

MEDICAL ASSESSMENT FAQs – PART 1

MEDICAL EXAM GENERAL INFORMATION

Q-1: Why do I need to take a medical exam?

A-1: The job of a Firefighter is physically demanding. For this reason, the FDNY's Bureau of Health Services (BHS) conducts a physical and mental health assessment, sometimes also referred to as a "medical exam" or "medical assessment," of each candidate to determine whether the candidate can safely fulfill the requirements of the job.

Q-2: When will my medical exam take place?

A-2: Your medical exam is part of processing for each Academy class. Typically, it takes place during the six month period prior the beginning of an Academy class. When you are called to meet with your investigator you will know that the FDNY has begun processing you for the next Academy class. You will not be called to take a medical exam until your number has been reached on the list for processing for an Academy class.

Scheduling for medical exams is done by the Candidate Investigation Division (CID). In general, you will be scheduled for your BHS appointment about one month after your visit to CID. If you anticipate any scheduling issues during this period of time, you can bring them to the attention of your CID investigator. If, after you have received your BHS appointment letter, you discover that you need to change the date of the BHS appointment, you can contact CID via email at CID@fdny.nyc.gov. CID will send you a letter with your new appointment date.

Q-3: I just passed the CPAT; do I need to do anything to prepare for the medical exam?

A-3: Preparation for your medical exam should begin as early as possible. If you are overweight, you should allow for a reasonable time to lose weight. You did not gain extra weight overnight; you cannot lose extra weight overnight. Take the time to lose the weight in a healthy way so you can keep the weight off. We strongly encourage you to consult with your medical services provider before assuming a weight loss regimen.

Physical conditioning for firefighting is important. Preparing for the CPAT examination will help you prepare for your medical assessment, but the CPAT and the medical exam are not the same tests.

Also, while it is rare, a period of 6 to 12 months can pass between the date of your CPAT and the date of your BHS appointment. You want to be in shape, and are encouraged to stay in shape, to pass the medical exam when you are called for it.

Q-4: What should I do to physically prepare for the medical exam?

A-4: First, you should familiarize yourself with the elements of the medical exam so you know what will be required of you. Read the [Bureau of Health Services Guidance for Firefighter Candidates Concerning Medical Assessment](#) (BHS Guidance Document) for a description of each portion of the medical exam and watch the video that provides an overview of the medical exam. You can access both the BHS Guidance Document and the video from the FDNY's Candidate Resources page.

As you will see in the video, the stairmill test is not like a stairmaster you might find at a gym. Practicing on a stairmill similar to the one used for your medical exam is important. Practicing can help assure that you don't fail because of lack of familiarity with the equipment.

Aerobic activity and strength building are both critical. In addition to lifting weights to improve your strength you must improve your cardiac capacity by including in your exercise routine exercises like running, biking, or stair climbing to get fit.

Practice healthy habits: Stay hydrated with water and eat a balanced diet with protein, whole grains, vegetables, nuts, and fruits. It is not advisable or necessary, however, to pile on vitamins, protein shakes, and protein supplements.

Q-5: I just had an annual checkup that didn't turn up any issues. Can I just provide the results of the checkup?

A-5: No. Regardless of your own doctor's assessment of your overall health, the FDNY must conduct its own evaluation of your physical fitness for the job of Firefighter. While your doctor probably performed some elements of the medical exam (measuring your height, weight and blood pressure) it is unlikely that your doctor performed the other tests that are part of the medical exam.

The nature of firefighting demands that the FDNY conduct thorough medical exams of all candidates to evaluate a candidate's physical fitness for the job. If a Firefighter has a medical problem while responding to a fire it may be difficult or impossible to provide timely medical attention. When a Firefighter is incapacitated while responding to a fire, members of the public and other Firefighters may be put in danger.

Q-6: Is the medical exam completed in a single day?

A-6: No. The medical exam will take place during three separate (but not consecutive) days that could potentially span a period of 6 to 12 months, or longer if a medical condition has been identified that requires additional follow up.

PHYSICAL EXAM: During one day, you will be asked to complete a set of forms, including the Candidate Medical Assessment Form, and visit 12 stations. All these forms may be accessed on the FDNY's Candidate Resources page, although nearly all forms must be completed on the day of your medical exam. You may access a video describing the medical exam from the Candidate Resources page. Some people pass the tests taken during the physical exam on the first attempt, but many people do not.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAM: About one month before or after the Medical Exam, you will also be required to complete the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), which consists of a series of true/false questions. You will also complete a "Biographical Data Sheet." The Biographical Data Sheet, the results of the MMPI, and any other documentation completed by you will be reviewed by BHS personnel. If it is determined as a result of that review that you may not be able to safely perform the job of a Firefighter, a "Reserved Medical Status" letter (see [Q-28 and A-28](#) below) will be issued and you will be scheduled to meet in person with a BHS mental health professional.

