

# ***PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTING (PFT)***

***New Applicant & BIT Student Guidelines***

***(January 2023 Version)***



# Physical Fitness Testing

The Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) Program is a mandatory United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) program to test and assess new Postal Inspector applicants' and Basic Inspector Training (BIT) students' level of fitness. The PFT Program aims to determine an individual's state of readiness to participate in the physical demands of the BIT Program and Postal Inspector position.

## PFT Program Overview

The PFT Program provides a measurement of upper-body and lower-body muscular endurance as well as aerobic and anaerobic endurance. It is a performance test that indicates an individual's ability to perform physically and handle their own body weight. PFT standards for new applicants and BIT students are gender adjusted.

## PFT Protocol

PFT consists of three (3) exercise events:

- 1-minute timed push-ups.
- 1-minute timed sit-ups.
- 1.5-mile timed run.

The PFT exercise events are required to be completed in the order listed above during one (1) testing period. One testing period is defined as the period of time that elapses from start to finish of all three exercise events (i.e., from the first push-up performed until the 1.5-mile run is completed). New applicants and BIT students are allowed a minimum of one minute to a maximum of five minutes of rest between each exercise. PFT scoring and exercise event minimums are mentioned later in this guidance; however, each participant must achieve a minimum score in each individual exercise event and a minimum cumulative score to successfully pass.

## New Applicants

Applicants in the selection process must successfully pass the PFT to proceed in the hiring process. Applicants will be provided three (3) separate opportunities to pass the PFT. The initial testing will be administered at the Assessment Center. If this initial testing is not passed, arrangements will be made for future testing if necessary. Failure to pass the PFT events will result in a pause of the applicant's progression, until a testing is successfully completed. If an applicant fails to pass three (3) consecutive PFT attempts, the applicant will be removed from the application process. An applicant removed from the application process for failing to pass the PFT may re-apply for future postings if still otherwise eligible. A passing PFT score is valid for one year from the date of the testing. If for some reason a candidate does not enter a BIT academy class within one year of taking the initial test, they will have to re-take and pass the PFT prior to entering BIT.

## BIT Students

While attending BIT, students will be administered the PFT periodically throughout the BIT program as follows:

- Testing 1 will occur between Weeks 1 and 4.
- Testing 2 will occur between Weeks 5 and 8.
- Testing 3 will occur between Weeks 9 and 12.
- Testing 4 will occur between Weeks 13 and 16.

Students must pass one of the first three PFTs and Testing 4 to successfully complete BIT. Students who fail to pass one of the first three PFTs and/or Testing 4 will be removed from the BIT program. A student removed from the BIT program for failing to pass a PFT may apply for future Postal Inspection Service employment if otherwise eligible.

## Medical Issues

Applicants who have an illness or injury at the time of their scheduled PFT are to advise testing staff of the situation as soon as practicable. This applicant will not be allowed to take the scheduled PFT. If an applicant cannot take a PFT due to illness or injury, the applicant will be provided an opportunity to take the PFT at a later date. Any applicant who does not disclose an injury or illness, participates in a PFT, and does not achieve a passing score, will not be allowed to claim the preexisting injury affected the applicant's performance. The failing score will stand.

If an applicant suffers an injury or illness during a PFT, the applicant must immediately report the injury or illness to the testing staff. The applicant will be allowed to re-take the PFT on a later date.

Applicants who would like to request a reasonable accommodation for PFT should contact the Postal Inspection Service Applicant Processing Unit via e-mail at [PIRecruitment@uspis.gov](mailto:PIRecruitment@uspis.gov).

No medical information should be provided in this initial e-mail. Applicants will be contacted by the Postal Inspection Service Medical Services Department for additional information and requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A BIT student who has an illness or injury is to advise the training academy staff of the situation. A BIT student will not be allowed to take a scheduled PFT if injured or ill.

Any BIT student who does not disclose an injury or illness, participates in a PFT, and does not achieve a passing score, will not be allowed to claim the preexisting injury affected the student's performance. The failing score will stand.

If a BIT student suffers an injury or illness during a PFT, the student must immediately report the injury or illness to the testing staff.

A BIT student who cannot take a PFT due to illness or injury, or who suffers an injury or illness during a PFT will be allowed to re-take the test on a later date once medically cleared.

