



ACT Rural Fire Service  
Standard Operating Procedure 4.3  
**Work Capacity Test**

**4.3**  
Service  
Management

### Purpose

This procedure outlines the physical fitness and work capacity requirements and processes to meet the operational fieldwork conditions of the ACT Rural Fire Service.

For the wellbeing and safety of personnel, brigades are to participate in the fitness assessment program on an annual cyclic basis.

### Operating Procedure

In order to keep a fitness test valid, reliable and fair, and to also ensure the safety of the participant, it is important that the same procedures are followed each time an assessment is conducted. Further information can be obtained from the Work Capacity Test, Administrators Guide (Attachment A).

### Fitness Categories

**Light:** Duties mainly involving non field based operational activity where light physical exertion requiring basic good health can be expected. Activities may include operating a vehicle, long hours of work, as well as some bending and light lifting. Individuals can almost always govern the extent and pace of their physical activity.

**Moderate:** Duties involving field work that requires complete control of all physical faculties and may include considerable walking over irregular ground, standing for long periods of time, lifting moderate to heavy weights (generally 11-20kgs), climbing bending, twisting and reaching. Occasional demands may be required for moderately strenuous activities in emergencies over long periods of time. Individuals usually, but not always, can set the pace of their work. This is the minimum level of fitness for active fire fighters.

**Arduous:** Duties involving field work that requires physical performance calling for above average endurance and conditioning such as remote area fire fighting. These duties include a demand for strenuous activities in emergencies under adverse environmental conditions and over extended periods of time. Requirements include strenuous walking, climbing, jumping, twisting, bending and lifting heavy weight (occasional above 20kgs). The pace of work typically is set by the emergency situation and may often be beyond the individual's control.

### Work Capacity Test

Field studies have shown that performance on the tests is significantly related to performance in emergency worker tasks, including prolonged fire fighting. The nature of



**ACT Rural Fire Service  
Standard Operating Procedure 4.3  
Work Capacity Test**

**4.3**  
Service  
Management

the test is an excellent indicator of the capacity to perform prolonged work under adverse conditions, with reserve to respond to emergency situations.

There are different test requirements for each of the different fitness categories (see table below). Each fitness requirement has different distances to walk with different pack weights in different times. The ratio of distance, weight and time have been determined following extensive USA studies and confirmed for Australian conditions following further testing in Australia.

Work Category	Test	Distance	Pack Weight	Time
Light	Walk Test	1.6km	None	16mins
Moderate	Pack Test	3.2km	11kg	30mins
Arduous	Pack Test	4.8km	20kg	45mins

### **Annual cyclic Basis**

Members are to participate in the fitness test on an annual cyclic basis. Any member who has not passed the fitness test, at the appropriate level, within a 15 month period is not permitted to be involved in any operational activity, this includes incident attendance and operational training activities (e.g. live fire training).

### **Failure to undertake/pass the test**

Members who fail to undertake the fitness test or do not pass the test are not permitted to be involved in any operational activity, this includes incident attendance and operational training activities (e.g. live fire training).

If a member fails a higher level category of the test but would have passed a lower category (based on time, distance and weight), then, they will be deemed to have passed the lower level category and will be able to undertake the task associated with that category. E.g. a member who is undertaking the Arduous test and passes the 3.2km mark in under 30 minutes but doesn't reach the 4.8km distance in under 45 minutes will be deemed to have passed moderate.

There is no limit to the number of times a member may try to pass any category of the fitness test.

### **New Recruits**

New recruits are to undertake the fitness test prior to undertaking the practical elements or assessment activities of the Basic Fire-fighter course. This will occur during the course; however recruits are permitted to undertake the fitness test with their brigades prior to the course.



ACT Rural Fire Service  
Standard Operating Procedure 4.3  
**Work Capacity Test**

**4.3**  
Service  
Management

**Minimum fitness level for RFS activities**

Below is a table providing examples of the type of work associated with each fitness category. This list is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the descriptions of fitness categories above. Any questions regarding what category of fitness is required for an activity should be referred to the Chief Officer.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>RFS Activity/Position</b>
Light	Working in an Incident Control Centre Aviation Radio Operator
Moderate	Fire fighter Ranked Officer Air Observer Interstate Deployments
Arduous	Remote Area Fire fighter Rapid Aerial Response Fire fighter Extended Duration Handline Construction Crew member International Deployment

**Maintained By:** Manager, Membership

**Approved By:** Andrew Stark

**Position:** Chief Officer RFS

**Signature:**

**Date:** 1.14/2013

**Cross Reference SOP/s:** SOP 1.21 Rank, Insignia & Helmets

**Amendments:** Version 3 – 1.14/2013