

## MEDICAL EXAMINATION FAQs – PART 1

### MEDICAL EXAM GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **Q-1: What is the FDNY medical examination?**

A-1: The FDNY's Bureau of Health Services ("BHS") conducts a three-part evaluation: (1) a medical exam; (2) a psychological screening; and (3) a timed run. The first two parts – the medical exam and the psychological screening – take place on the same day at FDNY Headquarters, which is located at 9 MetroTech Center, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201. The timed run is conducted on a different day at the FDNY Fire Academy – after you pass the medical exam and the psychological screening – and is scheduled approximately 2 to 4 weeks before the start of the next Probationary Firefighter class. Candidates scheduled for the timed run will receive a letter from the Candidate Investigation Division ("CID").

#### **Q-2: Why do I need to be evaluated?**

A-2: The job of a Firefighter is physically and mentally demanding. For this reason, a thorough examination of each candidate is conducted to determine whether the candidate can safely fulfill the requirements of the job.

#### **Q-3: When will my medical exam take place?**

A-3: When you receive a letter from the FDNY Candidate Investigation Division ("CID") scheduling you for Intake, you will know that the FDNY has begun processing you. The date you have been scheduled for Intake will also appear in the [FDNY Candidate Portal](#).<sup>1</sup> CID schedules the initial medical exam, usually about one month after your Intake.

If any scheduling issues arise during this period of time or you become ill or injured, you must contact CID by sending an email to [CID@fdny.nyc.gov](mailto:CID@fdny.nyc.gov). If, after you have received your letter scheduling your medical exam at BHS, you need to change the date of the BHS appointment, send an email to CID. CID will send you a letter with your new appointment date. If you reschedule due to illness or injury, you may be required to bring medical documentation on the date of your medical exam.

#### **Q-4: Do I need to do anything to prepare for the medical exam if I just passed the Candidate Physical Agility Test ("CPAT") conducted by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services ("DCAS")?**

A-4: Yes, you need to prepare for the medical exam. While preparing for the CPAT will help you prepare for your medical exam, the CPAT and the medical exam are not the same test. Physical conditioning for firefighting is important, and the FDNY encourages you to build and

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<sup>1</sup> You may access the materials on the [Candidate Portal](#) once you have received a login to the Candidate Portal. If you have received a login and need technical assistance accessing the Candidate Portal, please send an email to [CandidatePortal\\_Support@fdny.nyc.gov](mailto:CandidatePortal_Support@fdny.nyc.gov)

maintain your physical fitness throughout your entire candidacy. 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 starting a weight loss regimen.

Also, while it is not typical, a period of more than one year can pass between the date of your CPAT and the date of your medical exam at BHS. 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-5: What should I do to physically prepare for the medical exam?**

A-5: First, you should familiarize yourself with the elements of the medical exam so you know what will be required of you. Read the [Firefighter Candidate Medical Examination Guidance \(“Medical Exam Guidance Document”\)](#) for a description of each portion of the medical exam and watch videos that show what happens during the Stairmill Test and the Pulmonary Function Test (“PFT”). You can access both the [Medical Exam Guidance Document](#) and the videos on the [JoinFDNY](#) website or from the [Candidate Portal](#).<sup>2</sup>

As you will see in the [“How to Take the Stairmill”](#) video, the stairmill machine is not like a stair stepper you might find at a gym. The main difference between a stairmill and a stair stepper is that your feet do not leave the pedals when using a stair stepper. On a stairmill, you will pick up your foot as the next step descends towards you. A stairmill is a better representation of climbing an actual staircase. It is important to practice on a stairmill similar to the one used for your medical exam or, if you do not have access to a stairmill, to practice in a stairwell. Practicing can help assure that you don’t fail because of a 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 routine exercises like running, biking, or stair climbing to get fit. You can access a video on running on the [JoinFDNY](#) website.

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.

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<sup>2</sup> All resources that describe the FDNY medical examination conducted by BHS can be found on the JoinFDNY webpage, which can be accessed at: <https://www.joinfdny.com/candidate-resources/fire/> Click on “Candidate Resources” in the menu and then click on “Go to Fire Resources.” You also may refer to the resources on the [FDNY Candidate Portal](#).