## PFT Scoring & Standards

### 1–Minute Push-ups:

The 1-minute push-ups are scored on a 100-point scale. (See Attachment 1.) Minimum scoring is as follows:

- Males must receive a minimum score of 34 points or complete at least 29 push-ups within one minute. (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under "Push-up (M).")
- Females must receive a minimum score of 36 points or complete at least 10 push-ups within one minute. (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under "Push-up (F).")

### 1–Minute Sit-ups:

The 1-minute sit-ups are scored on a 100-point scale. (See Attachment 1.) Minimum scoring is as follows:

- Males must receive a minimum score of 50 points or complete at least 30 sit-ups within one minute. (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under "Sit-up (M).")
- Females must receive a minimum score of 42 points or complete at least 22 sit-ups within one minute (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under "Sit-up (F).")

## 1.5–Mile Run:

The 1.5-mile run is scored on a 100-point scale. (See Attachment 1.) Minimum scoring is as follows:

- Males must receive a minimum score of 34 points or complete the 1.5 mile run in 15 minutes 46 seconds (15:46) or less. (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under “1.5-Mile run (M).”)
- Females must receive a minimum score of 39 points or complete the 1.5 mile run in 17 minutes 54 seconds (17:54) or less. (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under “1.5-Mile run (F).”)

## Combined Score:

Each exercise must be completed to obtain an overall passing score. (See Attachment 1 for the PFT Ability Group scoring chart.) The minimum Ability Group scoring is as follows:

- All individuals must obtain a combined score of 140 points or at least score in the Advanced Basic Ability Group. (See Attachment 1, yellow highlight under “Ability Group.”)
- **Note:** Meeting the minimum score in each exercise will not reach a combined score of 140, the minimum passing score.

## Preparing for PFT

The Postal Inspector position requires a commitment and dedication to physical fitness and physical preparedness. Physical fitness and physical preparedness should not begin when you become a Postal Inspector; it should be a part of a candidate’s daily life.

To prepare for PFT, USPIS recommends all applicants and BIT students follow a disciplined workout program. USPIS recommends the following types of workouts:

- Muscular strength and endurance training.
- Aerobic training.
- Circuit training.

Some examples of suggested trainings are provided below:

### ***Muscular Strength and Endurance Training:***

USPIS recommends incorporating some type of muscular strength and endurance training in a workout program. This type of workout will increase the ability to exert force and combat fatigue. USPIS strongly recommends consistently practicing and performing push-ups, sit-ups, body weight squats, body weight leg lunges, and pull-ups as primary exercises. These exercises will prepare the candidate for the PFT exercise events and will build the core muscle groups needed to successfully pass PFT.

### ***Aerobic Training:***

USPIS recommends incorporating some type of aerobic training in a workout program. This type of training will increase the cardiovascular, respiratory, and musculoskeletal system’s ability process and deliver oxygen for needed energy. It is strongly recommended to build up to and maintain sustained running (at least two miles or more) during training sessions. It is also recommended to incorporate sprint running (short distances with maximum effort) into training sessions. These exercises will prepare the candidate for the PFT exercise events and build the cardiovascular, respiratory, and musculoskeletal systems needed to successfully pass PFT.

### ***Circuit Training:***

USPIS recommends incorporating circuit training into a workout program. This type of training will combine muscular strength and endurance training and aerobic training with limited periods of rest in-between. This type of training will increase the ability to perform at maximum levels with limited rest in-between exercises. An example of a circuit style training routine is listed below:

- Run for two minutes (moderate pace).
- Maximum number of continuous push-ups.

- Run for two minutes (moderate pace).
- Maximum number of continuous pull-ups.
- Run for two minutes (moderate to PFT pace).
- Maximum number of continuous sit-ups.
- Run for two minutes (moderate to PFT pace).
- Maximum number of continuous body weight squats or lunges.

**Note:** This complete circuit should be repeated three to five times in one workout session with one to two minutes of rest between exercises and three to five minutes of rest between each complete circuit.

## PFT Testing Events

### Proper Attire

Participants in PFT tests should wear appropriate athletic attire and running shoes.