TIMED RUN: If you pass both the physical and psychological components of the Medical Assessment and assuming that you are otherwise qualified, you will be scheduled for a timed run that takes place at the FDNY Fire Academy shortly before you would be appointed as a probationary Firefighter. You will be required to run 1.5 miles in 13 minutes or less.

Q-7: What happens on the day of the Physical exam?

A-7: You fill out and submit medical forms; and you will complete 12 stations, which are described in more detail below and in separate FAQs on each station, as well as a video that can be accessed from the FDNY's Candidate Resources page.

Q-8: What happens at the end of the Physical exam?

A-8: If you have a medical issue that requires follow up, you will be given a Reserved Medical Status letter. BHS may require the results of diagnostic testing. For **some** types of diagnostic testing, BHS may even offer the testing at no cost to you, and BHS can schedule you on the date of your BHS visit for a future diagnostic test.

If there is no medical issue that requires follow up, you will be contacted by CID regarding any other requirement concerning your candidacy for the position of Firefighter. Assuming that all requirements for hiring have been met, you will be scheduled for the timed run.

Q-9: Can I see the forms I will have to fill out?

A-9: Yes, the forms are available on the Candidate Resources page on the FDNY's website. Most of these forms must be completed during your visit to BHS. A FDNY employee will

describe these forms to you on the day of the Physical exam.

It is important that you provide complete and accurate information on all forms. Your answers to the questions on the forms will be used by the FDNY during the medical assessment and will assist the FDNY in determining whether you are medically fit for appointment as a Firefighter.

Q-10: Does the FDNY use any national standards for the medical exam?

A-10: For many parts of the medical exam, the FDNY has adopted a standard published by the National Fire Protection Association, also known as the NFPA.

Q-11: I have one or more medical conditions or issues. Will they disqualify me from becoming a Firefighter?

A-11: Maybe. The FDNY evaluates candidates on an individualized basis. What may be a medically satisfactory result for one candidate for a specific evaluation may not be a satisfactory result for another candidate, depending on the candidate's overall health picture and the severity of the specific condition. For that reason, the FDNY cannot tell you in advance if any condition(s) will result in disqualification. Often when candidates have potentially disqualifying conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and certain heart and orthopedic conditions, they may be referred for additional testing. You will be told whether additional testing is required and whether it is offered as no cost to you. For further information please see the [BHS Guidance Document](#) on the FDNY's Candidate Resources page.

Some candidates may receive a Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification because they have a condition that cannot be immediately resolved. If you receive this notice, please carefully read it. You may have a condition that can be resolved over time, and you may be able to temporarily decline being considered for appointment (this will remove you from consideration for the Academy class for which you were being considered) and ask to be restored to the eligibility list once your condition is resolved (you would be considered for a subsequent Academy class). Instructions on how to decline being considered for appointment will be found on the Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification.

Q-12: I take prescription drugs for one or more medical conditions or issues. Will they disqualify me from becoming a Firefighter?

A-12: Maybe. The FDNY evaluates candidates on an individualized basis. What may be a medically satisfactory result for one candidate for a specific evaluation may not be a satisfactory result for another candidate, depending on the candidate's overall health picture and the severity of the specific condition. For that reason, the FDNY cannot tell you in advance if any prescriptions will result in disqualification.

If your doctor has prescribed a medication for you that poses a problem for your candidacy, the FDNY may be able to identify possible alternative medication(s) to discuss with your physician. However, only your physician can make the determination as to which medication is best for your health.

Q-13: Who do I contact if I require a reasonable accommodation due to a disability or my religion?

A-13: If you require a reasonable accommodation due to a disability or because of your religion in order to complete the medical assessment, please contact the FDNY EEO Office at 718-999-1446, 1447 or 1448.

Q-14: What should do if I have additional questions or concerns regarding my medical status?

A-14: It depends. If you have a medical condition that requires follow up, BHS will notify you of the condition in writing in a Reserved Medical Status letter. If you are scheduled by BHS for an appointment, you will also be notified in writing, and instructions for re-scheduling will be included. Also, if you are sent a Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification or a Final Notice of Medical Disqualification, you should carefully read those notices as they contain important instructions.

However, BHS does not treat medical conditions and does not provide guidance on how certain medical conditions should be corrected so that you are medically cleared for hiring as a Firefighter.

