

**COMMONWEALTH  
OF  
PENNSYLVANIA**

**PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION**

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
OFFICER CADET**



**CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET**

Revised January, 2017

## Introduction

The Pennsylvania Game Commission requires candidates to pass a Medical Examination and Physical Fitness/Agility Tests as part of the pre-employment selection process for Wildlife Conservation Officer Cadets.

This is an overview of those tests. We encourage you to read this material in its entirety and understand what will be expected of you when you report for testing.

After reviewing this information, if you have any questions regarding the medical examination or the physical fitness/agility test, please contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission Test Coordinator at the following address:

PA Game Commission  
Division of Human Resources  
2001 Elmerton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
Attention: Christine Worley  
(717) 787-7836

Wildlife Conservation Officer Cadets must effectively perform physically-demanding tasks which include:

1. Walking/running over difficult terrain and in all weather conditions
2. Climbing over, crawling under or moving around obstacles
3. Lifting, carrying, pushing, dragging up to 120 pounds
4. Forcing your way through barriers
5. Subduing and restraining combative subjects
6. Using defense and control tactics and disarming
7. Kneeling, squatting, bending, twisting and jumping
8. Using sidearms, rifles, shotguns and other devices commonly used in law enforcement
9. Swimming/wading

The medical examination and the physical fitness/agility tests are designed to determine a candidate's ability to perform the essential job tasks of a Wildlife Conservation Officer Cadet safely and effectively.

Following is an explanation of the physical fitness/agility testing process and how the tests are evaluated as well as standards that a candidate must meet. You are strongly encouraged to begin training early in preparation for this testing.

***Please Read This Disclaimer:*** *You should always consult your physician before participating in any health related, physical fitness, workout, running or swimming program. The information presented in this document is for resource purposes only. The Pennsylvania Game Commission accepts no responsibility for injuries sustained during preparation for, or participation in this testing.*

## Explanation of the Testing Process

The physical fitness/agility testing will be scheduled soon after the oral examination is completed. Only those candidates who score highly enough on the written/oral civil service examinations will be invited to participate in this testing. More information on this will be provided to those candidates.

The physical fitness/agility testing is very demanding. A medical clearance form will be required to participate. You must be examined by your family physician and be deemed fit enough to participate in the testing. You will not be permitted to participate in the testing if any physical or medical conditions are identified that would prevent you from participating safely in the physical fitness/agility tests. As such, you will be removed from the eligibility list.

Candidates must pass every test in order to advance in the selection process. No retests will be scheduled.

### Physical Fitness/agility tests and minimum performance standards:

- Vertical Jump - 15.5"
- One-Minute Sit-up - 30 repetitions
- 300-Meter run - 65 seconds
- One-Minute Push-Up - 30 repetitions (full body push-ups)
- 1.5 Mile run - 15:30
- Illinois Agility Run - 19 seconds
- Sit & Reach - 16"

These tests will be administered in the approximate order they are listed above. Cool down/recovery periods will follow each event.

The performance standards listed for this battery of tests constitutes a single standard for men and women, regardless of age.

## Preparation for Testing

### Before testing:

- Get a good night's sleep the night before the testing. Come to the test well rested.
- Allow yourself enough time to get to the site without rushing. Arrive at least 10 minutes before the stated reporting time.
- A proper warm up should be done prior to performing the tests. Warm-up should include stretching major muscle groups in the arms, shoulders, legs, back and abdomen. Performing warm-up exercises regularly and often will increase your flexibility, improve your performance on the tests and reduce the likelihood of injury.

- Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move freely. Bring a towel with you and, if you wish, a change of clothing and a bottle of water.
- Candidates should not eat a heavy meal for at least 2-3 hours prior to the test. Do not eat or drink anything immediately prior to testing, except water.
- Do not smoke or use tobacco within an hour of testing. Smoking or the use of tobacco will not be permitted at any time during the testing.
- Recovery after each test should be active (i.e. slow walking, gentle stretching)

## **Performing and Scoring the Tests**

### **Vertical Jump**

#### Procedures

1. Candidate stands with one side toward the wall and reaches up as high as possible to mark his/her standard reach on the yardstick.
2. Candidate jumps as high as possible and marks the spot on the wall above his/her standard reach mark. Prior to jump, one foot must remain stationary on the floor.
3. Score is the difference between the standard reach and top of the jump mark, to the nearest half inch.
4. The best of three trials is the score.

### **Sit-Up Test**

#### Procedures

1. The candidate starts by lying on the back, knees bent, heels flat on the floor, with the fingers laced and held behind the head. Avoid pulling on the head with the hands. The buttocks must remain on the floor with no thrusting of the hips.
2. The feet are held down firmly (by another person).
3. The candidate then performs as many correct sit-ups as possible in one minute.
4. In the up position, the candidate should touch elbows to knees and then return until the shoulder blades touch the floor.
5. Score is total number of correct sit-ups. Any resting should be done in the up position.
6. Breathing should be as normal as possible; making sure the candidate does not hold his/her breath.
7. Neck remains in the neutral position.
8. Do not pull on the head or neck.