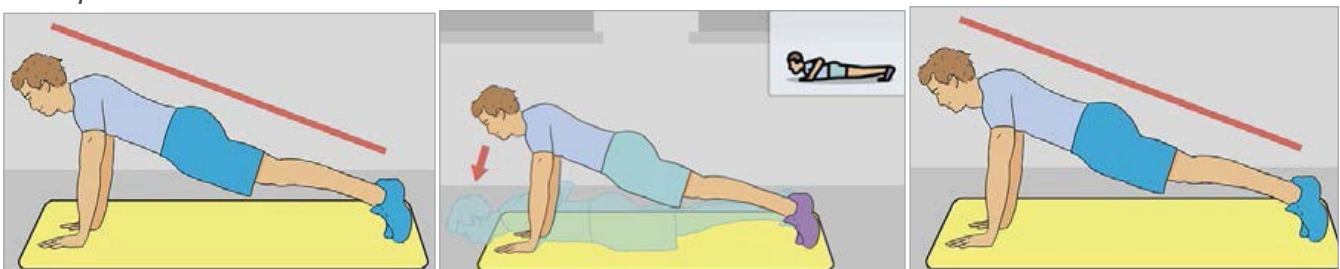
### Starting PFT

The testing staff will read the instructions for all three events prior to the start of the testing and will demonstrate the push-up and sit-up. Please see the examples below:

#### **Push-Ups:**

*Participants will assume the push-up position by placing their hands shoulder-width apart on the ground. The feet may be together or apart, but are fully extended, where the body is seemingly in a straight line from shoulders to ankles (when viewed from the side).*

*On the "BEGIN" command, bend the elbows, lowering the entire body towards the ground maintaining a straight line until the chest is approximately three (3) inches from the ground. Then raise the body back to the starting position, with arms fully extended. Repeat this movement in a continuous motion until unable to perform another push-up with the proper form. Failure to maintain the proper form (body generally straight with chest lowering down to approximately three (3) inches from the ground, and then full extension of arms back to the starting position) will not count as a full repetition. See demonstration below:*



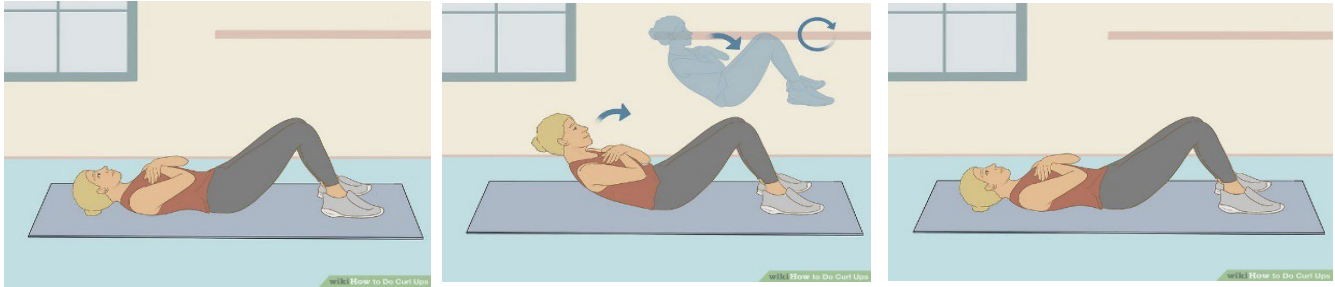
#### **Sit-Ups:**

*Participants will assume the sit-up position by lying on their backs and placing their hands across their chest, with their shoulder blades on the ground. The knees are bent with feet on the ground. The feet may be together or shoulder-width apart, but contact with the ground must be maintained. A partner will hold the feet in place during the exercise.*

*On the "BEGIN" command, raise the upper body towards the thighs, in a crunching motion. Then lower the upper body back to the starting position. The elbows must touch the upper part of the thighs before lowering the upper body back to the starting position. The arms must stay attached to the chest when raising and lowering the upper body. Shoulder blades must touch the ground when returning to the starting position before beginning the next repetition. Repeat this movement in a*



continuous motion until unable to perform another sit-up with the proper form. Failure to maintain the proper form as mentioned above will not count as a full repetition. See demonstration below:



**1.5 Mile Run:**

Participants will assume a good running position at the starting line. On a high school track, the participants will complete six (6) full laps, ending at the starting position, unless otherwise directed by the CDU PFT Coordinator or designee. If an alternate location or running trail is used, the participants will run 1.5 miles from the start to the finish line. If an alternate location or running trail is used, the CDU PFT Coordinator or designee will show all participants the start and finish lines before the 1.5-mile run begins.

