

Winston-Salem, North Carolina Fire Department

Firefighter Physical Ability Examination

Participant Study Guide



INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to describe the physical tasks you will be required to perform for the Winston-Salem, North Carolina Firefighter Physical Ability Examination. You will increase your chances of obtaining a passing score if you spend a fair amount of time preparing for the test. This includes thoroughly reviewing this study guide, following the specific directions regarding attire, paying proper attention to your physical well-being before the test and taking care to avoid becoming overly anxious about the test.

OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PROCESS

An analysis of the physical requirements of Winston-Salem Fire Department firefighter jobs was conducted and included personnel from the ranks of Firefighter, Fire Captain, Fire Engineer, Fire Battalion Chief, Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, Fire Division Chief and Fire Chief. The analysis provided the background information necessary to validate the job-related physical ability examination. It allowed for the identification of the essential physical functions required of the jobs, and these essential functions are included in the physical ability test.

Among other physical tasks, firefighters in the Winston-Salem, North Carolina Fire Department must be able to perform the following: crawl through smoky buildings; climb an aerial ladder; drag uncharged hose; perform forcible entry/ventilation procedures; carry a length of hose up stairs; descend stairs; drag charged hose; carry a ladder; and drag a victim to safety.

This examination is equally valid for assessing the physical skills of participants with firefighting experience and those without. For example, one portion of the test requires the participant to drag a dummy 100 feet. It is not necessary to have prior experience as a firefighter to possess the physical ability to drag a heavy object.

Preparation instructions and a description of the physical ability test are provided below.

TEST PREPARATION

The following suggestions should help you prepare yourself physically for the test:

- Avoid junk food and maintain a well-balanced diet for several days before the test.
- Avoid tranquilizers and stimulants such as caffeinated beverages, especially on the day of the test.
- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- Do not drink a lot of liquids or eat a large meal before the test.
- Avoid alcohol several days prior to and especially on the day of the test.

WHAT TO WEAR

Participants should wear the following during the test:

- Tennis shoes
- Long-sleeve T-shirt
- Turnout gear coat (Provided by the Fire Department)
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (Provided by the Fire Department – but not worn on the Aerial Climb)
- Gloves (Provided by the Fire Department)
- Participants should NOT wear watches, rings or other items which could harm them while taking the test. These items should be removed before testing for safety purposes.

Note: The Winston-Salem Fire Department will provide participants with the indicated gear and equipment necessary to participate in the testing process, and an assortment of sizes will be available to ensure a reasonable fit for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST

The test will require a participant to complete several physical tasks in sequence within an allotted time frame, as well as to complete two untimed tasks. All applicants will be given an orientation and walk through prior to taking the test. No one will be allowed to take the test unless he/she is fully aware of what he/she is expected to do.

During the sequence of timed events, it is extremely important to pace yourself. Over-exerting yourself early in the test may reduce the amount of energy you have left for exercises at the end of the test, such as the victim rescue. Additionally, participants are not permitted to run between events for safety reasons.

TEST EVENTS

UNTIMED EVENTS: (Participants will not wear the SCBA apparatus for these events).

1. **Blind Crawl.** The test administrator guides the participant to one end of a blind crawl tube, which the participant crawls through until the end. Participants unable to successfully complete the blind crawl will not be allowed to continue on to the aerial climb or timed series of events.
2. **Aerial Climb.** The fire Department's aerial apparatus is extended approximately 75 feet off the ground at an angle of about 75 degrees. A belay line is strung through the top rung of the ladder to serve as a safety line. Participants are tethered to the belay line and, upon instruction, ascend and descend the ladder without stopping. Two rescue technicians secure the line to ensure safety. Participants are given 5 minutes to complete this exercise, not to hurry them, but to allow adequate time to ascend and descend the ladder at a safe pace and to ensure they do not stop for an extended period of time. If it is clear the participant is not able to complete this exercise after 5 minutes, or takes breaks in excess of 10 seconds, the participant will be considered to have failed this exercise. No time will be recorded unless the participant fails. After successful completion of this event, the candidate proceeds to the timed sequence of events.

TIMED EVENTS: Page 5 contains a sample map illustrating the entire test sequence. Two courses are set up. Each event listed below corresponds to a particular point on the map.