BHS might identify a condition that may be corrected so that you are medically cleared for hiring, or BHS might identify a condition that can permanently disqualify a candidate from being hired as a Firefighter. If a medical condition that requires treatment is identified (for example, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes), we strongly encourage you to contact your medical services provider so that you may pursue an appropriate course of treatment.

Q-15: Where do I take the medical exam?

A-15: Most components of the FDNY medical exam will take place at BHS, located at FDNY Headquarters, 9 MetroTech Center, Second Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Should any component of the medical exam not take place at BHS, you will be notified of the location in writing.

Q-16: How long is the Physical exam? Should I bring my lunch?

A-16: You will be required to arrive at BHS at 6:45 AM on the date of your appointment. In general, the physical exam can take about 5 ½ hours, although the amount of time may vary

from candidate to candidate. Only a light breakfast is recommended, as the stairmill test involves aerobic exercise and you will be subject to blood testing. We do recommend that you bring your own bottled water and a light snack that you can consume after the blood work station. We do not recommend that you bring your lunch.

Q-17: Do I need to be clean shaven for the Physical exam?

A-17: Your face must be clean shaven for the Physical exam. In general, you may not have a beard, moustache, or facial hair of any kind. This is necessary so that you can maintain a proper seal on the mask as part of the Physical exam.

Q-18: What do I wear for the Physical exam? Is there a place to change?

A-18: You should bring or wear sneakers and comfortable gym clothing, in anticipation of the stairmill test. If candidates need to change clothing they may use the restroom.

Q-19: Is secured storage available?

A-19: No. There are no secure locker facilities available for candidates. You may place any personal items that you bring with you in a gym or duffel bag and these will be kept in a training room. You may place a lock on your bag. You are strongly discouraged from bringing valuables such as jewelry, and may be required to remove certain jewelry if it impedes any portion of the medical assessment. You will be permitted to retrieve your bag upon completing your medical assessment.

When you arrive at FDNY Headquarters, you and your belongings will be subject to security screening. You will not be permitted to enter the building with any firearm, or sharp objects such as a pocketknife, multi-purpose tool, swiss army knife, or scissors.

Q-20: Can I eat breakfast on the day of the Physical exam?

A-20: You may eat a light breakfast, but you are strongly encouraged to not eat one hour prior to your appointment. Bear in mind that your blood will be subject to testing. Bring snacks, such as a granola bar or fruit, and bottled water with you. You should eat any snack that you bring only after completing the blood work station.

You should not consume tonic water, quinine water or other quinine product, or any poppy seed product.

You are not allowed to take stimulants such as Red Bull or other high energy drinks at least 24 hours before any part of the medical exam.

Q-21: Is there anything I need to bring with me for the Physical exam?

A-21: You must bring:

- The letter from CID (notice of attendance)
- A completed, signed and notarized Medical Disclosure Form, which will be given to you before the date of the Physical exam (you may review the form on the FDNY's Candidate Resources page)
- A valid government photo ID (Examples: NYS Department of Motor Vehicles ID or Driver's License, or US Passport)
- Your eyeglasses or contact lenses – you will be allowed to wear them to take the vision testing
- If you are on medication, a list of your prescriptions or the prescription bottles themselves
- If you are under the care of a medical provider, a note outlining diagnosis, medications, and treatment plan (for example for diabetes or hypertension) or any other medical records you feel might be helpful
- If you have had orthopedic procedures or surgeries, an operative note and any other medical documentation
- Immunization records (vaccination records) – if available
- A pen

If you bring any medical records, we will make copies on site so that you can keep your original copies.

Q-22: Can someone accompany me during any part of the medical exam?

A-22: No. You are not permitted to bring anyone with you for any part of the medical exam.

Q-23: I've become ill or have suffered an injury prior to the Physical exam, and I feel I cannot proceed with the exam as scheduled. What can I do?

A-23: You may write to CID at CID@fdny.nyc.gov to re-schedule your exam. Depending on the matter that you have reported, you may be required to bring medical documentation on the date of your Physical exam.

Q-24: I've become ill during the Physical exam. What should I do?

A-24: If you feel sick or uncomfortable and don't think you can complete the Physical exam, you must let a Fire Officer know so he/she can give you directions for rescheduling. Fire Officers are in uniform and wear white shirts.

If you have started and are not able to complete the Stairmill Test, you will be re-scheduled for a Second Stairmill Test. Please read the [BHS Guidance Document](#) for further instructions regarding the Stairmill Test.

Q-25: Can I have my cell phone with me during the medical exam?