On the “BEGIN” command, each participant will run 1.5-miles as PFT as possible, beginning and ending at the appropriate points. Although the CDU PFT Coordinator and/or designee(s) will be monitoring all participants, each participant will be responsible for keeping track of the laps or distance ran. The CDU PFT Coordinator or designee(s) will make a final determination if a discrepancy arises. If it is determined a participant did not complete the entire 1.5-mile distance, the participant will automatically fail the 1.5-mile event and subsequently fail the PFT.

**Sample Workout Routine**

USPIS is committed to supporting any efforts towards physical wellness and overall wellbeing. Below is a weekly sample workout routine that can be used to improve overall health and wellness. This routine will assist in preparation for PFT, but will not guarantee a passing score.

**Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday      Sunday**

<b>WARMUP</b>	<b>WARMUP</b>	<b>WARMUP</b>	<b>WARMUP</b>	<b>WARMUP</b>	<b>WARMUP</b>	<b>REST</b>
<b>CIRCUIT TRAINING</b>	<b>AEROBIC TRAINING</b>	<b>CIRCUIT TRAINING</b>	<b>AEROBIC TRAINING</b>	<b>CIRCUIT TRAINING</b>	<b>AEROBIC TRAINING</b>	
<b>MUSCULAR STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE TRAINING</b>		<b>MUSCULAR STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE TRAINING</b>		<b>MUSCULAR STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE TRAINING</b>		
<b>COOL DOWN</b>	<b>COOL DOWN</b>	<b>COOL DOWN</b>	<b>COOL DOWN</b>	<b>COOL DOWN</b>	<b>COOL DOWN</b>	

## Avoiding Injuries:

To avoid injuries, USPIS recommends the following:

- **Include Warm-ups and Cool-Downs** – Each workout session should begin with a warm-up period of at least 5-10 minutes. This will prime the body for the workout to follow and increase performance while lowering the risk of injury. Each workout session should end with a cool-down period of at least 5-10 minutes. This will allow the body to transition back to a resting state and lower the risk of injury.
- **Choose Proper Footwear** – It is recommended to choose the proper footwear when engaging in physical activities, especially when running. Every effort should be made to find the proper running shoe fit.
- **Don't Overtrain** – Gradually increase the intensity level during training. Too much training in a short period of time or beginning a rigorous workout routine before the body is physically ready can lead to serious injury.
- **Use Proper Technique** – Bad exercise techniques can lead to injury. Every effort should be made to use the proper technique while exercising. Never sacrifice proper technique for faster times or increases in strength.
- **Maintain Muscle Balance and Overall Flexibility** – Overall health and physical performance will decrease over time if muscles on one side of the body are substantially weaker than the other side. Joint and muscle inflexibility will also compromise overall health and physical performance. Engage in training that will promote muscle balance and overall joint and muscle flexibility. Stretching should be included in every workout.
- **Awareness of Overall Workout Conditions** – For every workout, be aware of workout conditions, such as location, surface, potential hazards, and weather conditions. Avoid extreme conditions such as training in excessive hot or cold temperatures, harsh running surfaces, and areas with frequent automobile traffic.

## ATTACHMENT 1 – Ability Group Score Chart

Ability Group	Score
Level 1 – Basic	0-139
<b>Level 2 – Advanced Basic</b>	<b>140-179</b>
Level 3 – Intermediate	180-219
Level 4 – Advanced	220-259
Level 5 – Elite	260-300

New Applicant & BIT Student

100 pt. scale	Push-ups (M)	Push-ups (F)	Sit-ups (M)	Sit-ups (F)	1.5 Mile Run (M)	1.5 Mile Run (F)
100	62	42	55	51	09:10	10:20
99						
98	61	41	54	50	09:22	10:35
97						
96	60	40	53	49	09:34	10:50
95						
94	59	39	52	48	09:46	11:05
93						
92	58	38	51	47	09:58	11:20
91						
90	57	37	50	46	10:10	11:35
89						
88	56	36	49	45	10:22	11:50
87						
86	55	35	48	44	10:34	12:05
85						
84	54	34	47	43	10:46	12:20
83						
82	53	33	46	42	10:58	12:35
81						
80	52	32	45	41	11:10	12:50
79						
78	51	31	44	40	11:22	13:05
77						
76	50	30	43	39	11:34	13:20
75						
74	49	29	42	38	11:46	13:35
73						
72	48	28	41	37	11:58	13:50
71						
70	47	27	40	36	12:10	14:05
69						
68	46	26	39	35	12:22	14:20
67						
66	45	25	38	34	12:34	14:35
65						



