

Waco, Texas Fire Department

Firefighter Physical Ability Examination

Participant Study Guide

INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to describe the physical tasks you will be required to perform for the Waco, Texas Firefighter Physical Ability Examination. You will increase your chances of obtaining a passing score if you spend a fair amount of time preparing for the test. This includes thoroughly reviewing this study guide, following the specific directions regarding attire, paying proper attention to your physical well-being before the test and taking care to avoid becoming overly anxious about the test.

OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PROCESS

An analysis of the physical requirements of the job of Firefighter in the Waco, Texas Fire Department was conducted. The analysis provided the background information necessary to validate the job-related physical ability examination. It allowed for the identification of the essential physical functions required of the job, and these essential functions are included in the physical ability test.

Among other physical tasks, firefighters in the Waco, Texas Fire Department must be able to perform the following: crawl through smoky buildings; climb an aerial ladder; drag uncharged hose; carry hose up stairs; hoist equipment using a rope; descend stairs; carry and place equipment; drag a victim to safety and drag hose charged with water.

This examination is equally valid for assessing the physical skills of participants with firefighting experience and those without. For example, one portion of the test requires the participant to drag a dummy 75 feet. It is not necessary to have prior experience as a firefighter to possess the physical ability to drag a heavy object.

Preparation instructions and a description of the physical ability test are provided below.

TEST PREPARATION

The following suggestions should help you prepare yourself physically for the test:

- Avoid junk food and maintain a well-balanced diet for several days before the test.
- Avoid tranquilizers and stimulants such as caffeinated beverages, especially on the day of the test.

- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- Do not drink a lot of liquids or eat a large meal before the test.
- Avoid alcohol several days prior to and especially on the day of the test.

WHAT TO WEAR

Participants should wear the following during the test:

- Wear comfortable clothing to facilitate the performance of physical tasks (e.g., physical fitness clothing), pants to protect the legs and knees, and gym/sport shoes.
- Wear a weighted vest weighing 50 lbs. to simulate the weight and bulk of turnout gear (supplied by the department).
- Wear a safety helmet (supplied by the department).
- Wear gloves (supplied by the department).
- NOT wear watches, rings or other items which could harm them while taking the test. These items should be removed for safety purposes before testing.

Note: The Waco Fire Department will provide participants with the indicated gear and equipment necessary to participate in the testing process. Vests and helmets are adjustable to ensure a reasonable fit for all participants. Several sizes of gloves will be available, and provided by the Department, to ensure a reasonable fit for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST

The test will require a participant to complete several physical tasks in sequence within an allotted time frame, as well as to complete two untimed tasks. All applicants will be given an orientation and walk through prior to taking the test. No one will be allowed to take the test unless he/she is fully aware of what he/she is expected to do.

During the sequence of timed events, it is extremely important to pace yourself. Over-exerting yourself early in the test may reduce the amount of energy you have left for exercises at the end of the test, such as the victim rescue. Additionally, participants are not permitted to run between events for safety reasons.

TEST EVENTS

UNTIMED EVENTS: (Participants will not wear the weighted vest for these events).

1. **Blind Crawl.** The test administrator guides the participant to one end of a blind crawl tube, which the participant crawls through until the end. Alternatively, the blind crawl exercise may be set up such that participants are required to follow a length of hose or rope around, over or under obstacles, while wearing a darkened facemask. Participants unable to successfully complete the blind crawl will not be allowed to continue on to the aerial climb or timed series of events.

2. Aerial Climb. The fire Department's aerial apparatus is extended approximately 75 feet off the ground at an angle of about 75 degrees. A belay line is strung through the top rung of the ladder to serve as a safety line. Participants are tethered to the belay line and, upon instruction, ascend and descend the ladder without stopping. Two rescue technicians secure the line to ensure safety. Participants are given 5 minutes to complete this exercise, not to hurry them, but to allow adequate time to ascend and descend the ladder at a safe pace and to ensure they do not stop for an extended period of time. If it is clear the participant is not able to complete this exercise after 5 minutes, or takes breaks in excess of 10 seconds, the participant will be considered to have failed this exercise. No time will be recorded unless the participant fails. After successful completion of this event, the candidate proceeds to the timed sequence of events.

TIMED EVENTS: Page 5 contains a sample map illustrating the entire test sequence. Each event listed below corresponds to a particular point on the map.

1. Uncharged Hose Drag. Participants begin with one end of a 100' section of 5" hose over their shoulder and with a hydrant wrench in hand, and drag it 50'. With equipment in hand, participants are advised to start when they are ready. Once the participant steps across the starting line, the test administrator will start time.
2. Stair Climb/Hotel Pack Carry. The hotel pack includes a 100' section of bundled 1 3/4" hose, and is located near the bottom of the stair tower. Participants carry the hotel pack up to the 5th floor, and then drop it. The hotel pack weighs approximately 35 lbs. Participants are not required to carry the pack back down.
3. Hoist Equipment. Standing inside the 5th floor of the stair tower, participants must hoist up a donut roll of hose (weighing approximately 19 lbs) from the ground using a rope attached to the roll to pull it up. Participants may use a hand-over-hand motion, or simply stand inside the tower and pull the rope up leaning slightly backwards. The roll must be completely brought in through the window and left on the ground. Participants then descend from the stair tower to the ground, leaving the hotel pack and donut roll behind. For safety on the way down, participants must hit every stair; there is to be no sliding down the handrails or skipping steps.
4. Carry Exhaust Fan. Participants will pick up an exhaust fan weighting approximately 48 lbs. and advance it to a point 80' away.
5. Victim Rescue. Immediately following the completion of the fan carry, participants will walk to an approximately 154 pound dummy and drag it a distance of 75' until all parts of it cross a line. While any technique may be used to drag the dummy, getting the arms under the arms of the dummy and then lifting and dragging the dummy will result in less friction than simply pulling the dummy across the ground.

6. Charged line. Participants will proceed to three, 50' sections of charged 1 3/4" hose and advance the charged line (i.e., hose that is charged and filled with water) a distance of 100' to the finish line. Timing will stop when the test administrator judges that the participant has advanced the tip of the nozzle across the finish line.

CRITERIA FOR PASSING THE EXAM

Participants must successfully complete all timed events in 4 minutes and 12 seconds (252 seconds) or less. Additionally, all entry-level and incumbent participants must successfully complete the Aerial Climb and Blind Crawl.

Waco, Texas Firefighter Physical Ability Course Layout (Not Drawn to Scale)