A-25: All electronic devices that you bring must be turned off during your medical exam. You are strongly encouraged to keep them in the gym or duffel bag that you bring with you.

Q-26: Will I know if I passed the medical exam the same day?

A-26: No. A FDNY physician must review the results from each station (including laboratory results which are generally available within one week of the medical exam) before a decision can be made, so they cannot advise you of your results the same day.

Q-27: How will I find out my results?

A-27: If the FDNY determines that you are medically qualified, you will be contacted by CID regarding any other condition for hiring that you are still required to fulfill. If you have fulfilled all conditions for hiring, CID will schedule you for the timed run.

Q-28: I received a "Reserved Medical Status" letter. What does this mean? What happens if I do not respond, or do not respond fully?

A-28: Where a candidate has a medical condition or status that will medically disqualify him or her from appointment, BHS will, in general, give the candidate the opportunity to correct the condition or status and/or provide documentation acceptable to BHS showing that the candidate can safely fulfill the job of a Firefighter.

In that event, you will receive a "Reserved Medical Status" letter, also sometimes called a "Reserved Status" letter, which will inform you of any medical condition or status that needs to be addressed prior to appointment. In general, candidates will be given a period of **30 days** from the date of the Reserved Status letter to address the condition or status described in the Reserved Status letter. If you do not submit follow up information within 30 days you will be sent a Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification.

Please note that in general, extensions to the 30 day requirement are not granted. **If you get a Reserved Medical Status letter, please read it carefully and follow instructions.**

Please note that in certain circumstances BHS will determine that a candidate's medical condition or status is so severe and/or that the candidate's overall medical status is such that the candidate will be medically disqualified from appointment as a Firefighter, without the need for further follow up. When this happens a candidate does not get a Reserved Medical Status letter. Instead, he/she receives a different document, called a Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification (NOPMD).

More details about the Reserved Medical Status letter and the NOPMD are available in the [BHS Guidance Document](#).

Q-29: I received a "Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification," what does this mean?

A-29: A Notice of Proposed Medical Disqualification, or NOPMD, means that the FDNY has reached a tentative conclusion that you are not medically qualified to be a Firefighter. This, however, is not a final decision. If you receive a NOPMD you will still have 30 days from the date of the NOPMD to respond. **Please carefully read the NOPMD and follow any instructions.**

Q-30: I have received a NOPMD and I need more time to respond. What can I do?

A-30: If you need more time to respond to the NOPMD, please follow the instructions contained in the NOPMD. You will be informed in writing whether additional time has been granted.

If the medical exam identifies a condition that takes more than 30 days to address, you can temporarily decline being considered for appointment (this will remove you from consideration for the Academy class for which you were being considered) and ask to be restored to the eligibility list once your condition is resolved (you would be considered for a subsequent Academy class). The NOPMD will provide instructions on how decline being considered for appointment.

Q-31: What is the Candidate Medical Assessment Form?

A-31: The Candidate Medical Assessment Form is one of the forms you will be asked to fill out on the date of your first appointment for the medical exam. The Candidate Medical Assessment Form asks a number of questions about your medical history, including whether you currently take or have taken certain medications, or whether you currently have, or have a history of, certain:

- conditions;

- illnesses;
- medical procedures; or
- medical statuses.

The Candidate Medical Assessment Form also has space for you to provide additional information about any of the above, including whether you received medical treatment for the medical matters that you have reported.

Q-32: Will I automatically be disqualified if I disclose that I had (or have) a specific illness, condition, or medical procedure?

A-32: No. You will **not** be automatically disqualified from appointment as a Firefighter just because you disclose that you had (or have) a specific illness, condition, or medical procedure. Instead, this will be evaluated on an individual basis together with your medical history and results of the medical exam.

However, if you fail to disclose medical information or a condition that is being asked about on the Medical Assessment Form, you could be disqualified from appointment.

Q-33: Will I automatically be disqualified if I disclose that I was certified as disabled by the US Department of Veterans Affairs?

A-33: You must disclose whether you were certified as disabled by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. However, you will **not** be automatically disqualified from appointment as a Firefighter just because you disclose that you were certified as disabled by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Instead, this will be evaluated on an individual basis together with your medical history and results of the medical exam.

Q-34: Will I automatically be disqualified if I disclose that I was medically disqualified from service by another employer?

A-34: You must disclose whether you were medically disqualified from service by another employer. However, you will **not** be automatically disqualified from appointment as a Firefighter just because you disclose that you were medically disqualified by another employer. Instead, this will be evaluated on an individual basis together with your medical history and results of the medical exam.