

CITY OF CLEVELAND
MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR PRE-PLACEMENT MEDICAL EVALUATIONS OF
POLICE AND FIRE CANDIDATES

Purpose: *Identify medical guidelines to highlight potentially disqualifying medical conditions. The standards provided herein and adopted by the City of Cleveland were established through a consensus development process approved by a diverse task group of physicians, first responders, executives, and municipal managers with input from content experts and advocacy groups that relate to topic areas. Adoption of these standards does not intend to urge action that is not in compliance with applicable laws, and this document may not be construed as doing so.*

Section I: Purpose of the Pre-Placement Exam

All candidates for firefighter and police officer positions are required to undergo medical evaluation to ascertain the presence of any medical conditions that would prevent the individual from performing the essential job functions of the position without posing significant risk to the safety and health of himself/herself or others. The medical exam will also assess the ability of the candidate to use required personal protective equipment and other required equipment (e.g. SCBA for firefighter or use of firearm for police). In addition to taking into account the essential job functions of police and fire personnel, these medical standards also incorporate the unique stresses and requirements of the respective safety force positions as detailed in the Functional Job Duties and Responsibilities established by the City of Cleveland Civil Service Commission.¹

Pre-placement medical exams also serve to establish an individual’s baseline health status prior to participation in training or performing the duties of the position for which he/she is hired. In addition, determining the candidate’s baseline cardiovascular and respiratory health status is a requirement of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Board. Medical determinations following completion of the pre-placement medical exam are formulated using established opinions from multiple health care specialties, federal regulatory bodies, national agency guidance on medical standards and laws promulgated by federal and state authorities.

Medical information collected as part of the pre-placement medical exam is considered confidential and shall not be released by the examining medical provider without the specific written consent of the candidate. The examining medical provider shall report the results of the medical evaluation to the candidate, including any medical condition(s) found during the medical evaluation and the recommendation whether the candidate is medically certified for the position of a firefighter or police officer or requires additional evaluation.

Upon completion of the pre-placement medical exam, the examining medical provider shall inform the employer of the medical determination. Such notification shall not include

¹ See *National Fire Protection Association, Standards on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments* (2022 Edition); *Guidance for the Medical Evaluation of Law Enforcement Officers, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (2015 Edition); *Ohio Revised Code Section 742.38*.

protected health information (PHI). The following statements shall be used to inform the employer of the candidate's status:

- (1) May work without limitations/restrictions
- (2) May work only with specified limitations/restrictions.
- (3) Unable to meet physical requirements of the essential job demands.
- (4) Determination pending.*If the initial determination of medical certification is pending following the pre-placement medical exam, the candidate will be advised of the necessary additional medical information or evaluation needed by the examining medical provider. Any additional medical evaluation, treatment or information required for making a final determination regarding the candidate's medical certification shall be at the expense of the candidate and under the direction of his/her personal medical provider. Once the required additional medical information has been reviewed by the examining medical provider, a final medical certification determination will be made and provided to the employer in writing.

Section II: Pre-Placement Exam Components

The pre-placement medical evaluation shall include the following:

1. A comprehensive medical history including, but not limited to, past and current medical conditions/illnesses, past and current mental health conditions, injuries, hospitalizations, surgeries, past exposure risks, medication and supplement use (prescription and over-the-counter), substance use (legal and illegal), allergies and immunizations.
2. A physical examination that at a minimum includes evaluation of the following:
 - a. Height and weight
 - b. Vital signs: pulse, respiratory rate, blood pressure and temperature
 - c. Vision testing in both eyes: Corrected and uncorrected distance and near visual acuity, visual fields, depth perception and color vision.
 - d. Other testing including audiogram, spirometry, chest x-ray (PA and lateral views), urine drug screen, breath alcohol test, 12-lead EKG and exercise stress test
 - e. Laboratory testing including: routine urinalysis, lipid panel, comprehensive metabolic panel, complete blood count and hepatitis B surface antibody.
 - f. A physical examination by a medical provider that shall include evaluation of the following:
 - i. Head, eyes, ears, nose, mouth and throat
 - ii. Cardiovascular system
 - iii. Respiratory system
 - iv. Gastrointestinal system
 - v. Genitourinary system
 - vi. Musculoskeletal system

- vii. Endocrine and metabolic system
- viii. Neurological system
- ix. Dermatological system

3. During the pre-placement medical exam, candidates will be offered the opportunity to voluntarily receive a Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) and hepatitis B vaccine.