## **300-Meter Run**

### Procedures

1. Candidate should warm up and stretch thoroughly prior to the test.
2. Candidate runs measured 300-meters at maximal level of effort. Time is recorded in seconds.
3. Upon test completion, candidate should walk 3-5 minutes to cool down. This is an important safety consideration.

## **Push-Up Test**

### Procedures

1. The hands are placed slightly wider than shoulder width apart, with fingers pointing forward. The scorer places one fist on the floor below the candidate's chest. If a male is testing a female, a three-inch sponge should be placed under the sternum to substitute for the fist.
2. Starting from the up position (elbows extended), the candidate must keep the back straight at all times and lower the body to the floor until the chest touches the scorer's fist. Candidate then returns to the up position. This is one repetition. Resting should be done only in the up position. Both hands must remain in contact with the floor at all times.
3. The total number of correct push-ups in one minute is recorded as the score

## **1.5 Mile Run**

### Procedures

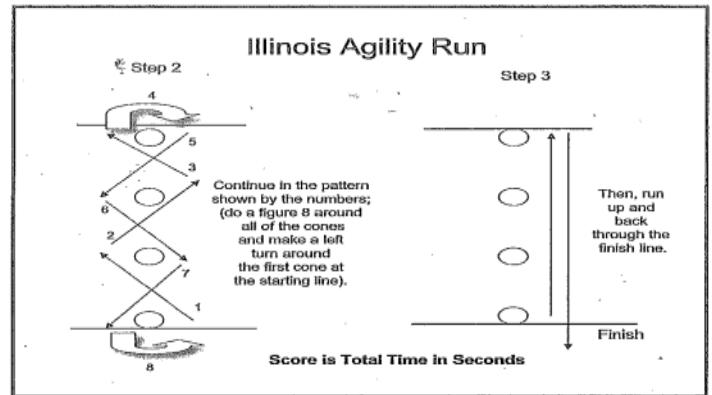
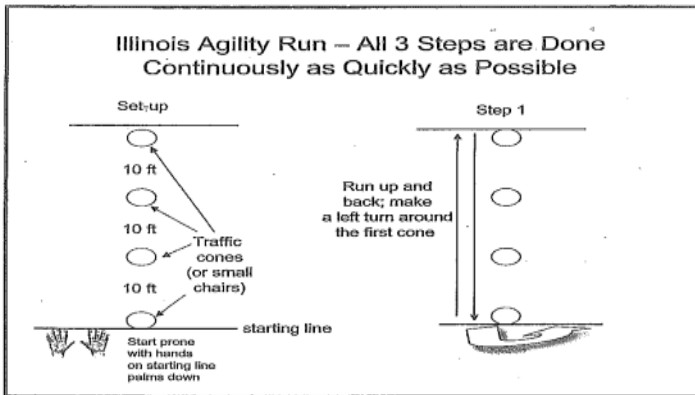
1. If possible, each candidate should have experienced some practice in pacing prior to the test. Often candidates will attempt to run too fast early in the run and become fatigued prematurely.
2. The candidate runs 1.5 miles as fast as possible.
3. During the administration of the test, clients can be informed of their lap times
4. Upon test completion, a mandatory cool down period is enforced. The candidate should walk slowly for about 5 minutes immediately after the run to prevent venous pooling (i.e., pooling of the blood in the lower extremities which reduces the return of blood to the heart and may cause cardiac arrhythmias).

## **The Illinois Agility Run**

### Procedures

As with any fitness test, a brief warm-up period (minimum 3 minutes) is recommended. Practicing the course by using a slow jog is recommended as part of the warm up. The cones are placed in a straight line 10 feet apart. The candidate starts from a flat prone position just to the left of the first cone with hands palms down on the starting line; then reacts to the starting signal. Sprint to the last cones, place at least one foot over the boundary line, turn around and sprint back. Make a left turn around the first cone and run a serpentine (figure 8) pattern around the cones up and back. Make a left turn around the first

cone at the starting line. Sprint to the last cone and back through the finish line. Score is the total time in seconds; recorded to the nearest tenth of a second.



## Sit and Reach

### Equipment

1. 12-inch box
2. Yardstick on box with 15-inch mark at edge

### Procedures

1. The candidate should warm up.
2. Shoes must be removed.
3. The feet are placed squarely against the box with the feet no wider than eight inches apart. Toes are pointed directly toward ceiling.
4. The knees remain extended throughout the test.
5. The hands are placed one hand on top of the other, fingertips even.
6. The yardstick is set on the box such that 15-inch mark is flush with the edge of the box.
7. The candidate leans forward without lunging or bobbing and reaches as far down the yard stick as possible. The hands must stay together and even and the stretch must be held for one second. Neck remains in the neutral position.
8. Record the reach to the nearest quarter inch.
9. Three trials are allowed; the best of three trials is recorded.
10. Exhaling on the reach is recommended.

