



## **USCG Body Composition Program FAQs**

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

### **Resumption of Body Composition Screening & Pilot Program extension FAQs**

1. Why is the Body Composition Pilot Program being extended to 30 NOV 2020?
  - a. To allow for the second semi-annual screening as outlined in the pilot program lost due to COVID-19 screening suspensions.
2. 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 Weigh-in as understood by most is the same as Body Composition Screening, it is just an outdated term.
3. How long is the Body Composition Program suspended for?
  - a. It will resume on 01 October 2020. All military members are reminded to remain in compliance with body composition standards during the suspension period.
4. When is the next semiannual Body Composition Screening?
  - a. The next scheduled semi-annual Body Composition Screening will be 01 October 2020.
5. Is the PFT still a method of compliance?
  - a. Yes, due to the COVID-19 suspension of screenings, the pilot program which included PFT is extended to 30 NOV 2020.
6. How can the PFT be done to address COVID19 concerns?
  - a. Per policy the PFT is an OPTIONAL method of compliance. If chosen by member should use normal COVID19 precautions for instance: Members should maintain distance, use fixed object vs another person for securing feet during sit-ups if desired, and observer should visualize pushup distance versus closed fist under chest method. Participants for runs can be spaced to eliminate mask during actual run.
7. Will members be required to have height redone as part of the October 2020 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.



8. How can Body Composition Screenings, specifically taping, be done safely?
  - a. Guidance for taping was developed with CG HQS Office of Health Services & Office of Safety and Environmental Health. This guidance was sent out to all ADMIN staffs. General guidelines are: if member or taper have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 they should not participate; face coverings worn by all, and gloves must be worn by screeners. Remember to sanitize all objects/surfaces before and after a screening.
9. What if I am a Reservist but have been excused from drills or am an Active Duty member on fulltime teleworking?
  - a. Work with your Command on when it is practical and safe to complete your Body Composition screening.

### **Body Composition Screening General FAQs**

1. 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.
2. 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.
  - b. A member who exceeds their chosen measurement and declines to use the other taping method will be required to sign a CG-3307 indicating that the member declined the second measurement.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Why was 39 inches for men and 35.5 inches as the max AC chosen for men and women respectively?
  - a. This criteria is based on medical health risk criteria for both genders.



12. 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.
13. What if I don't want to get taped? Can I just get measured by AC?
  - a. Members who exceed their MAW can chose either AC or Standard Taping for their body composition measurement. If the member exceeds their chosen taping method, they will have the option to use the other method.
14. Are the height and weight measurements changing too?
  - a. No. MAW remains in line with DoD policy and is not changing.
15. What are the PT Test requirements?
  - a. The PT test is the standard Boat Crew PT test as specified in BOAT volume II.
16. Who will administer the PT test for my unit?
  - a. The CO or OIC of each command will designate personnel able to administer the PT test.
17. 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.



18. Does my CO or OIC have authority to deny my ability to take the PT test?
  - a. No. If a member is cleared by a Coast Guard Medical Officer and the member chooses to take the PT test they cannot be denied that opportunity to demonstrate compliance.
19. What is the process I go through in Medical to be approved for the PT test?
  - a. Member will have to be seen by their medical provider. CG-11 provided specific guidance for medical screening in ACN 113/19. In general, medical officers will ensure members are healthy enough to perform the PT test.
20. If I already take the boat crew test for my job, do I still need to weigh in? Get measured?
  - a. Yes, all military personnel will who are required to weigh-in will follow the process and procedures in [ACN 112/19](#) as modified by ACN 033/20.
21. What if I think I'm healthy enough for the PT test and medical says I'm not?
  - a. If a medical officer determines a member is not healthy enough for the PT test then the member will not be permitted to take the test for compliance. The member should work with the medical officer to develop a plan to improve their health and enable to them to take the test.
22. What if I have a waiver/abeyance that prevents me from doing one or more components of the PT test?
  - a. The PT test must be completed in its entirety if using as a method of compliance. A member with a medical abeyance or waiver would be considered compliant during the waiver or abeyance period.
23. Does the requirement to pass "weigh-ins" prior to or at CPOA, PCO/PXO, TDY, etc. still remain? Will those units that validate my weight/tape during those courses administer the PT test for me?
  - a. Yes all required "weigh-in" periods per policy still apply. Per the policy, members should be assessed upon receipt of orders for training such as CPOA, PCO/PXO, "A" schools, etc. In the event that a member is assessed for compliance upon arrival, all standards and procedures will apply.
24. I'm a YN. How do I record this?
  - a. After 01 Oct 2020, DA will have new entry fields to allow for complete recording of body screening data thus eliminating the need for the complex data string in the comments section.
25. 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.



26. What about underweight members? Are there any changes to that program?
  - a. There are no changes policy concerning underweight members.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. Does the calculation for weight probation now include AC measurement?
  - a. Yes, weight probation calculations will now include AC measurement.
32. 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 are ineligible for probation and do not pass PFT 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.