Section III: Additional Information on Testing During the Pre-Placement Exam

The following provides additional information on the specific testing requirements on the pre-placement physical exam:

1. Vision Testing: The following vision deficits found present during the medical exam are considered disqualifying –
 - Far visual acuity worse than 20/40 binocular, corrected with contact lenses or glasses, or far visual acuity worse than 20/100 binocular for wearers of hard contacts or glasses, or new (i.e. less than six months of continuous use) soft contact lens wearers, uncorrected
 - Far visual acuity worse than 20/100 in the worse eye, corrected or uncorrected
 - Monocular vision, stereopsis without fusional capacity, night blindness, or loss of peripheral vision resulting in horizontal field of vision less than 110 degrees in each eye
 - Horizontal peripheral vision of less than 110 degrees in the better eye or any condition that significantly affects peripheral vision in both eyes
 - Near visual acuity of less than 20/40 binocular, corrected or uncorrected
 - Additional vision deficits may be considered disqualifying if found to interfere with the ability of the candidate to perform the essential functions of the position without posing a significant safety and health risk to themselves, coworkers, or the public
2. Audiometry Testing: The following hearing deficits found present during the medical exam are considered disqualifying –
 - Hearing ability in the better ear, without use of a hearing assistance device, worse than an average of 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, and 3000 Hz
 - Additional hearing deficits may be considered disqualifying if found to interfere with the ability of the candidate to perform the essential functions of the position without posing a significant safety and health risk to themselves, coworkers, or the public

3. Spirometry testing: A candidate must meet the following minimum performance on pulmonary function testing –
 - Forced vital capacity (FVC) and forced expiratory volume in 1 second (FEV1) of at least 70 percent predicted
 - FEV1/FVC at least 70 percent
4. Exercise stress test: A candidate must meet the following minimum performance on the exercise stress test –
 - Demonstrated aerobic capacity of at least 12 METs

Section VI: Information on Specific Medical Conditions

As stated in Section I, the purpose of the pre-placement medical evaluation is to determine whether there are medical conditions that would prevent the individual from performing the essential job functions of the position without posing significant risk to the safety and health of him/herself or others. Therefore, any medical condition that precludes an individual's ability to safely perform essential job functions may be disqualifying or may result in the recommendation of restrictions on work duties. It is not possible to list all of the potentially disqualifying or limiting medical conditions for firefighter or police candidates.

The following are a few examples of medical and/or physical conditions that may lead to medical disqualification or limitations on medical certification:

1. Vision impairments that cannot be improved or corrected with use of corrective lenses or refractive surgery (e.g. LASIK) such that minimum vision requirements are met
2. Any medical condition that prevents the candidate from wearing required personal protective equipment (e.g. SCBA/respirator) or use required equipment (e.g. firearm use)
3. Any medical condition that places the individual at risk for sudden incapacitation (e.g. epilepsy, certain cardiac conditions)
4. Use of certain medications on chronic (continuous) or frequent basis (e.g. anticoagulants, narcotics)
5. Any chronic medical conditions that are not currently under control (e.g. hypertension, diabetes) or are unstable or severe such that the individual is not able to safely perform the essential functions and required duties of a police officer or firefighter. Other chronic conditions that are disqualifying are those that are progressive in nature such that they may be expected to prevent the individual from safely performing the essential functions and required duties of a police officer or firefighter.