

2026 FIREFIGHTER SAFETY STAND DOWN



Firefighter FITNESS: Fit to Serve, Fit for Life

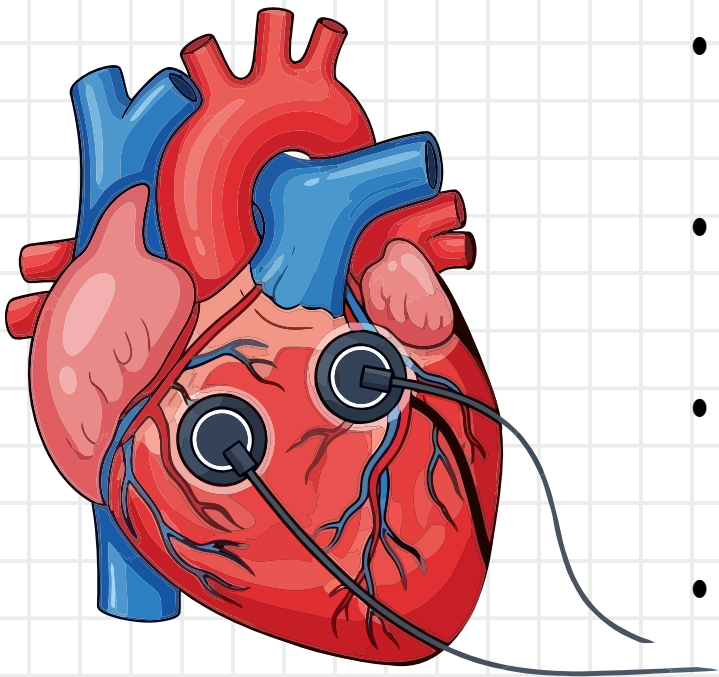
DAY 1- FOUNDATIONS OF FITNESS

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Understanding the health risks firefighters face serves as the foundation for taking the steps needed to remain physically fit.

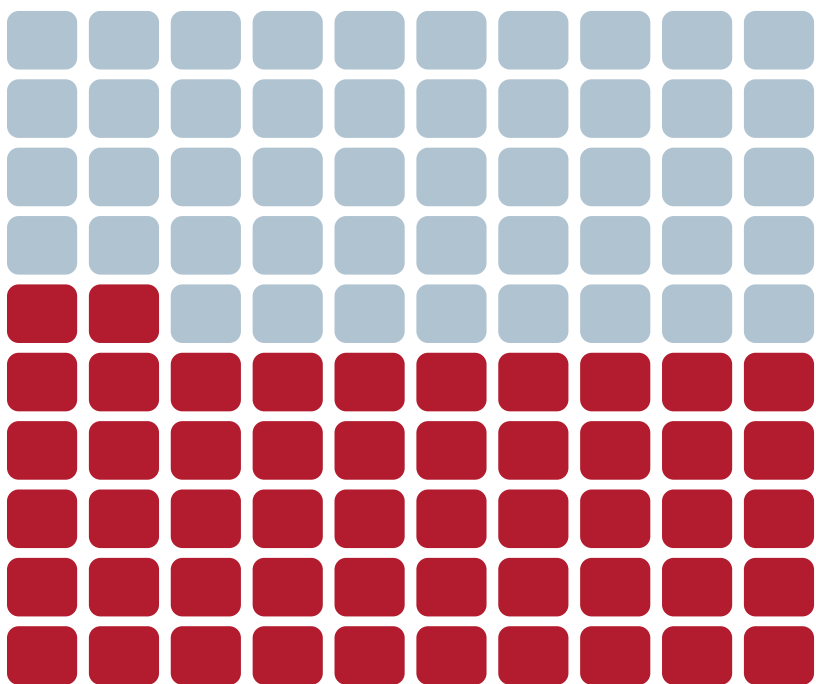
Sudden cardiac death is the leading cause of firefighter fatalities during job-related activities. Overexertion, strain, and underlying medical conditions represent contributing factors.

Firefighter Cardiac Fatality Facts:



- 39% of all on-duty firefighter deaths were sudden cardiac events.
- 30 fatalities were due to heart attacks, accounting for nearly half of total firefighter fatalities.
- 10 fatalities occurred between ages 45–49 (career and volunteer combined).
- Older firefighters (60+) saw increased risks, particularly for volunteer personnel.

DID YOU KNOW?



Slightly more than half (52 percent) of all departments do not provide individual exposure tracking, whether it is department-based or a mechanism for individuals.

- Exposure tracking at the department level is much more common among large departments than smaller ones.

KEY AREAS FOR INVESTMENT

When fire departments invest in firefighter health and safety, the positive impacts can be significant. Following are key areas and action steps fire departments can take to proactively support firefighter physical health and fitness:

Fitness and Health Programs

Action Step:

Enhance physical fitness programs to affirm readiness for strenuous firefighting tasks while reducing cardiac strain.



Medical/Physical Exams

Action Step:

Review NFPA 1580, Standard for Emergency Responder Occupational Health and Wellness, which provides guidelines for conducting physical and medical evaluations for firefighters.

Medical Program for Fire Departments

Action Step:

Strengthen prevention training to recognize signs of overexertion and monitor factors like heat exposure and dehydration.



Fitness Assessments

Action Step:

Refine annual medical evaluations to ensure fitness assessments are tailored to high-stress occupational activities.

