



## **USCG Body Composition Program FAQs**

Email questions to: [HQS-SMB-BodyCompPolicy@uscg.mil](mailto:HQS-SMB-BodyCompPolicy@uscg.mil)

### **Body Composition Program COVID-19 Mitigations FAQs (until 01 October 2021)**

1. Why is the Body Composition Program resuming on 01 April 2021?
  - a. The need for an operational Body Composition program is imperative to ensure our members meet operational needs and challenges, maintain a healthy weight and body fat percentage, and present a sharp, professional military appearance.
  - b. TTPs for conducting the body composition screenings in a COVID-19 environment were developed and implemented for the October 2020 measurements. To date there have been no recorded COVID-19 cases related to Body Composition Screening activities.
  - c. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce, the April 2021 Body Composition screening process has been modified.
2. When is the next semi-annual Body Composition Screening?
  - a. The next scheduled semi-annual Body Composition Screening will be 01-30 April 2021.
3. Since the April 2021 Semiannual BCS does not count do I have to complete it?
  - a. ALL military members must complete the April 2021 Semiannual BCS, failure to do so can result in disciplinary action.
4. What happens if I am not in compliance after taping?
  - a. Members not in compliance after taping must be referred to medical for counseling/screening, once the member has received medical counseling/screening if cleared to take PFT the member can attempt the PFT to show compliance, regardless of result the member will then be marked compliant in DA.
5. Is the PFT still a method of compliance?
  - a. Yes, it is still a temporary additional method of compliance and will be part of a continued pilot program for the April 2021 BCS.
  - b. If a member chooses to take the PFT, this desire must be communicated and approved by medical during counseling. It is recommended that members make a medical appointment prior to 12 April 2021 to ensure they can safely participate in the PFT, even if a member has yet to be measured for MAW or alternate compliance (but feels they



may not gain compliance in these measurements).

6. Are COs required to provide fitness time during duty-hours?
  - a. COMDTINST 6200.1E CG Health Promotion Manual states that all AD members must engage in fitness activity as outlined in their PFP, a minimum of 180 minutes per week. Operations and workload permitting, allow all military members (AD and SELRES) time for exercise and physical activity a minimum of 180 minutes per week during normal working hours. Commands do not have to comply when the unit is on a tropical hours schedule or deployed; however, military members are still required to adhere to the 180 minutes per week exercise standards as outlined in Paragraph B.1. in this Chapter. Commanding Officers of training centers may waive fitness enhancing activity and PFP requirements for military students if they determine course requirements fulfill the fitness enhancing activity requirement, or if fitness enhancing activity cannot be reasonably accommodated in the training schedule. In efforts to follow this policy, Commanding Officers and officers-in-charge may limit the working hours during which fitness activity may be performed to prevent or mitigate disruptions to unit or work-group efficiency and effectiveness and/or exclude participation by incumbents of civilian employee positions assigned activities that cannot be paused during assigned working hours without adversely affecting work being performed by other members, employees or work-groups, due to activity interdependency.
7. Does the requirement to pass "weigh-ins" prior to or at CPOA, PCO/PXO, TDY, etc. still remain?
  - a. No, due to COVID-19 impacts, CG-1 has issued a blanket waiver for AY21 to execution of PCS, School, and ADOS/TDY orders regardless of body composition compliance.
8. Will members be required to have height redone as part of the April 2021 semi-annual Body Composition Screening?
  - a. Yes, if they have not already had height rechecked on current tour. Personnel conducting screening can also require it regardless of last time it was performed.
9. How can Body Composition Screenings, specifically taping, be done safely?
  - a. First, if member or taper have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 they should not participate; second, gloves and face coverings must be worn by screeners. Remember to sanitize all objects/surfaces before and after a screening. There is a safe taping guide "Procedures Update" on the CG Body Composition website:  
<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/military/Body-Composition-Program/>



10. What if I am a Reservist or Active Duty member teleworking?
  - a. All CG members are required to comply with the Body Composition Program regardless of telework status.
11. If I am non-compliant with BC standards, can I promote/advance/be frocked?
  - a. Yes, if you meet the other policy requirements, being out of compliance with the Body Composition Program will not prevent those actions.
12. If I do not meet compliance will I receive a three or lower on my OER/EER?
  - a. The mandatory marks of three or lower for non-compliance have been waived due to COVID-19, so while the CO/OIC may still do so for other reasons it is not required for non-compliance with the Body Composition Program.
13. How does non-compliance affect my ability to get assigned to special assignments such as Command Cadre?
  - a. Body Composition Program compliance assignment restrictions have been waived by CG-1 due to COVID-19 impacts for AY 21.
14. How long will these COVID-19 mitigations be in place?
  - a. These special rules to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 will end 01 Oct 2021.

### **Body Composition Program General FAQs**

**(ones related to probation are not applicable during April 2021 mitigation)**

1. What is the difference between “weigh-in” and Body Composition Screening?
  - a. Body Composition Screening is defined as the process of measuring height, weight, and if needed, both taping procedures (standard or 2/3 site taping and Abdominal Circumference). Weigh-in as understood by most is the same as Body Composition Screening, it is just an outdated term.
2. What changed in the CG Body Composition Program following the October 2019 initial pilot screening?
  - a. The CG has formally adopted the Abdominal Circumference (AC) measurement alongside Body Fat Assessment (Standard Taping) as a valid Body Composition measurement. AC is now an official measurement in the Body Composition Program.
  - b. When a member exceeds their maximum allowable weight (MAW), they now have the option to tape AC measurement OR Body Fat Assessment (standard taping) OR both.
  - c. If the member exceeds their chosen taping standard, they may elect to be taped using the other method.



