



What Counties Need to Know



Why Readiness for Duty?

The Readiness for Duty program was created by the Healthy County program of the Texas Association of Counties Health and Employee Benefits Pool (HEBP) to save lives, and improve the health, fitness and longevity of law enforcement personnel. Improved health will play a vital role in an officer's ability to do their job safely and effectively. Healthy and fit officers are equipped to protect themselves and the public and resolve high intensity situations without using deadly force. The Readiness for Duty program should also result in a reduced number of injuries and medical claims costs, which may help county budgets.

The program aims to simultaneously reduce medical, workers' compensation and liability claims incurred by law enforcement personnel. Readiness for Duty is based on the Texas Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Physical Fitness Program. However, each county will be able to develop a customized Readiness for Duty program that fits its own needs and culture.

Why Have a Program For Law Enforcement Officers?

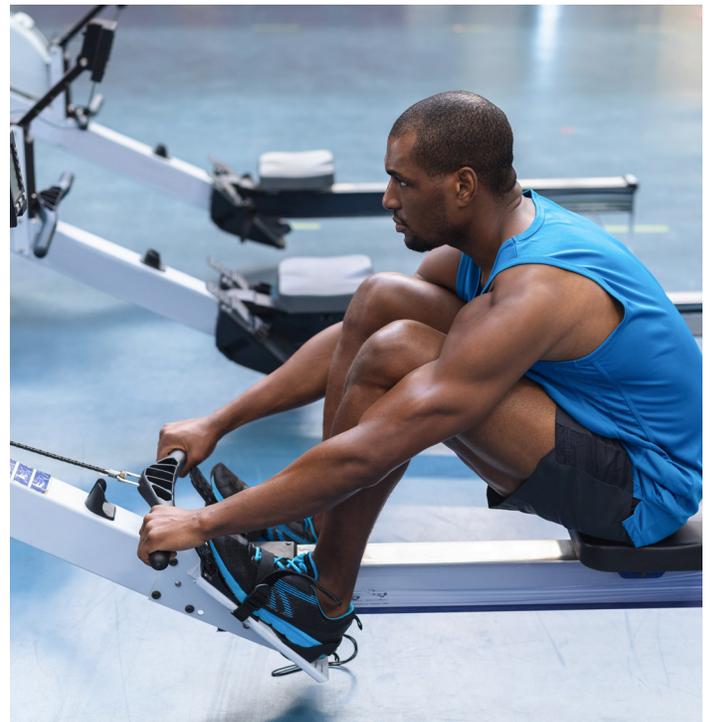
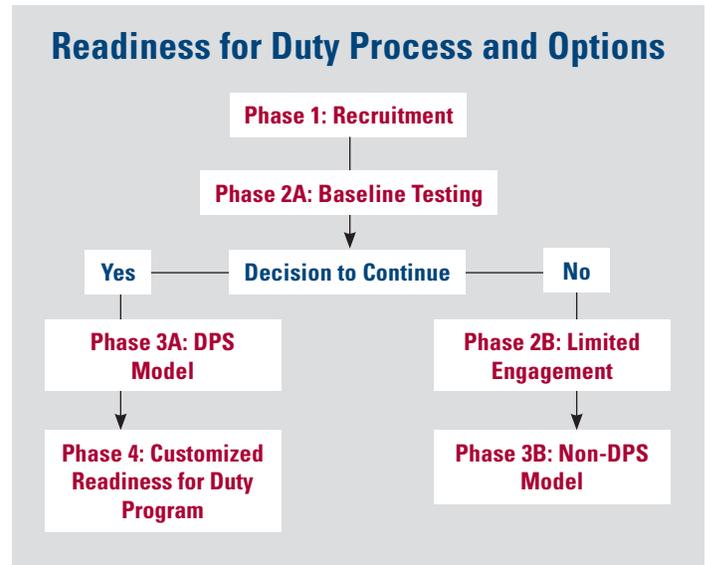
- The average age at death of a law enforcement officer in the United States is 57.
- Officers live 22 fewer years than the average American.
- Officers are 25% more likely to die of heart disease.
- 20-25% of officer retirements are due to heart disease.

Benefits to the Sheriff's and Constable's Offices:

- Help deputies and jailers live healthier and more productive lives, benefiting themselves and the public;
- Reduce the risk of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, which are known factors for heart disease;
- Help fulfill occupational duty of care requirements or recommended practices;
- Help control future costs and save lives;
- Reduce turnover and early retirement;
- Improve career longevity; and
- Reward your officers and jailers for making smart choices.

Program Phases Overview

- Phase 1: Recruitment**
- Phase 2A: Baseline Testing**
- Phase 2B: Limited Engagement Option**
- Phase 3A: DPS Model**
- Phase 3B: Non-DPS Model Option**
- Phase 4: Customized Readiness for Duty Program**



Phase 1: Recruitment

During recruitment, your county will receive a presentation outlining the new program, its benefits, options, and the various resources available from TAC HEBP to assist in development and implementation.

Phase 1 must be completed at least five weeks before Phase 2 to allow time for scheduling, pretesting physical examinations and delivery of equipment.

Phase 2A: Baseline Testing

All participating employees will complete a workshop with TAC HEBP and DPS before baseline testing begins. This workshop is mandatory for counties to receive the equipment needed to complete the testing. Baseline testing will be conducted by a certified DPS instructor using the DPS testing protocol and a rowing machine provided by TAC HEBP (only the rowing machine model provided by TAC can be used for program). All participants will be required to complete a medical exam before testing. (All fully pooled TAC HEBP groups have unlimited annual physical exams as a covered benefit.) No employee will be allowed to participate without the completion of the medical exam (a medical exam completed within the last six months will be accepted).

