

Poster # 87

Uniform Service Readiness Programs - Development of a Model At-Work Fitness Program for USPHS Commissioned Officers

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Background: Protective service workers encompass occupational groups including the military and other uniformed services, police, firefighters and other emergency response workers. These occupational groups have a higher standard of physical fitness applied to them due to the nature of their missions. This paper discusses fitness for duty under conditions of higher readiness standards. It explains the purpose of military readiness standards and extends the standards of fitness to officers of the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS).

Purpose: To present a model at-work physical fitness program.

Approach: Comparative study of the fitness programs for all Uniform Services and their relationship to national guidelines for civilians established by the Department of Health and Human Services, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies.

Summary: The minimum fitness for duty program for USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers would be one which includes a set of planned activities that ensures the following eight elements:

1. The promotion of an aggressive fitness culture, and which motivate all members to participate in a regular year-round health and fitness program;
2. An individually-based program that includes the training necessary to develop a progressive fitness program of aerobic, flexibility, muscular strength, and cardiorespiratory and muscular endurance exercises;
3. The establishment of a written annual fitness plan for each member and which is reviewed by the officers' supervisor at every evaluation period;
4. The institution of an effective weight maintenance program which emphasizes weight maintenance and healthy nutrition during all stages of a Uniformed Service career and that decreases the need for efforts aimed at weight loss;
5. The aggressive integration of physical readiness activities into the workweek, while meeting mission and operational requirements;
6. Management supervision which leads a unified fitness program by providing access to exercise facilities during duty hours a minimum of 3x/week, or maximum of 5x/week for up to 90 minutes of duty time for each session;
7. Promotion of training sessions that include: 10 minutes of warm-up activities, 30-40 minutes of aerobic exercise in the target training heart rate zone, flexibility exercise, muscular strength and endurance conditioning, and five to 5-10 minutes of cool-down activities; and which also promotes the pursuit of daily tasks that result in the accumulation of moderately intense physical activities and that minimizes sedentary periods; and
8. Which efficiently ensures a passing score on all required USPHS fitness standards on the annual physical fitness and body composition evaluation of medically qualified officers.