



THE POLICE FITNESS ASSESSMENT

RCMP's Physical Employment Standard Modernization Project

From Obstacle Courses to Operational Readiness

RCMP Fitness & Health Promotion
2026

Presented by
Leslie Frei
National Fitness & Health Promotion Manager

Canada

OBJECTIVES

In this session I will share;

1. RCMP Fitness and Health Promotion program goals
2. The Police Fitness Assessment Project & it's connection to the FHP program goals.
3. The link between physical employment standards, performance, safety, & health.
4. Lessons learned in change management.
5. Hidden treasures offered by a PES anchored program.

I. CONTEXT



RCMP Fitness & Health Promotion Program

Mission: Empower Employees in the Pursuit of Health and Fitness for Duty

Vision: An Exceptionally Fit & Resilient RCMP

Program Pillars:

1. *Prepare* members for the physical demands of police duty
2. *Support* employee fitness and health
3. *Engage* employees in a culture of fitness & health

RCMP Fitness & Health Promotion Program

🚩 22 CSEP-CEP Fitness Professionals + 10 Academy Fitness Coaches

🚩 Policy

- ✓ *Fitness for Duty*
- ✓ *Health Promotion for Employees*



PES – PHYSICAL EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

- ✓ PARE
- ✓ POPAT
- ✓ PREP
- ✓ COPAT
- ✓ PFA

- ✗ PUSH UPS
- ✗ TREADMILL RUN
- ✗ BODY COMPOSITION ANALYSIS
- ✗ MAX BENCH PRESS
- ✗ COOPERS RUN

PES – PHYSICAL EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

PES

- ✓ Rationally connected to the job
- ✓ Performance is necessary; accommodation cannot occur.
- ✓ Adopted in Good Faith
- ✓ Meets CLC obligations

NOT A PES

- ✗ Gender norms
- ✗ Ignoring Accommodation Options
- ✗ Arbitrary or Traditional Standard
- ✗ “averaging” performance standards

RCMP “THEN”

- 🚩 (1873) Northwest Mounted Police founded “to bring order to the lawless countryside of the Northwest”
- 🚩 (1883) Royal Canadian Mounted Police “Depot” training police cadets in Regina, Saskatchewan
- 🚩 (1918) RCMP - federal enforcement throughout most of the country.
- 🚩 (2023) RCMP provides law enforcement in communities & federally across Canada. RCMP officers account for 30% of Canada’s law enforcement officers.



Canada

RCMP "NOW"

22% WOMEN
12% VISIBLE MINORITIES
8% INDIGINEOUS

19,000+ SERVING
LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICERS
11,000 CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