- d. The AC measurement is now a factor to help determine probation.
  - e. If unable to meet body composition standards through MAW, 2/3 taping or AC, the member will be provided medical guidance and, if medically cleared, will be able to use the PFT to demonstrate a suitable fitness level as a means to achieve compliance.
  - f. The PFT will be part of a continued pilot program for the October 2021 BCS.
3. If I choose to take the AC measurement and I exceed my maximum value how long do I have to elect to use Standard Taping?
  - a. A member who exceeds their chosen measurement must elect to take the second measurement during that taping session. The member cannot come back at a later date.
4. How will the AC measurement be used to calculate weight probation duration?
  - a. The AC measurement safe loss rate is 0.5 inches per month. Probation is not to exceed 8 months per policy.
5. How soon can I weigh-in after being placed on weight probation?
  - a. Members must wait 30 days from their initial weight probation determination to perform their first non-compliance weight screening.
6. What is the Commandant's vision and expectation of the Body Composition Program?
  - a. The Coast Guard needs to maintain a physically and mentally mission-ready workforce. Updating the body composition program is one step in improving the culture of health and wellness within the Coast Guard.
7. Why is this program changing?
  - a. The initiative to modernize the CG's Weight and Body Fat Standards policy was initiated based on feedback from the RAND Women's Retention Study and Holistic Analysis (WRSHA), inputs from the field, and benchmarks from other DoD services. In response, a multidisciplinary team studied the issue for several months and developed an improved body composition policy that benefits all members.
8. Why is it now called the CG Body Composition Program?
  - a. The name change to Body Composition Program is more in line with DoD policy and practices, and better reflects the CG's efforts to improve integration between medical and policy.
9. How were the minimum requirements for each required measurement determined?
  - a. All of the requirements for each required measurement were determined by using current medical and scientific conventions along with parity with DoD standards.



10. How is Abdominal Circumference different from taping?
  - a. The standard taping method is a measure of an individual's overall body fat. It does not indicate where that fat is located on the body. The Abdominal Circumference is a measure of abdominal fat irrespective of gender. This type of fat is indicative of an individual's overall health risk. Abdominal Circumference is a health risk indicator, not necessarily an indicator of a member's overall fitness level. Additionally, the measurement procedure is done differently from standard taping.
11. What is the max AC for women? Men?
  - a. The max AC for women is 35.5 inches and the max AC for men is 39 inches. If a member measures at or below their max they are compliant.
12. Why was 39 inches for men and 35.5 inches as the max AC chosen for men and women?
  - a. This criteria is based on medical health risk criteria for both genders.
13. Is Body Fat Assessment and AC measurement done over clothing? If so, what clothing?
  - a. All taping measurements will be made over the skin with the exception of hip measurements. Members requiring hip measurements will have the option to have their hips taped over USCG PT Gear. If that option is selected, one inch will be subtracted from the hip measurement only.
14. Are the height and weight measurements changing too?
  - a. No. MAW remains in line with DoD policy and is not changing.
15. I'm a YN. How do I record this?
  - a. DA has entry fields to allow for complete recording of body screening data thus eliminating the need for the complex data string in the comments section.
16. Why can't we use the body fat scales (i.e. electrical impedance devices) or other ways to measure?
  - a. The Coast Guard will explore this use of technology as it continues to evaluate the Body Composition standards policy.
17. What are the new parameters for medical waiver/abeyance?
  - a. CG-11 has provide guidance to medical officers through HSWL Service Center on authorized abeyances. If you think you might qualify for an abeyance please contact your servicing clinic.
18. Who maintains the sole responsibility to meet and maintain the Coast Guard's Body Composition Program standards?
  - a. It is up to the individual member to maintain a personnel readiness posture



including compliance with the Body Composition Program.

19. I am a Reservist, if I fail maximum allowable weight, standard taping, and abdominal circumference, who does my medical screening?
  - a. If the reserve member exceeds MAW and one or both taping measurements, the member will complete a medical screening form prior to the conclusion of the drill period in which their screening was conducted. Reservists will submit their forms to their Health Records Custodian (HRC). The list of HRCs can be found at [https://www.reserve.uscg.mil/Portals/2/Documents/PDF/HSWL\\_HRC\\_list\\_SELRES%232.pdf?ver=2018-08-17-135417-933](https://www.reserve.uscg.mil/Portals/2/Documents/PDF/HSWL_HRC_list_SELRES%232.pdf?ver=2018-08-17-135417-933). Please see ACN 113/19 for more information.
20. If a Cutter is underway and the IDHS cannot clear a member for whatever reason and they cannot see a medical doctor what should they do?
  - a. The command and IDHS should contact CG-11 at [HQS-SMB-BodyCompMedical@uscg.mil](mailto:HQS-SMB-BodyCompMedical@uscg.mil) for guidance.
21. Does the calculation for weight probation now include AC measurement?
  - a. Yes, weight probation calculations will now include AC measurement.
22. Who is not eligible for probation?
  - a. Members who exceed their maximum allowable body fat by more than eight percent, maximum allowable weight is over 35 pounds, and their abdominal circumference measurement is more than 4 inches over maximum AC and do not successfully complete a PFT are ineligible for probation and will be processed for separation.
  - b. If a member declines to take one of the two measurements, their separation will be based on screening weight and their chosen tape measurement.
  - c. Members who are non-compliant for a third consecutive time within a 14-month period are ineligible for probation and will be processed for separation.
  - d. Members receiving a third strike as explained in the CG Weight and Body Fat Standards Program Manual, COMDTINST M1020.8H.