

# PORTSMOUTH FIRE, RESCUE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

## DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST

**PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST:** The ability test is designed to test a person's endurance and ability to perform basic strenuous tasks that professional firefighters must perform. The test is a series of seven tasks, which are simulations of actual tasks performed on the job. The MAXIMUM time allowed to complete the seven tasks is six (6) minutes. The applicants will perform the tasks wearing a hard-hat, weighted vest and gloves. The total weight of the protective gear is approximately fifty (50) pounds and is to simulate the personal protective equipment that firefighters must wear.

You should wear athletic/casual clothing and shoes (athletic shoes are recommended, no flip flops, sandals, or open toed shoes) that will allow you to move freely and complete physical tasks. Anticipate spending one (1) hour at the test site. Bring your own utility gloves for practice and test sessions. They must be enclosed with no exposed fingers/palms.

Do not take the physical ability test lightly. It is more difficult than it appears. Chances for passing the test may be increased through attending a practice session and being familiar with the course. Physical training should emphasize cardio and respiratory (heart-lung) fitness, strength and muscular endurance. Running and weight training are two of the best approaches.

Each task must be completed before moving on to the next task. The descriptions of the seven tasks, which make up the physical ability test, are listed in the order in which applicants proceed through each task:

- 1. LADDER EXTENSION** - Fully raise the top (fly) section of the twenty foot (24') extension ladder and safely lower it completely by using the attached rope (halyard). The applicant will use the hand-over-hand method without allowing the rope to slip through the hands because it is an unsafe practice. A penalty of 10 seconds will be added to an applicant's total time, if the rope slips and the top section falls a distance of 3 or more rungs. Both of the applicant's feet must remain in contact with the ground at all times while raising and lowering the ladder. Automatic disqualifier will be an uncontrolled handling of the ladder and allowing the ladder to fall to the ground.
- 2. PIKE POLE EXERCISE** - The applicant will approach a pike pole, which will be hanging on a rope. There will be 35 lbs. attached to the rope, hooked to a pulley and leading to the pike pole. The applicant will grab the pike pole with both hands, walk behind the cones and simulate using a pike pole by pulling it 15 times. Each time, the applicant must fully extend and fully contract their arms. This exercise simulates the task of a firefighter having to pull ceiling materials to check for fire extension.
- 3. HOSE PULL** - The applicant will approach 100 feet of dry two and one-half inch (2 1/2") fire hose and nozzle, which is in an extended accordion fold. The applicant must move forward until the entire length of the hose is stretched out. This is completed as quickly as possible and without running.
- 4. FORCIBLE ENTRY** - Using the Keiser Force machine and a weighted shot mallet, the applicant must drive the Keiser weighted beam across a five foot sled. This task is finished when the end of the beam crosses the 5 foot line. This skill simulates breaching floors, roofs, and other objects to check for fire extension.

5. **LADDER HANDLING** - The applicant will approach a 16-foot ladder, which is on a rack. The ladder must be removed from the rack, carried approximately ten (10) feet and replaced in its original position on the identical rack, as quickly as possible. The ladder must not be dropped or touch the ground. A penalty of 10 seconds will be added to an applicant's total time if the ladder drops or touches the ground.
6. **ATTIC CRAWL** - The applicant will proceed on hands and knees on rafters, which are 24 inches apart, through a ground level attic prop, which is 16 feet in length. The above requirement must be performed as quickly as possible. Ten (10) seconds will be added to the applicant's overall time each time a part of the body drops between the rafters.
7. **VICTIM SIMULATION DRAG** - Applicant must drag a 150-lb. victim simulator 60 feet to the finish line, as quickly as possible. A pulling harness is attached to the simulator for your assistance.

The applicant will be allowed rehabilitation breaks, in which they may take a rest period, if they choose. The time spent during this break will be counted into their total time. Any time spent on a rehabilitation break increases the overall time of the applicant. There will be no running from one task to the next task, as this is an unsafe practice on the fire-ground. Fast paced walking is allowed.