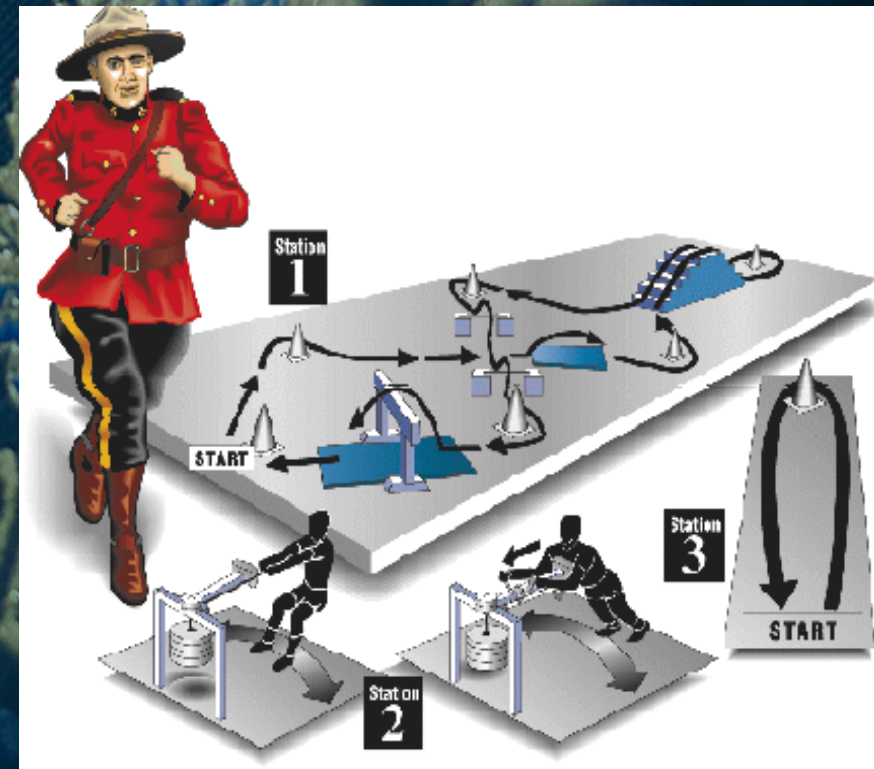
2.7 Million calls for
Service per year

1200 New Hires per year
700 Police Detachments



PES - THEN

- 1980 - Health Related Components of Fitness testing for recruits
- 1990 - RCMP first PES for policing in Canada (Farenholtz & Rhodes; Bonneau)
- 2007 - PES revalidation (Anderson & Plecas)
- 2015 – FHP Manager – strategic planning
- 2016 - PES removed from the recruiting process
- 2017 - MOU with CFMWS Human Performance (Girard, Gagnon, RCMP Research committee)
- 2023 – Launch of Gold Standard PFA Cadet Training
- 2024 – Launch of PFA Field for Regular Member



PES - NOW

- **Founded on International PES established process and Canadian legal context**
- **Scenario-based Discrete Item Tasks For Employment**
- **Simplified Field Assessments For Pre-employment And Regular Fitness Accountability**
- **Updated representative workforce**
- **Designed with adaptability and flexibility in mind**





POLICY

3. 4. Police Fitness Assessment as a Requirement

3. 4. 1. The PFA is a requirement for all RMs. The PFA supports the physical activities required for police work and is based on task analysis conducted with RMs.

3. 4. 2. All RMs are required to perform the PFA every three years unless they are medically exempted from police work or have medical limitations and restrictions for certain aspects of police work as defined by an RCMP-designated physician. When an RM is medically cleared for police work, he/she is deemed medically cleared for the PFA.

