

TOWN OF MONCKS CORNER REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Title: Consider Purchasing Fireground Physical Ability Test (FPAT) system.

Background:

Currently, the Town of Moncks Corner Fire Department does not have an implemented physical fitness assessment for new hires or current employees.

Physical fitness is a pertinent part of being a firefighter. This career is physically demanding; the lack of sleep, stress, strenuous activity, change in heart rate, and fast-paced environment all take a toll on the body and overall physical/mental well-being of each employee. We must assess the physical fitness of both new and current employees.

Currently, six departments in SC are using the FPAT: Mt. Pleasant, Charleston, North Charleston, St. Andrews, St. Johns, and Isle of Palms. The City of Greenville is in the process of purchasing. The Charlotte Fire Department has been using the system, along with two other NC departments that did not conduct the validation. This investment supports our Fire Department, our personnel, and the citizens of Moncks Corner.

The FPAT is a program designed to test a firefighter's physical ability. It incorporates basic firefighter skills, while increasing the individual's heart rate, and testing cardiovascular endurance. The test consists of carrying firefighter equipment, breaching and pulling a ceiling, advancing and feeding a charged hose line, performing forcible entry with both left- and right-handed techniques, crawling (using a search technique), and a victim drag. The fire sled gives consistency to evaluation. It can be done rain or shine, regardless of the weather, with the setup inside in an open bay area.

Without having a physical fitness assessment for new hires, we have no way of knowing that a new hire is physically capable of performing basic firefighter skills. We are solely relying on the individual's preparedness and readiness to perform, based on the information gathered during the interview. As stated before, firefighting is a physically demanding job, and our community expects us to be capable of performing it when they call us for an emergency. We should understand their physical ability before hiring them, as this will help prevent potential issues related to physical fitness incapability.

As current employees, we are responsible for maintaining our physical fitness. Currently, the Town of Moncks Corner Fire Department has an SOG in place that requires employees to do one hour of physical fitness per day while on duty. This assessment would ensure that employees are following this SOG and

can identify any physical fitness issues. Maintaining physical fitness can help decrease on-the-job injuries and overall health problems. The FPAT would be used for a semiannual physical fitness assessment. All FPAT components can be incorporated into our training schedule to enhance proficiency in the necessary tasks.

Implementation:

- Current employees will all complete the FPAT
- Average of times, plus an additional allotted time for new hires (TBD)
- Current employees complete the assessment within average time
- Work up to completing assessment in full firefighter PPE

The quote is \$52,445 for the complete FPAT system. If we can implement the whole system, it will ensure compliance with the other departments in the area and provide a system that is unbiased and fair to all.

Exhibits: FPAT Quote

Funding: This is an unbudgeted item that will be included in the budget adjustment ordinance. There is enough unobligated but budgeted funds in the Fire Department to cover this cost. Therefore, it will not increase the total budget for the Department.

City Council action requested: Authorized the purchase of the FPAT system.