## **Medical Testing**

Those candidates who pass the fitness/agility testing will begin the background investigation process. Candidates who pass background investigations and child welfare clearances and are given a conditional offer of employment will be provided details of the medical, visual and hearing examinations at that time.

The Medical examination will include a complete review of your medical history. This review will assess your current health status, recent injuries, recent or chronic illnesses and any medications you are taking currently. Your medical history review also will consider your resting blood pressure, resting heart rate (pulse), height, weight, smoking history, routine levels of exercise and physical activity.

You will supply most of the information needed for the medical history review by completing a Medical History questionnaire. All medical information you supply will be treated as confidential.

If a candidate fails to meet the physical fitness/agility requirements and/or fails to be deemed fit for duty medically or psychologically, the Game Commission will notify the Pennsylvania Civil Service Commission and have the candidate deactivated from the Wildlife Conservation Officer Cadet list and withdraw the candidate's conditional offer of employment. You will receive an explanation of why you were deemed ineligible.

The following tests will be administered as part of the medical examination after a conditional offer of employment is made.

- VO2 Max
- Swim Test
- Drug screening
- Psychological evaluation

### **VO2 Max**

This test is conducted on a treadmill under controlled conditions and is used to determine the candidate's cardiorespiratory fitness by measuring the amount of oxygen used during increasingly intense exercise. Performance on this test can be improved by regular cardio-respiratory exercise prior to the test.

### **Swimming Test**

The candidate will begin in the pool and swim laps the length of the pool the equivalent of 100 yards. Using the pool wall to turn and push off is acceptable. Immediately after completing this phase the candidate must continue to tread water for five minutes. Touching the bottom or using the pool walls or equipment for support at any time during the test will be considered a failure.

### **Drug Screening**

Samples for this screening will be taken during the medical examination.

### **Psychological Testing**

This will consist of a standardized psychological inventory and a follow up interview with a licensed psychologist.

## Self-Evaluation

At each stage of the testing, a candidate should reevaluate his/her lifestyle, family needs and interests and consider the working conditions of this position.

As a cadet, your lifestyle will change dramatically. The training program lasts about 50 weeks and includes both classroom instruction in residence at the school and field assignments. Cadets are required to live at the school facility in Harrisburg and may return home only on weekends. They work long hours and are granted leave only as the training schedule permits. They live and study in confined quarters with a group of other adults. Under these conditions, obedience to regulations, discipline and respect are necessary to ensure everyone is afforded a reasonable level of comfort with minimal stress and conflict. While enrolled in the training program Cadets learn to enforce laws and regulations, prosecute violators, conduct wildlife surveys, oversee Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers, conduct educational classes and lectures, habitat management activities, etc. Classroom subject matter includes wildlife management and natural history of wildlife, game laws and regulations, law enforcement principles and methods, public relations and land management. Field assignments give Cadets the chance to apply the principles covered in the classroom. During field assignments, Cadets work under the supervision of experienced Wildlife Conservation Officers, who monitor the Cadet's continued progress toward completion of the program. Performance in all stages of training is reviewed through written examination, formal inspections and individual evaluations.

The training is conducted under close supervision in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Cadets are required to pass a variety of tests with a minimum passing grade of 70 percent and must maintain an overall average grade of at least 80 percent for successful completion of the training program.

The training program was developed to provide the cadet with the knowledge base and skill set to perform the duties of a current-day Wildlife Conservation Officer. It is designed to approximate the daily demands of the job and to develop behavior patterns, positive work habits and interpersonal skills that will aid the officer in managing multiple tasks and interacting successfully with the many and varied people he or she will meet.

In order to participate in the training you must be able to reside at the Training School and at field assignment locations during the training period and...

1. You must be willing to work in all weather conditions and irregular hours, at any time of any day, including weekends and holidays and be available for emergency duty.
2. You must be willing to spend much of your time dealing with hunters and related organizations.
3. You must be willing to work alone in isolated areas and be exposed to certain elements of danger such as dealing with people who are armed and confrontational.
4. You must be able to work independently, without daily supervision, to complete assignments and meet regular deadlines.
5. You must be willing to wear a uniform and conform to Game Commission policies on grooming and appearance.



6. You must be willing to learn the use of unarmed self-defense and firearms, and to carry and use weapons as required by the job.
7. You must be willing to promote and support all Pennsylvania Game Commission operations and programs.
8. You must be able to perform all the essential functions of the position.
9. Upon graduation from the Ross Leffler School of Conservation, Cadets are promoted to Wildlife Conservation Officers and must be willing to accept assignment to, and service a district anywhere in the state, and to relocate to, and maintain an office in that assigned district.

**If you are unable or unwilling to fulfill all these conditions of employment, you are encouraged to withdraw from the selection process.**