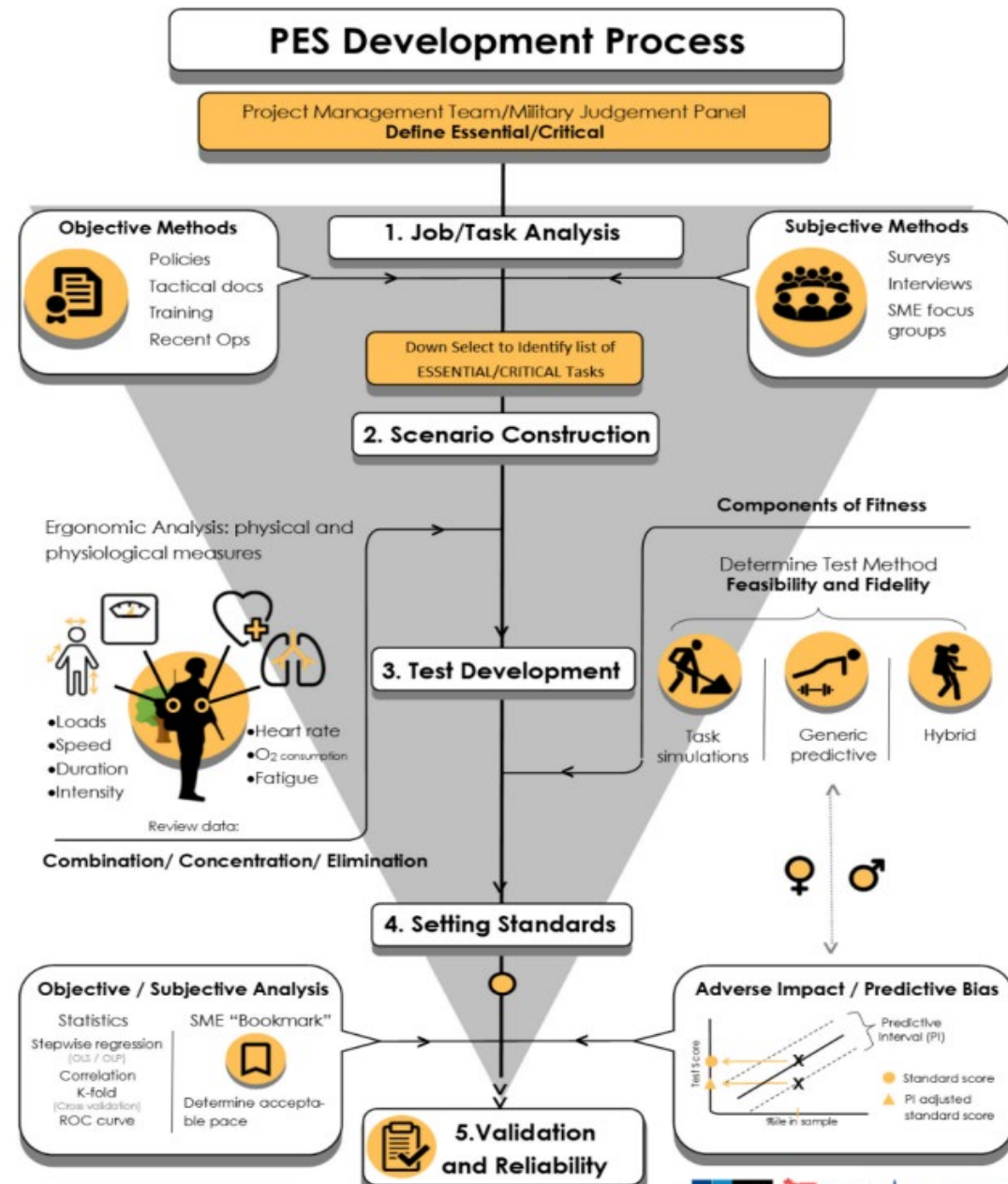




II. THE PROJECT

Five Phase Project

1. Identify the physically demanding tasks of policing which are common & essential
2. Measure the physical demands of the task
3. Develop an assessment tool
4. Determine Standards
5. Validation & Reliability



What are the COMMON, ESSENTIAL, PHYSICALLY DEMANDING TASKS?

- RCMP Task Bank Review (from 314 > 14 > 7 > 4)
- Incident Reports
- SME Focus Groups with relevant experience



SME FOCUS GROUPS

RCMP Project
TASK SPECIFIC SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (SME)
Administer assistance in a natural disaster or emergency situation