The sheriff or constable should give employees a reasonable amount of time, not less than 15 days, to complete the pre-test medical exam. TAC HEBP will provide the required medical exam documentation forms, which will be collected the day of testing.

Baseline testing will involve the following:

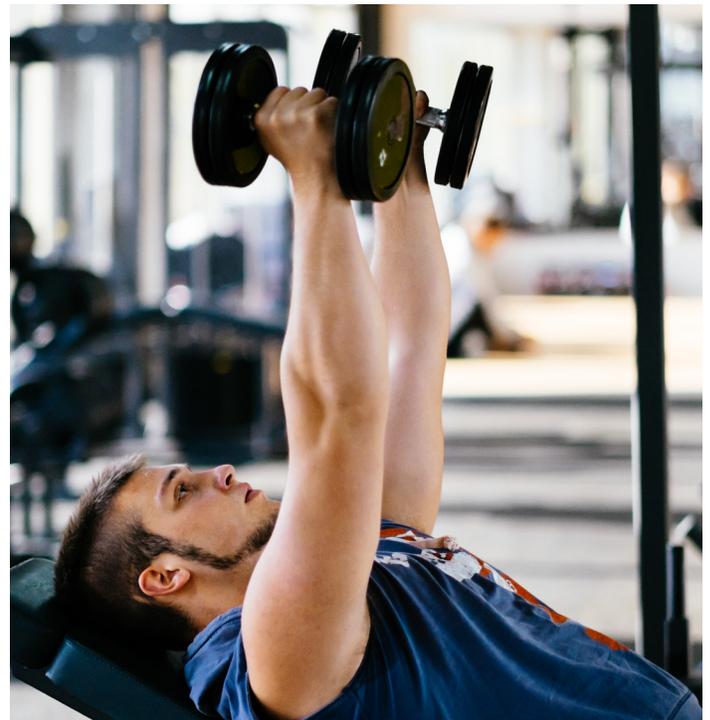
- Employee workshops will be held prior to the baseline test, detailing the procedures;
- All participants must attend the workshop in order to complete the test;
- Each participant will take 30 minutes to complete the test;
- The results will be submitted to and analyzed by DPS; and
- Baseline test results will be presented to the sheriff or constable.

The results will include a baseline ranking from comparisons to similar groups, and recommendations for testing standards by DPS staff. The sheriff or constable will have the option to accept the recommendations and continue with the program by adopting the DPS model or use an alternative, non-DPS model.

If every eligible employee completes the baseline testing, the sheriff's or constable's office will be eligible for the Darren Jackson Fitness Award. The Darren Jackson Fitness Award is earned by a sheriff or constable and their office for demonstrating leadership with a focus on the health and fitness of their employees.

Phase 2B: Limited Engagement Phase

Limited engagement is for those counties that elect to pursue their own efforts and not follow the DPS model. These counties may be provided limited resources and tools from TAC, including the opportunity to take the baseline test twice a year.



Phase 3A: DPS Model

If the sheriff or constable elects to move forward with the DPS model, DPS staff and the sheriff or constable will jointly review the results from the baseline test and develop a retest goal for employees. This goal will be based on the percentile the sheriff or constable elects to adopt for his or her employees.

During this phase, one or two participants may be sent to the DPS Fitness Institute with expenses covered by TAC HEBP.

After the initial baseline and data analysis, employees will retest every six months to measure progress. If an employee fails the retest, DPS will provide resources to help them pass the test in the next cycle. However, if the employee fails the retest twice, they will be provided a fitness improvement plan (FIP) through DPS.

When 80% of participating employees achieve the DPS percentile standard for fitness (50%), the sheriff's or constable's office will be eligible for the Terry Pickering Fitness Award.

Phase 3B: Non-DPS Model.

Some counties may not wish to retest their employees or continue with the DPS model, but may still want to implement a fitness program. These groups may be provided with resources and tools from TAC HEBP in the form of training, webinars and small reimbursements for rowers. Groups in this phase will have the opportunity to retest and move to Phase 3A if they decide to adopt the DPS model.

Phase 4: Customized Program

Phase 4 counties have adopted a Readiness for Duty program with measurable results that have surpassed the DPS recommended fitness metrics. During this phase, the sheriff or constable will customize the program to address his or her department's specific needs by adopting the following components:

- County fitness policy;
- Mandatory DPS fitness standards and policies;
- Testing schedule;
- Incentives for participation and improvement; and
- Wellness workshops.

Additional financial resources for the purchase of equipment and/or for employees to attend the DPS Fitness Institute may be provided by TAC HEBP. The Readiness for Duty TAC Advisory Group will select employees to attend the DPS institute based on the recommendation of the sheriff or constable.

Employees recommended by the sheriff or constable for the DPS institute should meet the following requirements:

- Be physically fit enough to complete the training;
- Assist other employees on an individual basis as needed; and
- Become a certified fitness tester.

Program Evaluation

The Readiness for Duty program will be a long-term investment, and it is expected to have a positive effect on claims by decreasing the number of work-related injuries. This program will be assessed using three variables: fitness standards, claims data and surveys from program participants. The first type of assessment is DPS standards. Counties will be assessed on their improvement with the DPS fitness standards by a DPS representative. An analysis of their claims data will be conducted by the Readiness for Duty TAC Advisory Group. In addition, a survey will be administered to employees and leadership before and after fitness testing to evaluate the effectiveness of the Readiness for Duty Program.

To learn more about the Readiness for Duty Program, reach out to your County's Wellness Consultant, email healthycounty@county.org or call (800) 456-5974.

To learn more about the Healthy County program, visit www.county.org/healthycounty.
