

Work Capacity Test

The ACT Rural Fire Service Chief Officer has issued this Service Standard under Section 38(1) of the *Emergencies Act 2004* – A Chief Officer may determine standards and protocols.

Purpose

Field studies have shown that performance in the work capacity tests is directly related to performance in emergency worker tasks, including prolonged firefighting.

This Service Standard describes the physical fitness and work capacity requirements and processes to meet the operational fieldwork conditions for the ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS).

Applicability

This Service Standard is applicable to RFS personnel engaging in RFS activities within the ACT or cross border.

Background

The following fitness categories apply:

No fitness test: Brigade support activities where physical exertion is not required, such as administration, radio operations or working in an Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). Activities exclude entering a fireground or participating in operational or operational training activities.

Light: Duties mainly involving non field-based operational activity where light physical exertion requiring basic good health can be expected. Activities may include operating a vehicle, long hours of work, as well as some bending and light lifting. Individuals can almost always govern the extent and pace of their physical activity.

Moderate: Duties involving field work that requires complete control of all physical faculties and may include considerable walking over irregular ground, standing for long periods of time, lifting moderate to heavy weights (generally 11-20kgs), climbing, bending, twisting and reaching. Occasional demands may be required for moderately strenuous activities in emergencies over long periods of time. Individuals usually, but not always, can set the pace of their work. This is the minimum level of fitness for active fire fighters.

Arduous: Duties involving field work that requires physical performance calling for above average endurance and conditioning such as remote area fire fighting. These duties include a demand for strenuous activities in emergencies under adverse environmental conditions and over extended periods of time. Requirements include strenuous walking, climbing, jumping,

twisting, bending and lifting heavy weights (occasional above 20kgs). The pace of work is typically set by the emergency situation and may often be beyond the individual's control.

Responsibilities

Members	<p>Ensure they participate in annual work capacity tests.</p> <p>Ensure they obtain required medical clearances.</p> <p>Ensure they understand and attain required fitness levels for any activity they undertake.</p>
Administrator (Person supervising the fitness test)	<p>Follow 3.3.1 Work Capacity Test, Administration Guideline.</p> <p>Supervise conduct of test.</p> <p>Record test results.</p> <p>Ensure results are forwarded to RFS Membership Support Officer.</p>
RFS Membership Support Officer	<p>Ensure records of members are updated and maintained on the RFS records management system.</p>

Service standard

For the wellbeing and safety of personnel, brigades must participate every 12 months in the fitness assessment program.

In order to keep a fitness test valid, reliable and fair, and to also ensure the safety of the participant, the same procedures must be followed each time an assessment is conducted. Further information can be obtained from 3.3.1 Work Capacity Test, Administration Guideline.

Fitness levels

Each of the fitness categories has its own test requirements as described in the table below. The ratio of distance, pack weight and time have been determined following extensive USA studies and confirmed, following further testing, for Australian conditions.

Work Category	Test	Distance	Pack Weight	Time
Light	Walk Test	1.6km	None	16mins
Moderate	Pack Test	3.2km	11kg	30mins
Arduous	Pack Test	4.8km	20kg	45mins

Frequency of testing

Members must participate in the work capacity test every 12 months, if fitness levels are required for RFS activities.

Failure to undertake or pass the test

Any member who has not undertaken or failed to pass the work capacity test at the required fitness level within a 12-month period, is not permitted to be involved in any operational activity. This includes incident attendance and operational training activities such as live fire training.

If a member fails a higher level category of the test but would have passed a lower category (based on time, distance and weight), they will be deemed to have passed the lower level category and will be able to undertake the tasks associated with that category. For example, a member who is undertaking the Arduous test and passes the 3.2km mark in under 30 minutes but doesn't reach the 4.8km distance in under 45 minutes will be deemed to have passed the Moderate test.

There is no limit to the number of times a member may try to pass any category of the fitness test.

Members may elect to become brigade support members if they fail their fitness test until such time as they pass.

New recruits

New recruits are to undertake the fitness test prior to undertaking the practical elements or assessment activities of the Bush Firefighter course. Recruits are required to undertake the minimum fitness level appropriate to their membership category.

Minimum fitness level for RFS activities

Below is a table providing examples of the type of work associated with each fitness category. This list is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the descriptions of fitness categories above. Any questions regarding what category of fitness is required for an activity should be referred to the RFS Manager, Membership.

FITNESS CATEGORY	RFS Activity/Position
No test required	Administrative activities Aviation Radio Operator Brigade support members Working in an ECC
Light	Driving Operational support activities Scribe
Moderate	Air Base Operator Air Observer Basic Firefighter Fire fighter Interstate deployments


FITNESS CATEGORY	RFS Activity/Position
	Junior Member Operational Command Support Ranked officer
Arduous	Extended Duration Handline Construction Crew member International deployment Rapid Aerial Response Fire Fighter Remote Area Fire Fighter

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	01/04/2013	Version 1.0
Carmel Summers	2.0	18/12/2019	Reviewed and updated
Craig Hicks	3.0		Reviewed and updated

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	CO ACT RFS		09/02/2024

Document Owner

Position	Section
Assistant Director	Volunteer Management

Next review due: 01/02/2027

Related documents

Document name	Version
3.3.1 Work Capacity Test, Administration Guideline	
3.1.4 RFS Membership Service Standard	
ACT RFS Training Information Book	

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.