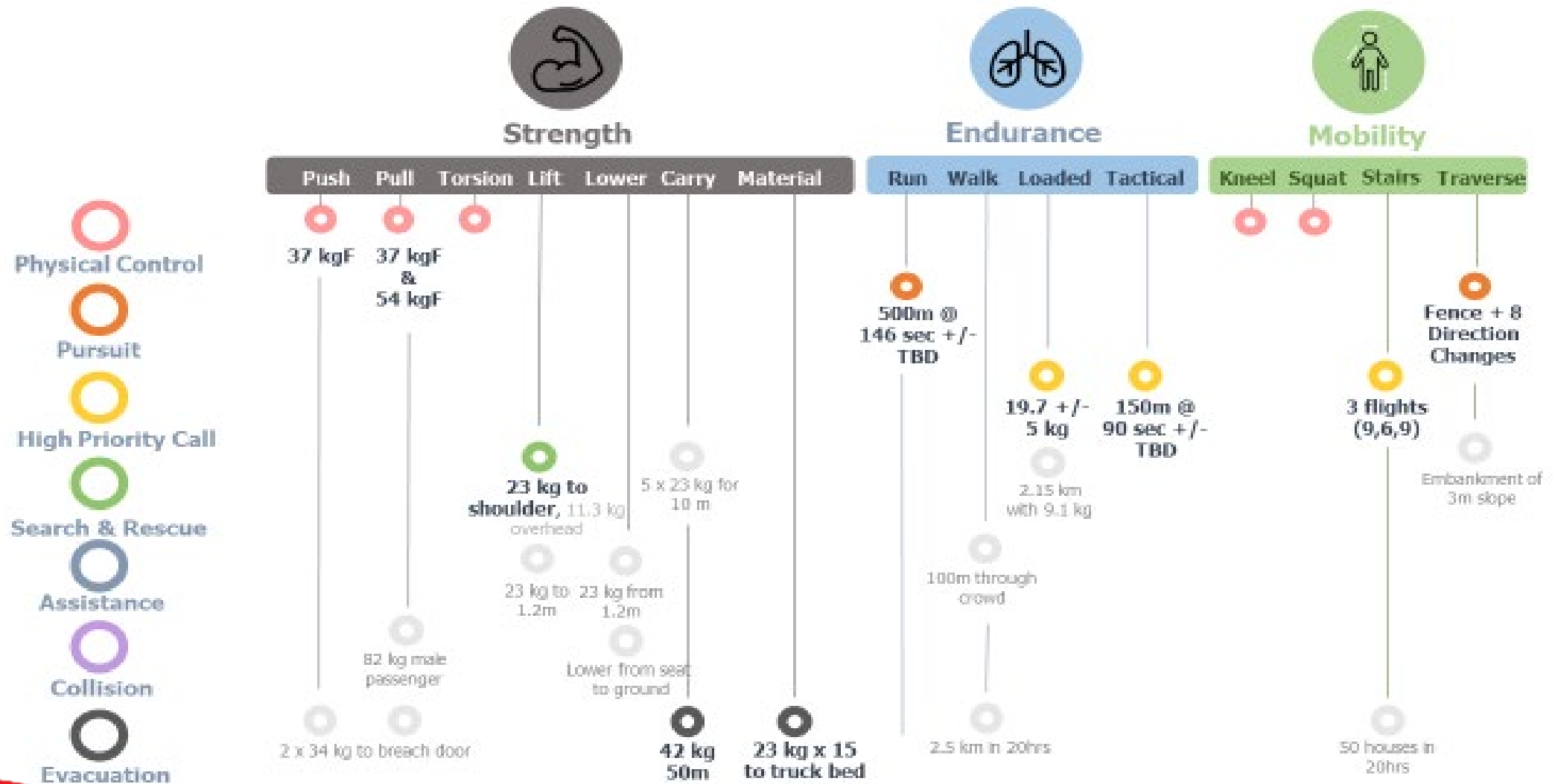
Please answer YES or NO for each of the nine statements.
Your answers must refer to the above task.
See definitions and criteria listed below.

	YES	NO
1. Recent and relevant experience performing the task independently during front line operational duties		
2. Recent and relevant experience performing the task during a critical incident		
3. Recent and relevant experience delivering formal training on the task (i.e. teaching courses, developing training curricula, etc.)		
4. Be acknowledged as an effective, experienced performer on the required task		
5. Experience in a position of leadership where you have directed and observed subordinates successfully perform the task in an operational setting		
6. Have witnessed the task being performed successfully in an operational setting and can attest to the reasons for and consequences of this performance		
7. Have witnessed the task being performed unsuccessfully in an operational setting and can attest to the reasons for and consequences of this performance		
8. Performed the required task with an undesired outcome and is able to identify why		
9. Experience witnessing and/or performing the task using several techniques and can comment on the advantages and disadvantages of these techniques		

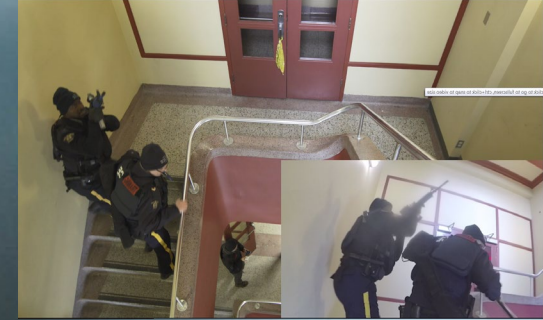
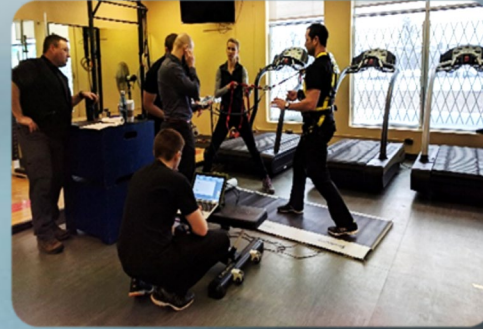


