

Onsite Medical Exams

In accordance with the last Interest Arbitration Award, the City has contracted with Professional Health Services (PHS) to conduct onsite medical examinations for members of the Department. The purpose of the exam is to confirm fitness for duty and the exams are being conducted at the Fire Academy. The first 2 pilot weeks were held in June and August, and testing resumes on September 19th.

Here are some questions we've had during the implementation process, a copy of which was provided to you back in June.

1. What is this exam all about?

The requirement for this medical examination is spelled out in the last Act 111 Award. The purpose of the exam is to ensure that you are physically able to safely perform the essential functions of the job. That doesn't mean that you're in the best shape of your life. It means we want to be sure there are no medical issues you were unaware of that could put your health at risk while you're on the job.

2. Am I required to go through this exam?

Yes, you are required.

3. What happens if I refuse?

The testing is mandatory. If you have reservations or questions you should contact the Union office at 215-440-4400 or call Jack Eltman at 215-906-2692.

4. Is this exam done during my work shift?

Yes. Similar to a company being detailed to the FTA for training, the same will happen with this program.

5. Why do I need to have this exam? I see my doctor regularly.

The Local 22 Health Plan has researched this issue. After we looked at all options, we realized it would likely be impossible to have consistent results because not all physicians have a background in occupational medicine. And, your primary care doctor may not be able to do all the testing needed. So you could be going to multiple doctors, on your own time, with results that could vary from member to member.

6. How did you decide who goes first with this exam?

The Award specifies that the exams will be performed on approximately half of the bargaining unit in each of the 2 years of the program. The first year of medical exams will be dedicated to

members who have less seniority in the Department. Our estimate is that members with 10 years or less will go in the first year, but if you want to get the exam done in year 1, but aren't scheduled until year 2, you might be accommodated. That becomes a scheduling issue.

7. What happens if I'm not available on the date of the exam?

You will be re-scheduled for another date.

8. How long will this exam take?

A Company will be given 1 hour per member, i.e., Medic Units would be 2 hours total; Engine companies would be 4 hours total; Ladder companies would be 5 hours total.

9. What do I need to bring to this exam?

You should bring a list of any medications you are on and the name/address of your own doctor so results can be sent to him/her. If you're 40 or older, you will be given a stress test. So members 40+ should also bring sneakers/running shoes/sweatpants or other comfortable clothing.

10. Does the exam include drug testing?

Absolutely not.

11. Do I need to fast from food or liquids before this exam?

No, you do not need to fast prior to the exam.

12. Who gets a copy of my results?

You get a copy, the doctor you specify gets a copy, and the City gets all the exam results **FOR STORAGE PURPOSES ONLY** once all the exams are done.

13. What does the City do with my results?

Your exam results are Protected Health Information (PHI) and protected under HIPAA. The City is doing nothing with the information they get from PHS other than storing it. We have asked the City to confirm who at the City, by name/title will get the information and how they plan to securely store it. Furthermore, we've asked the City to confirm that you would be notified in advance of any access of your PHI.

14. What happens if my results show that I have medical issues?

Here are the outcomes we anticipate:

- 1) your results are all within NFPA 1582 and 1583 guidelines
 - you're done with the exam and there's no follow up
- 2) your tests show you have some underlying medical issues that should be addressed but it doesn't interfere with your ability to do the job
 - you will receive a call from a PHS Nurse Case Manager with recommendations on how you should follow up with your doctor

- 3) your test results indicate a medical issue that interferes with your ability to safely perform the ***essential functions*** of the job, but you could perform other duties
 - you will be placed on Restricted Duty/Light Duty until your medical issue is resolved
- 4) your test results show a medical condition so severe that you are unable to perform any duties of the job
 - you will be assigned No Duty status until the medical issue is resolved

15. How is my medical issue “resolved”?

If your medical issues are severe enough that you cannot return to work, you’ll be given a handout that outlines what next steps you need to take. You can see your own private physician for treatment but you will need to be cleared by Dr. Hayes before you can return to work. For **any** medical issue that’s detected, the resources of the Local 22 Health Plan, including fitness trainers, Guardian Nurses, and the health coaches at Independence Blue Cross, are available to help you reach your goal.

16. What happens if I’m injured while taking the exam?

We’re not sure how you’d be injured but, e.g., if you had a cardiac event while taking the stress test, it would be considered IOD.

17. What happens if I don’t agree with the results?

Any member who is placed on No Duty or Restricted Duty will have the right to appeal the decision to the Local 22 Joint Wellness Fitness Committee.