



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

AREA MITIGATION

**MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT
INFORMATION BOOKLET
JULY 2022**

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1 Overview

The purpose of this booklet is to assist you in preparing for medical and physical capability assessments as part of the Area Mitigation Crew Member and Crew Leader recruitment process (and recertification).

In order to accurately assess your suitability, we enclose background information on the Medical and Physical Capability Assessment requirements which form part of the application and selection process.

2 Why Medical and Physical Capability Assessments are Important

Area Mitigation crews undertake field work that is physically demanding. It is recognised that the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) has a duty of care to ensure Area Mitigation personnel are medically and physically capable of undertaking the tasks allocated to them.

Area Mitigation crews are expected to participate in field work requiring high levels of fitness and endurance, and must maintain these levels during their time of employment.

This work can include occasional demands for extraordinarily strenuous activities often under adverse environmental conditions, over extended periods of time.

Additionally, tasking can involve working from heights, working with heavy plant and machinery, and in and around aviation facilities and assets.

Area Mitigation crews are expected to display maturity, maintain mental clarity and calmness in periods of high stress, demonstrate teamwork and sustain individual motivation.

3 Medical Assessment Process

Medical assessments will be completed through an accredited workplace medical service provided within the designated timeframe. If you are successfully shortlisted for Area Mitigation Crew opportunities, you will be contacted by the designated medical services provided (advised by Recruitment team) who will assist with booking your medical assessments. Alternatively, you may be provided with the details to contact the designated medical service directly to arrange your appointment time.

If you have undertaken a NSW RFS Arduous Medical Assessment within the last 12 months, please advise the designated medical service and email a copy of your medical to Mitigation.Recruitment@rfs.nsw.gov.au as soon as possible for review.

The NSW RFS will cover the cost of medical assessments for shortlisted candidates through the designated medical provider only. In exceptional circumstances, where the designated medical provider is unable to undertake the medical assessment, the NSW RFS may cover the cost which will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

The medical assessment will be undertaken by a Registered Medical Practitioner.

As part of your medical assessment, there are two (2) documents you must take along to your Registered Medical Practitioner:

- NSW RFS Arduous Medical Assessment
- NSW RFS Area Mitigation Role Profile (December 2021)

3.1 NSW RFS Arduous Medical Assessment

The NSW RFS Arduous Medical Assessment form is required to be completed by yourself and your Registered Medical Practitioner and has been designed to ensure that you are medically fit to proceed to future stages of recruitment and to undertake the duties required for an Area Mitigation Crew Member or Crew Leader.

3.2 Blood test requirement

As part of the Medical Assessment all participants are required to provide blood test results. These blood test include

- > Lipids (including total cholesterol and HDL cholesterol) and
- > Glucose (blood sugar).

If you have undertaken these test within the last **12 months** please bring the results with you to your appointment.

If you do not have these results the Registered Medical Practitioner will provide you with a referral within your medical assessment appointment. Please undertake this test within 24 hours of your scheduled medical assessment otherwise your medical assessment result will be delayed.

3.3 NSW RFS Area Mitigation Role Profile (December 2021)

The NSW RFS Area Mitigation Role Profile (December 2021) is to be provided to your Registered Medical Practitioner at the time of your medical assessment, and guides the Registered Medical Practitioner through tasks typically undertaken by Area Mitigation Crews in the field. Your Registered Medical Practitioner will use this guide to determine your medical suitability for the role.

Area Mitigation Crew Members and Crew Leaders are required to:

- successfully pass the medical assessment every two years and;
- successful pass physical capability assessments every year.

4 Physical Capability Assessment

The Physical Capability Assessment for Area Mitigation Crew consists of a task based assessment (known as the Arduous Pack Test) and twelve (12) kinetic assessment tasks. Participants who commence the Physical Capability Assessment will be assumed to be of good health and capable of undertaking such assessment.

4.1 Adult Pre-exercise Screening System (APSS)

If participants have had a delay of more than three (3) months between their medical assessment and physical capability assessment, they will be required to complete an APSS.

The APSS can be completed electronically [here](https://form.jotform.com/RFSHealth/APSS) or at the following URL:
<https://form.jotform.com/RFSHealth/APSS>

All components of the APSS are completed by the prospective Arduous Pack Test participant. The APSS must then be reviewed by a Health Professional. The NSW RFS has internal Health Professionals who review these documents in accordance with organisational guidelines. Records remain confidential and are not released to any personnel outside of the Health & Safety Team. There are no costs associated with submitting the APSS through the internal NSW RFS process.

Members will need to provide evidence of their APSS outcome to the relevant APT Facilitator prior to assessment. Evidence comes in the form of the APSS front page declaration signed by a Health Professional. All other pages of the APSS are strictly confidential and remain with the candidate or Health Professional.