- Pursuing a client on foot (**running**) for 500 m where directional changes and a fence climb are encountered.
- “Executing a warrant at a bar to a client that is resisting arrest” **Pushing & pulling a 80kg+ client, pulling an 80kg+ client off their centre of mass**
- Evacuating a hospital during a natural disaster emergency. **Lifting and carrying** patients and equipment from a hospital.
- Entering a school to respond to an active shooter. **Running, carrying** and **stair climbing** in Hard Body Armour weight

HOW DO WE MEASURE?



TEST & STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT



RCMP Project
TASK SPECIFIC SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (SME)
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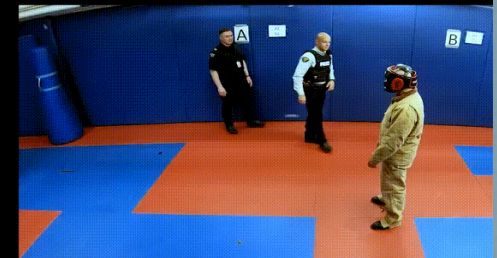
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RCMP FITNESS
TASK



PFA BFOR



PFA FIELD



NEW PFA



Model Summary



Foot Pursuit



Physical Control



Emergency Assistance⁺



High Priority Call

**Scenario/
Call**

Pursue a client who threatens to harm his ex-partner and runs to house.

Single officer executes an outstanding warrant at bar with an **actively-resistant** client.

1. Hospital evacuation of patients.
2. Loading of medical equipment.
3. Rescue of lost child.

911: Suspected gunmen in school. Multiple gunshots during approach.

BFOR Test

500 m with 1 fence jump (5') and 11 directional changes.

1. "M" course with 37 kg (82 lbs).
2. Manikin Pull with 54 kg (119 lbs).

1. 3 x 50 m trap bar carries 39 kg (86 lbs).
2. 15 x 23 kg (50 lbs) lifts to 1 m.
3. 1 x 23 kg (50 lbs) lift to 1.4 m.

150 m course with 25 stairs.
SO1* with high-risk gear = 20 kg (44 lbs).

**Regular
Member
Field Test**

500 m
direction changes TBD

Medicine ball assessment

1. Replace truck bed with line on wall.
2. Replace various objects with 23 kg (50 lbs) bags.





Canada
9.985 Million Km²





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Project founders; Gaetan Girard, Patrick Gagnon, OHSB, Senior Executive Committee
- Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services Human Performance
 - Rachel Blacklock, Dr. Martin Poirier, Michael Cao et al.
- RCMP Division Fitness and Health Promotion Advisors
- RCMP Training Sections, PRTC, Police Defensive Tactics, Police Fitness Training, Police Interventions Unit, Depot Div, Learning & Development, Technology Strategists, OHSB, Strategic Research Branch, Depot Works, and nearly 800 RM/Cadet Volunteers.
- National Police Federation
- Canadian Forces 17 Wing Winnipeg, 12 Wing Shearwater, 3 CDSB Edmonton, Le Regiment de Hull Gatineau



Finished Product

PFA Field for RCMP Regular Members

[RCMP Police Fitness Assessment video](#)



STRATEGIES & LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Senior Leadership Support
- ✓ Include your budget in the project plan.
- ✓ Hire experts.
- ✓ Assemble a representative stakeholder team.
- ✓ Recognize the realities around the work environment.
- ✓ Stay focused on the goal by keeping the original problem at the forefront of the project.
- ✓ Prepare communications early on and be consistent.
- ✓ Prepare to adapt.



