly recommends that departments use certified test proctors and follow MPOETC's physical fitness protocols, to avoid civil liabilities issues.

If a cadet (applicant) asks for a pacer, should a pacer be provided?

- MPOETC protocols allow applicants and cadets to request a trained pacer for the 300 Meter Run and the 1.5 Mile Run events. A "trained pacer" is an individual certified by MPOETC as a Physical Fitness Instructor. The trained pacer is also an individual that has experience regarding running. The trained pacer must be able to complete the event in the acceptable time for that cadet. Remember, the trained pacer must set a pace that will give the cadet every opportunity to pass this event. The pace must be timely enough for the cadet to pass, if able, yet not too fast to cause the cadet to prematurely become exhausted.
- Pacers may not physically assist the cadet during the event.
- Cadets or other applicants must not be used as pacers. This will avoid issues that the pacer did not set a proper pace because they were not trained.

What type of surface should the cadet run on for the 300 Meter Run and the 1.5 Mile Run?

- MPOETC protocols recommend that these events be conducted on a standard 440 yard oval track.
- Reasons:
 - This will allow the proctor to keep all cadets in view for safety reasons.
 - Also, the cadets will be running on the same surface for the entire event.



- This will eliminate having cadets walk the course prior to the event for familiarity purposes.

What is an “Experienced Spotter” or “(Spotter)”?

- Spotter and experienced spotter are interchanged terms.
- During the 1 RM Bench Press event (using free weights), MPOETC protocols require two spotters to be used. Spotters must be Physical Fitness Instructors established by MPOETC. Spotters should also have experience with free weights.

What is the reason that cadets (applicants) cannot be used as spotters, pacers, holders, starters, and timers?

- Only Physical Fitness Instructors must be used in assessments and tests to ensure fairness, accuracy, standardization, safety, and completeness during the fitness test battery.
- Using cadets and applicants could open the academy or Department up to a host of civil liabilities. Civil liability issues are only limited to the imagination of the cadet that failed and his/her attorney.
- Cadets can be used at the discretion of the academy during non-assessment and non-testing aspects of physical training.