



ARDUOUS PACK TEST

Overview

The purpose of this guide is to assist NSW RFS members who want to undertake the Arduous Firefighter Programme or Remote Area Operations in preparing for the arduous pack test. The arduous pack test is an international standard for wildland firefighting for members to undertake continued strenuous firefighting operations.

Medical Assessment Process

NSW RFS members who intend on undertaking the Arduous Firefighting programme are first required to complete a medical. The purpose of a medical assessment is to ensure that there are no underlining medical conditions which may exclude a member from undertaking arduous activities.

Medical assessments are typically done by an approved medical centre in your local area. Prior to arranging a medical appointment you will need to liaise with your local District to obtain consent and relevant documentation. The District will also ensure that a purchase order is raised to cover the cost of the appointment.

NSW RFS Medical Assessment - Specialist

This form is required to be completed yourself and your Registered Medical Practitioner and has been designed to ensure that you are medically fit to undertake arduous firefighting activities.

On completion of your medical assessment, you must only retain the front page of the medical assessment. This front page will be signed by a medical practitioner and must be returned to your local District FCC for processing. The remainder of the medical forms are confidential and should remain on file at the medical centre or practice. Your medical remains current for 2 years.

Arduous Pack Test (APT)

The arduous pack test (APT) consists of:

- 4.83km walk over level ground
- Carrying 20.4kg (i.e. weight vest)
- Completing the course in under 45 minutes

If you are under 68kg in total body weight, you have the option to reducing the carried weight to 15.4kg. You should wear suitable clothing (i.e. t-shirt, shorts and comfortable footwear). A hat and sunscreen should also be used. 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 unless it's contained in small containers and does not slop around (shifting weight) within the container. Personal vests or packs will be weighed prior to the assessment.

The APT 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 arduous firefighting.

Generally the APT should be conducted on a suitable sporting field or grass athletics track. Prior to undertaking the APT on the day, you will be required to complete a Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q). If you are temporarily unfit to undertake the assessment due to illness, injury or other reasons, this will impact on you being able to successfully complete the APT.

You must have a current medical to undertake the APT. The APT remains current for 1 year.

Preparation for the Arduous Pack Test

It is strongly recommended that you are prepared before undertaking any physical activity, especially the APT. As indicated above the APT is intentionally stressful and without preparation you may find it difficult to complete.

Training tips for the Arduous Pack Test:

- 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

Below is a suggested 8 week training program 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