

/Kelly Foreman, Public Information Officer

Changes set to go into effect on Jan. 1 to the physical agility portion of the Peace Officer Professional Standards will allow chiefs and sheriffs to select candidates from a greater applicant pool, said Don Pendleton, Department of Criminal Justice Training director of training support and special committee member.

After careful consideration of empirical data under the leadership of Dr. Bryant Stamford, a special committee appointed by the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council recommended that a weighted standard of scoring be established. Up-

males at a rate of only 21.6 percent.

“There has been discussion in the law enforcement community with chiefs and sheriffs for some time that the female pass rate on those tests has been less than ideal,” Pendleton said.

In a preliminary test of 20 females, results showed that under the existing scoring scheme, one in 20 applicants received a passing score. However, when the same females were scored under the weighted system, nine passed and three others came close to meeting the standards. Testers felt confident that given the opportunity for pre-test training, the passage rate could have been boosted to 60 percent.

were done. That was a failure,” Pendleton said. “We have allowed a second start to facilitate that if somebody’s shoe comes untied and can’t complete the run, they could do it again the same test day, that kind of thing. So, there are some things that are being done that will help try to facilitate more success in addition to the weightedness of the scores.”

The weighted standard only will apply to entry standards, Pendleton said. The exit standards will remain the same and will be scored the same as in the past.

“Keeping the current academy exit standards benefits recruits in two ways,” Jumper said.

Physical Performance Points Distribution

Event	9 pts	9.5 pts	10 pts	10.5 pts	11 points
Bench Press (% body weight)	55.3%	59.7%	64%	68.5%	≥ 73%
Sit Ups (repetitions)	13	16	18	-----	≥ 18
300 Meter Run (seconds)	68	67	65	-----	≤ 65
Push Ups (repetitions)	14	17	20	23	≥ 25
1.5 Mile Run (min:sec)	17:56	17:34	17:12	16:44	≤ 16:15

holding the standards already in place, the validity of the five-component test battery included in POPS will not be altered.

Stamford, a professor, consultant, author and principal investigator for the 2001 study, which led to the previous POPS revision, was contracted to evaluate the standards. Stamford’s previous experience and understanding of the issue was an important part of the evaluation process, Pendleton said. Eight others from various levels of law enforcement served on the review committee.

A chart has been established to show how points gained through physical performance during the test will be distributed to reach an overall minimum score of 50 points. Each test in the five-test battery now will have a range of scores to meet instead of the previous pass or fail score of 10 points per test. (See above chart for further details of new weighted standard.)

The change is expected to most greatly affect females, who historically have failed the physical agility test at a rate of 66.8 percent, compared to

“The changes to the Peace Officer Professional Standards will not affect our expectation of the recruits,” said Joe Jumper, senior DOCJT Physical Training and Defensive Tactics Section instructor. “The physical training section still will teach the importance of fitness in law enforcement. We still will continue to motivate the recruits when they are outside running two to four miles or inside lifting weights. It is incumbent upon this section to make sure the recruits are fit enough to protect themselves and the community when they graduate DOCJT.”

Additionally, the study addressed potentially negative test protocol issues, such as elements which could penalize applicants and make it difficult for them to demonstrate their ability to pass the tests. Some of the issues related to the bench press test, pacing issues in the 300 meter and 1.5 mile run and time restrictions. Several recommendations were made by the committee to reduce these issues.

“As an example, in the 300-meter run, typically if for some reason you tripped and fell, you

“First, the exit standards set a goal. If a recruit doesn’t work sufficiently enough to meet that goal, she or he will not graduate the academy.

“Second, recruits finally are given the opportunity to see for themselves how much they have improved physically and hopefully maintain their fitness throughout their career,” Jumper continued.

Pendleton also stressed that there will be no compromise on what it takes to graduate and become a police officer, but said there is an expectation that the changes will lead to a more complete applicant pool.

“Law enforcement strives to represent the communities we serve and the greatest group impacted currently has been females, so allowing law enforcement executives to consider those persons in their applicant pool will be a tremendous improvement,” he said. “Now, how many more are employed is their call, but the ability to consider additional people that more represent the community is important.”

Changes Made to Test Protocols

WEIGHTED PHYSICAL-AGILITY STANDARD ENACTED FOR POPS

/Photo by Elizabeth Thomas