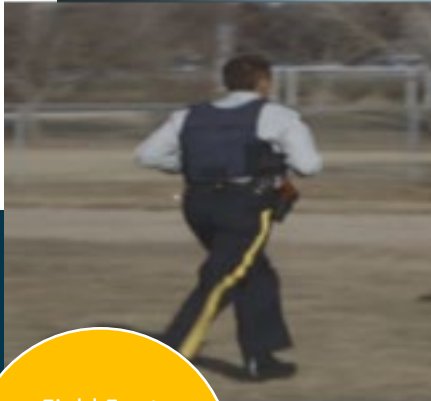


III. PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

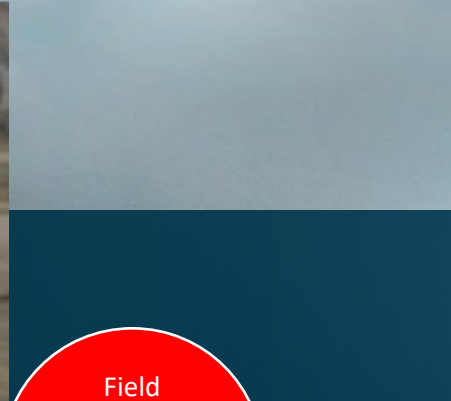
DISCRETE ITEM MODEL – ADAPTABLE AND FLEXIBLE



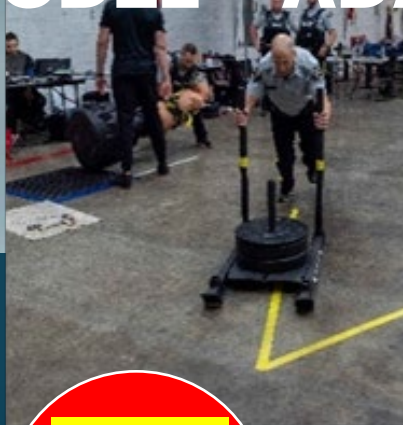
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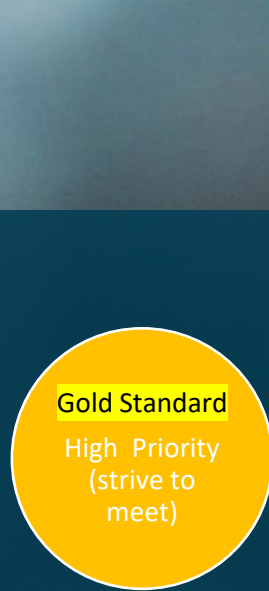
Field Foot Pursuit (strive to meet)



Field Emergency Assistance (meet/does not meet)



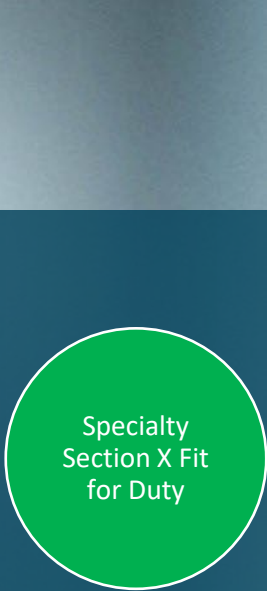
Gold Standard Physical Control (meet/does not meet)



Gold Standard High Priority (strive to meet)



CP Position Change Task (meet/does not meet)



Specialty Section X Fit for Duty



Canada





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3. 5. 1. Minimum Police Fitness Assessment Standard for Specialized Units

3. 5. 1. 1. The PFA (refer to the [Police Fitness Assessment](#) web page) is a standard for consideration of, and continuation in, the following specialized units:

- 3. 5. 1. 1. 1. Protective Policing (bodyguard duties);
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 2. Tactical Troops;
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 3. Aircraft Protection;
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 4. Underwater Recovery;
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 5. Musical Ride;
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 6. Explosive Disposal Unit;
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 7. Specialty Dog Handlers;
 - 3. 5. 1. 1. 8. Crime Scene Methods and Procedures Analyst.
3. 5. 1. 2. RMs in these units must meet the PFA minimum standard each calendar year.
3. 5. 1. 3. It is the RM's responsibility to be compliant with the minimum PFA standard required for his/her unit.



