

Pre-employment Physical Competency Test

The Physical Competency Test will be conducted by the Irish Prison Service in its Training Centre at Stack House, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. Applicants are required to be aerobically fit in order to safely undergo training and to subsequently carry out the duties assigned to them. It will consist of a series of tests designed to measure your physical performance in tasks that relate to the work of a recruit prison officer. All the tests must be passed. The tests have the same pass level for both sexes and every age. The tests will take about 60 - 90 minutes to complete, including several rest periods.

What preparation should you do for the tests? This depends upon your fitness and strength levels. Anyone with reasonable strength and fitness should be able to pass the tests. If you feel that your fitness or strength level may be insufficient to pass the tests, you may wish to participate in fitness / strength training at your local gym or sports club prior to the testing.

What should you wear for the tests? You will need to bring standard PE or sports kit - shorts / top with sports shoes.

How will you know what to do? You will be given detailed instructions when you attend for the test and general guidelines will also be posted on the IPS website at www.irishprisons.ie

What will happen if you fail a test? All tests must be passed. You will have two opportunities to do so. If after two attempts you fail you will be told at the time that you have failed to make the minimum standard for a test. Feedback will be provided on whether you passed or failed the physical competency assessment.

The tests will comprise the following:-

(i) Running / carrying tests

Aerobic Test: *This tests cardiovascular endurance, and simulates running around a building, with constant changes of direction.*

This test involves running over and back between two points 15 metres apart. The test involves 40 continuous shuttle runs to give a total distance of 600 metres. You must complete this test in 210 seconds (3 min 30 seconds) or less.

Anaerobic Test: *This tests your ability to sprint, and simulates the response to an emergency.*

This test involves 7 shuttle runs (i.e. 7 x 15 metres) done as quickly as possible. You must complete this test in 35 seconds or less.

Fire-extinguisher carry test: *This tests your ability to carry a standard fire extinguisher through a building in an emergency.*

You should carry a standard fire extinguisher, weighing 14 Kg, 30 m (two shuttles) without dropping it. You must complete this test in 30 seconds or less.

(ii) Strength / power tests

These tests assess upper body strength, grip and hold strength required in control and restraint techniques.

Seated bench press: *You will complete 5 measured bench-presses using a concept-II ergo meter.*

The average bench press over the 5 should be 34 Kg or higher.

Seated bench pull: *You will complete 5 measured bench-pulls using the concept-II ergo meter.*

The average bench pull over the 5 should be 34 Kg or higher.

Grip Strength: *This is measured using a standard grip strength ergo meter. You will be asked to squeeze as hard as you can with right and left hands (you will get two attempts with each hand)*

Minimum strength to pass:

Dominant hand **32 kg**

Non-dominant hand **30 kg**

Shield Hold: *The test will require a standard riot shield, of about 6 Kg to be held in front of the body in a stipulated position. The shield must be held in position for a minimum of 60 seconds.*