


# Fire Department

Departmental

**MEMO**

## City of Salisbury

**To:** Mr. John R. Pick, City Administrator**Date:** 19 April 2005**From:** David B. See, Chief of the Department**Subject:** Additional Background Information - Medical Physical Standard  
for Operational Personnel

The safety of fire department personnel is our first and foremost responsibility and includes the physical and mental health and well being for each member. In July 2003, the department adopted the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1582, Comprehensive Occupational Medical Programs for Fire Departments. This nationally recognized standard is used by numerous fire departments worldwide as the standard for the medical physical requirements for personnel. Since its adoption, this standard has been applied, without modification, by the department's physician in the performance of pre-employment, bi-annual, and return to duty examinations for all department personnel. Not only does this standard outline the responsibilities of the fire department regarding the physical health and well being of personnel, it also provides a detailed medical examination for personnel including the following components:

- Vital signs
- Head, eyes, ears, nose, and throat (HEENT)
- Neck
- Cardiovascular
- Pulmonary
- Breast
- Gastrointestinal
- Hernia
- Lymph nodes
- Neurological
- Musculoskeletal
- Skin (includes cancer screening)
- Vision
- Blood and urine tests

As the department provided medical physical examinations in strict compliance with this standard, it became apparent that the strict letter of this policy often prevented some otherwise healthy members from providing operational services. This adverse impact on the department's operational personnel caused us to take an in-depth look into the long-term ramifications of continued use of the standard.

Several major areas of the unamended NFPA 1582 that Dr. James Burns, the department's Medical Director, felt would hinder our volunteer recruitment and retention efforts concerned the stringent standards regarding cardiovascular disease, non-insulin dependent type II diabetes, asthma/COPD, smoking, and orthopedic problems of a nature that can be treated and rehabilitated without unnecessary dangers to the personnel involved. Therefore, he suggested that we draft a department medical physical standard based on NFPA 1582 that would be applicable for all department personnel. The department standard would ease the adverse impact brought about by strict adherence to the NFPA's document, and would, at the same time, ensure the medical physical safety for department members. Our program would provide the additional benefit of a process of treatment or rehabilitation to correct the medical deficiencies identified in the examination process – something not addressed in the NFPA standard. The revision is completed, includes some copyrighted material from NFPA, (with that agency's authorization) and is ready for implementation. Note: The revision process included consultation with a medical spokesperson for volunteer department members. Subsequently, Dr. Burns has requested that we seek the endorsement of the City Council for implementation of this document. Therefore, I am requesting that the City Council officially adopt this revised medical physical standard to ensure the safety of operational department personnel.

A resolution for consideration by the Council is attached. Should you have additional questions regarding this information please do not hesitate to contact me immediately.

cc: File

**Resolution No. 1242**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, MARYLAND ADOPTING THE CITY OF SALISBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT'S PERSONNEL MEDICAL PHYSICAL STANDARD.**

WHEREAS, firefighting activities expose personnel to strenuous mental and physical activities requiring operational personnel to be physically fit and medically qualified; and

WHEREAS, the medical well-being of fire department personnel is important and directly impacts the department's delivery of efficient and effective services; and

WHEREAS, the department's Medical Director has prepared a written medical physical standard based on nationally recognized standards outlining medical physical requirements for operational fire department personnel; and

WHEREAS, the department requests that the City Council officially adopt this medical standard to ensure the protection of its members,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, MARYLAND, adopts the City of Salisbury Fire Department Medical Physical Standard for all operational members of the department.**

THIS RESOLUTION was duly passed at a meeting of the Council of the City of Salisbury, Maryland held on May 9, 2005, and is to become effective immediately upon adoption.

ATTEST:

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Brenda J. Colgrove, City Clerk

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Michael P. Dunn, President  
Salisbury City Council

APPROVED BY ME THIS:

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2005

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Barrie P. Tilghman, Mayor