64	44	24	37	33	12:46	14:50
63						
62	43	23	36	32	12:58	15:05
61						
60	42	22	35	31	13:10	15:20
59						
58	41	21	34	30	13:22	15:35
57						
56	40	20	33	29	13:34	15:50
55						
54	39	19	32	28	13:46	16:05
53						
52	38	18	31	27	13:58	16:20
51						
50	37	17	30	26	14:10	16:35
49						
48	36	16	29	25	14:22	16:50
47						
46	35	15	28	24	14:34	17:05
45						
44	34	14	27	23	14:46	17:20
43						
42	33	13	26	22	14:58	17:35
41						
40	32	12	25	21	15:10	17:50
39						17:54
38	31	11	24	20	15:22	18:05
37						
36	30	10	23	19	15:34	18:20
35						
34	29	9	22	18	15:46	18:35
33						
32	28	8	21	17	15:58	18:50
31						
30	27	7	20	16	16:10	19:05
29						
28	26	6	19	15	16:22	19:20
27						
26	25	5	18	14	16:34	19:35
25						
24	24	4	17	13	16:46	19:50
23						
22	23	3	16	12	16:58	20:05
21						
20	22	2	15	11	17:10	20:20
19						
18	21	1	14	10	17:22	20:35
17						
16	20		13	9	17:34	20:50

<b>15</b>						
<b>14</b>	19		12	8	17:46	21:05
<b>13</b>						
<b>12</b>	18		11	7	17:58	21:20
<b>11</b>						
<b>10</b>	17		10	6	18:10	21:35
<b>9</b>						
<b>8</b>	16		9	5	18:22	21:50
<b>7</b>						
<b>6</b>	15		8	4	18:34	22:05
<b>5</b>						
<b>4</b>	14		7	3	18:46	22:20
<b>3</b>						
<b>2</b>	13		6	2	18:58	22:35
<b>1</b>						
<b>0</b>	12		5	0	19:10	22:50

## ATTACHMENT 2 – Heat Index Guidance Chart

### TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON HEAT INDEX OF COMBINED HUMIDITY AND TEMPERATURE

**Green (80°-84.9)** – Utilize discretion in planning heavy exercise because the environment is at a marginal heat stress limit for all individuals.

- Heavy exercise for acclimatized personnel should be conducted with caution and under responsible supervision. Buddy system is recommended.
- Heavy exercise for acclimated personnel is unrestricted.
- Drink 1 quart of cool water per hour. Use 75% work and 25% rest for outdoor work (example: 45 minutes work and 15 minutes rest). Heat cramps and heat exhaustion possible with continued exposure.

**Yellow (85°-87.9°)** – Strenuous exercise and activity must be curtailed or markedly reduced for individuals not acclimated to a minimum of two weeks of heat exposure. Heat stress can occur.

- Strenuous exercise is limited to those acclimated 14 days or longer.
- Drink 1-2 quarts of cool water per hour. Utilize a partner when training and monitor each other's condition. Use 50% work and 50% rest\* (example: 30 minutes work and 30 minutes rest). Heat cramps likely. Heat stroke and heat exhaustion possible with continued exposure.

**Red (88°-89.9°)** – Strenuous exercise must be curtailed for all individuals with less than 12 weeks training in hot weather. Heat stress is likely to occur.

- All physical training should be halted for those who have not become thoroughly acclimated by at least 30 days of physical activity at this temperature. Those who are acclimated may carry on limited activity.
- Drink 2 quarts of cool water per hour. Use a "buddy system" and have teams monitor each other's condition. Use 25% work and 75% rest (example: 15 minutes work with 45 minutes rest). Heat stroke possible with continued exposure.

**Black (>90°)** – Physical training and strenuous exercise should be suspended for all individuals. Heat stress will occur in most cases.

- Outdoor work should be limited to critical missions only (requires commander approval). Use 25% work and 75% rest (example: 15 minutes work with 45 minutes rest). Use a "buddy system" and have teams monitor each other's condition. Drink 2 quarts of cool water per hour. Heat stroke likely with continued exposure.