4.2 Task Based Assessment (Arduous Pack Test)

The task based assessment (Arduous Pack Test) consists of:

- A 4.83km walk over level ground
- Wearing a 20.4kg weight vest (15.4kg if you are under 68kg in body weight)
- Completing the test under 45 minutes

You should wear suitable clothing (i.e. t-shirt, shorts and comfortable footwear). A hat and sunscreen should also be used, weather dependant.

The Arduous Pack Test is intentionally stressful and is a good indicator of aerobic capacity, muscular strength and muscular endurance. It is used to assess your level of fitness and to provide an indication that you are physically fit to participate in fieldwork.

The test is a brisk walk; as such no running or jogging is permitted.

Personal weight vests or packs can be worn for the Arduous Pack Test as long as they conform to the weight requirement as specified above. Water is not to be used as a weight. Personal vests or packs will be weighed prior to the assessment.

4.3 Kinetic Assessment Tasks

A series of kinetic assessment tasks have been designed to assess an individual's physical capacity relating to the work specific tasks for their role.

The kinetic assessment tasks consist of:

- **Climbing into and out of a Category 17 tanker.** Candidates will be required to climb into and out of a Category 17 Tanker (front cab door) five (5) times without any significant break between each ascent. The task starts with the candidate's feet on the ground and whilst maintaining three (3) points of contact they climb up all steps until both feet are on the floor of the cab. The candidate then returns to the ground and repeats the task.
- **Ladder climb.** The candidate will be required to climb up seven (7) rungs (one rung at a time) and return to the ground whilst maintaining three (3) points of contact at all times. The task (ladder climb) is to be repeated six (6) times.
- **Jerry can lift.** Candidates will be required to lift a full 20 litre Jerry Can from the ground to the crew refuge area of a Category 17 Tanker. The lift is to be completed with one (1) hand under the Jerry Can and one (1) hand on the top handle. The task is to be repeated five (5) times. Candidates are permitted to stop and adjust their hand position at any time.
- **Jerry can carry.** Candidates will be required to carry a full 20 litre Jerry Can with one hand a distance of 150m. You are permitted to stop and swap hands at any time throughout the task. However, the Candidate is not permitted to carry the Jerry Can with two (2) hands.
- **Pole saw lift and hold.** Candidates are required to lift and hold a fully extended pole saw three (3) times. Candidates pick up the pole saw from the floor. Lift the pole saw to a waist high horizontal position. Then lift the pole saw to a 45-degree angle and hold for five (5) seconds. Following the five (5) second hold candidate lower the pole saw back to the horizontal position and repeat this three (3) times before laying the pole saw back on the floor.
- **Brushcutter walk.** Candidates must be equipped with a brushcutter harness with the brushcutter attached, along with two full fuel canisters. From one end the candidate walks down the middle

straight line (10m) and stops at each set of cones. In a controlled movement candidate rotate 180 degrees over each cone (right and left) and then moves on to the next set of cones.

- **Chainsaw hold.** Candidates must maintain three static chain sawing positions for 45 seconds each using a 16" Chainsaw. Candidates have 15 seconds rest between each hold.
 - Standing upright with the chainsaw above waist height
 - Standing with bent knees with one arm locked into the body and the other straight.
 - Kneeling (one knee on the floor the other leg planted on the floor) with one arm locked into the body and the other straight holding the top chain saw handle.
- **Crawl / crab walk.** Candidates will be required to crawl or crab walk (hands and toes) for a distance of 20m.
- **Dummy drag.** Candidates will be required to drag a 50kg manikin a distance of 20m. This task is to be completed twice. The first task is to be done in an upright position and the second task is to be done in a stooped (under 1.5m height) position.
- **Kneeling and Squatting.** Candidates will be required to kneel or squat for 3 minutes (in a CPR simulation).
- **Pull Simulation.** Candidates will be required to pull a large tyre (with its inner sleeve weighted) with a hand tool (McLeod tool or similar) for a distance of 10m.
- **Sledgehammer.** Candidates will be required to strike a tyre positioned flat on the ground. Candidates are to position themselves adjacent to the tyre and strike the side of the tyre 60 times within a two (2) minute period.

4.4 Preparation for the Physical Capability Assessments

It is strongly recommended that you are prepared before undertaking any physical activity. Training tips for the Arduous Pack Test include:

- Train in appropriate footwear and clothing (including hat & sunscreen)
- Check your heart rate – generally it should be less than $(220 \text{ less your age}) \times 0.75$
- Drink sufficient amounts of water
- Warm up and cool down with dynamic stretching exercises
- Train with care and seek medical advice if required
- Train on varying grounds e.g. grass oval, pavement, treadmill

Below is a suggested training plan to assist in preparing for the Arduous Pack Test:

Week	Action	Frequency
1	Walk 2.4km in 22 minutes	3 times / week
2	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes	3 times / week
3	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes with 4kg of weight	2 times / week
4	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes with 7kg of weight	3 times / week
5	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes with 10kg of weight	2 times / week
6	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes with 13kg of weight	3 times / week
7	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes with 17kg of weight	3 times / week
8	Walk 4.83km in 45 minutes with 20.4kg of weight	2 times / week