**Q-6: I just had an annual checkup that didn't turn up any issues. Can I just provide the results of the checkup?**

A-6: No. Regardless of your personal 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 (such as 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-7: How long is the medical exam?**

A-7: You will be required to arrive at BHS at 6:30 AM on the date of your appointment. You should expect to be at BHS until about 4:00 PM, although the exact amount of time may vary from candidate to candidate.

**Q-8: Do I need to be clean shaven for the medical exam?**

A-8: Firefighters must be able to maintain a proper seal in order to safely use a breathing mask. Safety standards prohibit any facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the mask and the skin. You will not be mask fit tested if you have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface and the skin. For additional information about the Mask Fit station refer to [FAQs Part 13 – Mask Fit Station](#).

**Q-9: What do I wear for the medical exam? Is there a place to change?**

A-9: You should bring or wear sneakers and modest, comfortable gym clothing, in anticipation of the stairmill test. If candidates need to change clothing, they may use the restroom.

**Q-10: Is secured storage available?**

A-10: There are no secure locker facilities available for candidates. You may place any personal items that you bring with you (including your wallet and cell phone) 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 you may be required to remove certain jewelry if it impedes any portion of the medical exam. You will be permitted to retrieve your bag upon completing your medical exam.

If you need to use your cell phone for an emergency during your medical examination, you will be escorted to the training room to use it.

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-11: What should I eat on the day of the medical exam? Should I bring any food with me?**

A-11: You may eat a light breakfast, but you are strongly encouraged to not eat one hour prior to your appointment. Bear in mind that the stairmill test involves aerobic activity and your blood will be tested. You should bring bottled water and a light snack, which you can eat after completing the blood work station. You should not bring lunch.

You should not consume tonic water, quinine water or other quinine product, or any poppy seed product on the day of your medical.

**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-12: Is there anything else I need to bring with me for the medical exam?**

A-12: You must bring:

- A valid (not expired) government photo ID (a list of valid forms of ID will be included on your medical scheduling letter);
- The scheduling letter from CID;
- Information that you will need to complete the computerized questionnaires about your medical and psychological history (a list of this information will be included on your medical scheduling letter);
- A list of your current medications (including name, dosage, and date you started taking the medication);
- If you have had orthopedic procedures or surgeries, an operative note and any other medical documentation;
- Immunization records (vaccination records for measles, mumps, rubella and hepatitis B) or positive titers – if available;
- A doctor's note, if you have taken a recent TB (PPD) test or have a history of positive PPD;
- Your eyeglasses or contact lenses (you will be allowed to wear them during testing at the Vision station);
- A towel; and
- A pen.

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

**Q-13: Can someone accompany me during any part of the medical exam?**

A-13: No. You are not permitted to bring anyone with you for any part of the medical exam.

**Q-14: What should I do if I become ill during the medical exam?**

A-14: If you feel sick and don't think you can complete the medical exam, you must let a BHS staff member or 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 on another day. Please read the [Medical Exam Guidance Document](#) for further instructions regarding the Stairmill Test.

**Q-15: What happens during the medical exam?**

A-15: 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 that can be accessed from the [JoinFDNY](#) webpage or the [Candidate Portal](#).

**Q-16: Can I see the forms I will have to fill out?**

A-16: Most forms, including the [computerized medical history questionnaire](#) referred to in Q18 below, are available on the [JoinFDNY](#) webpage and the [Candidate Portal](#). These forms must be completed during your visit to BHS. An FDNY employee will describe these forms to you on the day of the 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 exam and will assist the FDNY in determining whether you are medically fit for appointment as a Firefighter. Failure to report any condition, illness, medical procedure, or any other requested information can result in your disqualification.

**Q-17: What are the computerized questionnaires?**

A-17: There are two computerized questionnaires that ask a number of questions about your medical and psychological history, including whether you currently take or have taken certain medications, or whether you currently have, or have a history of, certain:

- conditions;
- illnesses; or
- medical procedures.

**Q-18: I have one or more medical conditions or issues. Will I be disqualified from becoming a Firefighter?**

A-18: Maybe. The FDNY evaluates candidates on an individualized basis. What may be a medically satisfactory result for one candidate 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 receive a Candidate Discharge Report listing any additional testing that is required. If you fail to disclose medical information or a condition, you could be disqualified. If are disqualified, you will receive a Notice of Proposed Disqualification (“NOPD”). For complete information on this process, please refer to the [Medical Exam Guidance Document](#) on the [JoinFDNY](#) webpage or the [Candidate Portal](#).