Pursuit on Foot

For Success



Running above lactic threshold



Distance running 10min+, talking in sentences is difficult

Sprinting



After warm-up, do a few 100-200meter sprints

VO2 max at approximately 42 ml/kg/min (stage 7 on the beep test)



Aerobic exercise
1)long easy,
2)shorter more intense
3) intervals

Agile



Build adaptability; vary your training surface, conditions, modes

Reserve available for subsequent tasks



Equip with multiple fitness 'tools'. Integrate systems.

Physical Control of a Client

For Success

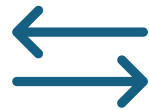


Power to move a 180lb client off their centre of mass

Muscular **Strength** to escort them in the direction of your control

Muscular **endurance** to sustain a longer altercation

Power to off-balance a 180lb client.



Powerful pushes and pulls



Strength Training – targeting your body weight +



Repeated efforts (push-ups, pull-ups, etc)



Explosive drills 1x/week

Emergency Assistance For Success



Workday tolerance



Increase non-exercise activity & reduce sitting

Running/urgency



Mix bouts of running with other fitness activities 1x/week

Repeated lifting



Squats, Deadlifts 1x/week. Mobility 2x/week

Lifting and Carrying



Farmer's carry, full body activities (get-ups, squat-to-press) 1x/wk

BENEFITS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

- ✓ Regular police training may decrease police officer sick days.
- ✓ Regular fitness assessments can motivate to exercise and slow the effects of ageing on health and performance.
- ✓ Placing PFA within Block Training encourages regular members to prepare, thereby increasing fitness and reducing risk for injury.



AUXILLARY BENEFITS

- ✓ Well-trained and fit police officers may also improve their officer presence, an attribute that has the potential to lower the level of intervention during incidents requiring use of force
- ✓ Physically active police officers improve their ability to respond effectively to high-stress events and are better equipped to manage the mental load of policing



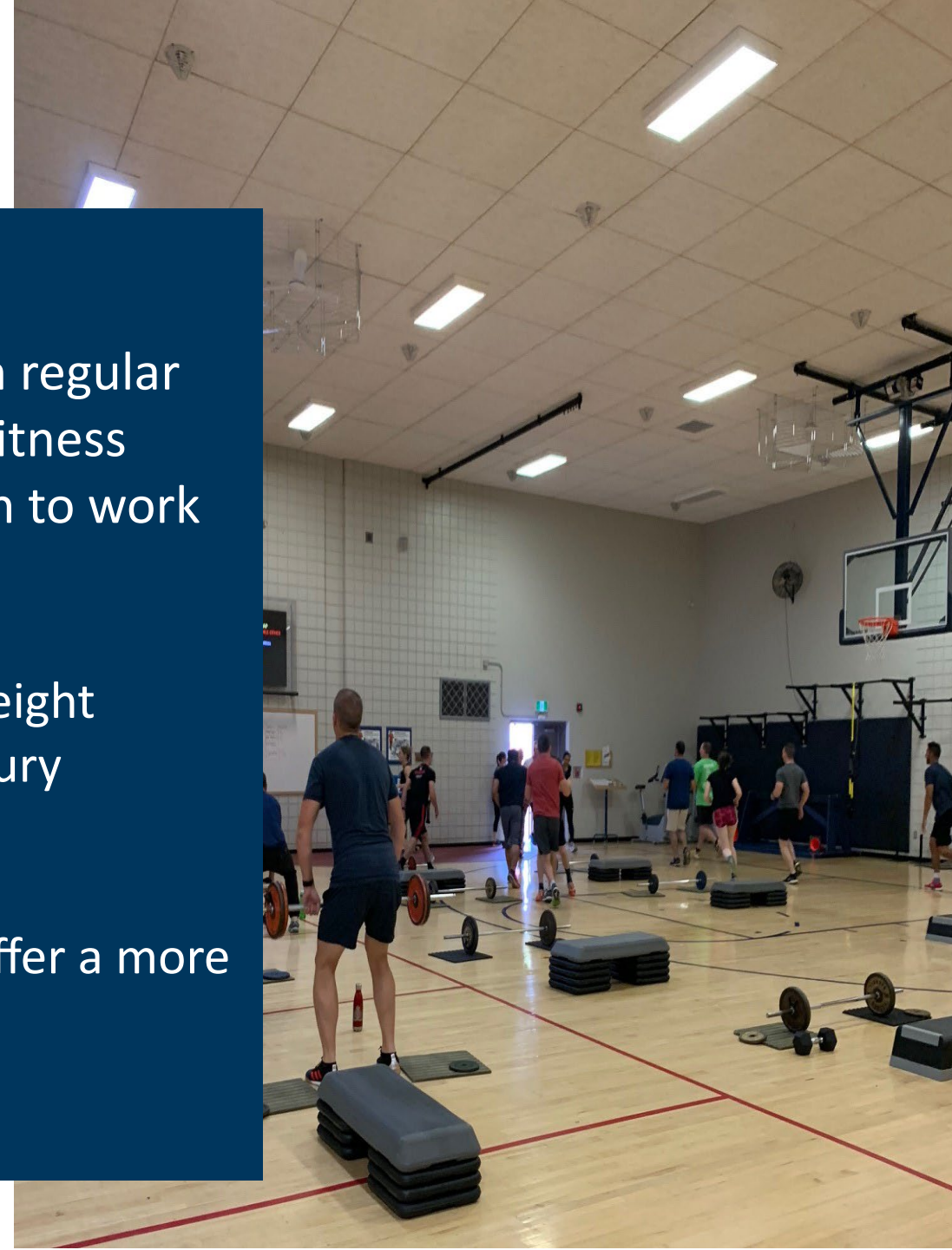
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- ✓ In Canada, physically active employees take 27% less sick days.
- ✓ In an RCMP sample of over 4200 regular members, those that performed as little as 60 minutes of physical activity per week took less than half the sick days of those members who reported as inactive.
- ✓ A 15% increase in physical activity can reduce depression health care costs by 13%. There is a 30% risk reduction in depression for physically active Canadian adults.