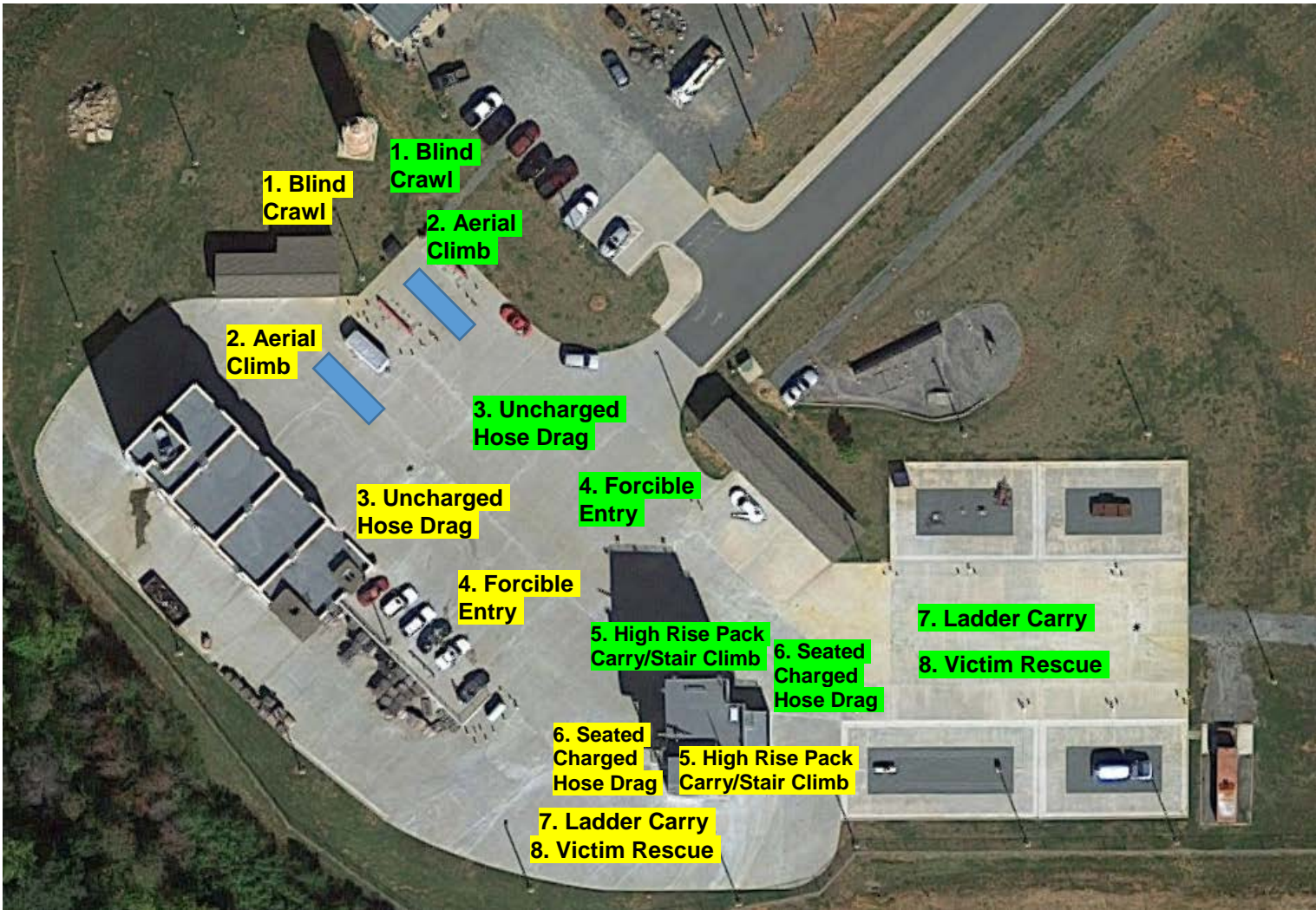
1. **Uncharged Hose Drag.** Participants begin with one end of a 100 foot section of 1 ¾ inch hose over their shoulder and drag it 100 feet after instructed to "GO".
2. **Forcible Entry.** Participants will use an approximately 8 pound sledgehammer to perform a forcible entry/ventilation simulation by hitting an object.
3. **Stair Climb/High Rise Pack Carry.** The high rise pack includes 50 feet of 1 ¾ inch hose, with wye & nozzle and is located at the bottom of the flight of stairs. Participants carry the high rise pack up to the 4th floor, and then bring the pack down to the original location.
4. **Seated/Kneeling Charged Hose Drag.** Participants will sit down or kneel and drag a charged 1 ¾ inch hose line for a distance of 25 feet.
5. **Ladder Carry.** Participants will carry a 16 foot roof ladder a distance of 100 and set it on the ground.

6. Victim Rescue. Immediately following the completion of the ladder carry, participants will walk to an approximately 165 pound dummy, safely get their arms under the arms of the dummy and lift it, and then drag the dummy 100 feet until all parts of it cross a finish line.

CRITERIA FOR PASSING THE EXAM

Entry-level and incumbent participants must successfully complete all timed events in 7 minutes and 10 seconds or less. Additionally, all entry-level and incumbent participants must successfully complete the Aerial Climb and Blind Crawl.

Winston-Salem, NC Fire Department Firefighter Physical Ability Course Layout



Note: Map not drawn to scale