**Q-19: I take prescription drugs for one or more medical conditions or issues. Will I be disqualified from becoming a Firefighter?**

A-19: Maybe. As explained in A-18 above, the FDNY evaluates candidates on an individualized basis. If a medication is inconsistent with firefighting duties, the FDNY will disqualify you and send you an NOPD. However, only your physician can make the determination as to which medication is best for your health.

**Q-20: Will I automatically be disqualified if I disclose that I was certified as disabled by the US Department of Veterans Affairs?**

A-20: No. 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. You must disclose this information, which will be evaluated together with your medical history and results of the medical exam.

**Q-21: Will I automatically be disqualified if I disclose that I was medically disqualified from employment by another employer?**

A-21: No. You will *not* be automatically disqualified from appointment as a Firefighter just because you disclose that you were medically disqualified by another employer. You must disclose this information, which will be evaluated together with your medical history and results of the medical exam.

**Q-22: Will I know if I passed the medical exam the same day?**

A-22: No. An FDNY physician must review the results from each station (including laboratory results which are not available on the day of the medical exam) before a decision can be made, so they cannot advise you of your results the same day.

**Q-23: I received a Candidate Discharge Report. What does this mean?**

A-23: All candidates who complete the initial medical exam receive a Candidate Discharge Report. The Candidate Discharge Report specifies any medical conditions that need to be addressed and any follow-up actions that you are required to take so that the FDNY can make a decision as to whether you are medically qualified. If there are medical conditions that need to be addressed or follow-up actions that you are required to take, this means you are in “reserved status” for your medical exam. The content of the Candidate Discharge Report will depend on your unique circumstances:

- If you do not have any medical conditions that require you to take further action at the time of the initial medical exam, the Candidate Discharge Report will indicate (1) you are in reserved status for your laboratory results; and (2) explain the actions that need to be taken to follow up on the PPD skin test for tuberculosis.
- If you have a medical condition that *could* medically disqualify you from appointment at the time of the initial medical exam, the Candidate Discharge Report will explain the additional diagnostic tests you need and/or the information you must provide.

If, for some reason, you are unable to complete the medical exam on your initial appointment date, you will be rescheduled to take the medical exam on a different day and will not receive a Candidate Discharge Report.

For a full description of the types of additional diagnostic testing, refer to the [Medical Exam Guidance Document](#) or [FAQs Part 15 – Candidate Follow-Up Actions](#) on the [JoinFDNY](#) webpage or the [Candidate Portal](#).

**Q-24: What happens if I do not follow the instructions in the Candidate Discharge Report?**

A-24: If you do not follow the instructions in the Candidate Discharge Report, your processing will be delayed and/or you may be disqualified. Any delay in providing information, including test results, will prevent the FDNY from making a determination about whether you are medically qualified for the position of Firefighter. If you are in reserved status (see Q-23 above) for one year, you will need to retake the medical exam.

**Q-25: How do I know if I have completed the medical exam?**

A-25: You can access the FDNY [Candidate Portal](#) to check on your progress from the CPAT through the timed run. Click on the “View My Progress” button. When the “Medical” button is green, you have completed the exam. Once you complete all of the stages of the hiring process, CID will schedule you for the timed run.

Please note that if your medical status changes at some point after the progress bar had indicated the medical examination was complete, the progress bar will then change to yellow to indicate that your status is “pending” and you will need to resolve any issues before you proceed further in the process.

**Q-26: How do I know if I have been disqualified?**

A-26: You will receive a Notice of Proposed Disqualification, or NOPD, stating that the FDNY has reached a tentative conclusion that you are not medically qualified to be a Firefighter. This is not a final decision. If you receive a NOPD, you will have 30 days from the date of the NOPD to respond. **Please carefully read the NOPD and follow any instructions.**

**Q-27: I have received a NOPD and I need more time to respond. What can I do?**

A-27: If you need more time to respond to the NOPD, please follow the instructions contained in the notice. 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 and cannot be addressed with the time of an extension or an extension is not granted, you can temporarily decline being considered for appointment and ask DCAS to restore you to the civil service eligibility list once your condition is resolved. The NOPD will provide instructions on how to decline being considered for appointment.

**Q-28: Who do I contact if I want to seek a reasonable accommodation due to a disability or my religion?**

A-28: Please contact the FDNY EEO Office at 718-999-1446.