FITNESS & SAFETY

- ✓ Where injuries cannot be prevented, participation in regular physical activity, especially if coupled with a higher fitness level, can reduce recovery time and expediate return to work or return to duty.
- ✓ The IACP reported police officers with healthy body weight missed almost half as many days work following an injury compared to those overweight.
- ✓ Those engaged in fitness training were less likely to suffer a more severe injury



HIDDEN TREASURES OF A PES

- ✓ A FIT-FOR-DUTY requirement fosters access, funding, opportunity, accountability frameworks, and improved health and safety.
- ✓ Improved operations, reward and recognition, health and well-being are the benefits for employees.
- ✓ Cost reductions, operationally ready employees, and healthy workplace culture are the organizational benefit.



PES and Program Pillars

1. Identify Minimum Safe Standards

A PES identifies the minimum safe standard for the task, helping prepare the employee for the physical demands of duty.

PES and Program Pillars

2. Support Growth and Development:

With a PES established, the police fitness program is then designed to provide policies, programs, and tools that optimize employee performance & health beyond the minimal standard.



PES and Program Pillars

3. Engage in a Culture of Fitness

- Building effective fitness culture requires support, opportunity, and empathy.
- Fostering a culture of fitness helps nudge managers to adopt workplace practices in support of fitness
- Culture instills a responsibility within the cadre to uphold fitness and health.
- An agency's fitness culture can benefit from a supportive approach that recognizes and rewards regular fitness habits.

A PES policy or program that feels punitive can become discouraging for police officers already under multiple work and health pressures.



Supervisor Support for Fitness & Health



- **Fitness-for-duty is a safety issue.**
- **Act as an enabler**
- **Demonstrate an interest; are your employees taking time for fitness and health?**
“As your manager I share in the responsibility of your safety, fitness-for-duty, and well-being. If you don't have what you need to stay fit, let's discuss how I can support you.”
- **Apply general expectations globally**
“I support you in making time to move each day. On busy days, take a 10 minute walk; on quieter days, do a workout. Do something, even if it's stretching at your desk.”



THANK YOU

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and Health Promotion Manager



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada



Empowering you in pursuit of
health and fitness for duty



RCMP FITNESS
GRC CONDITION
PHYSIQUE

Canada



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