

Fire Services Fitness Test Preparation Guide

Physical Aptitude Test (PAT) - FRV, CFA & State Services

This preparation guide has been created by FITRME Performance to help you understand the physical demands of your entry assessment and prepare effectively. Use this checklist to structure your training and track your progress.

Note: Standards may change. Always confirm current requirements with the relevant recruiting authority. This guide is for general preparation purposes only.

TEST OVERVIEW: Fire Services Physical Aptitude Test (PAT)

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), CFA and other Australian fire services use a Physical Aptitude Test that simulates real firefighting tasks. The PAT is a circuit of physically demanding tasks performed with minimal recovery between stations. It tests muscular strength, endurance and cardiovascular fitness under sustained effort.

Common PAT Components

Task	What It Tests
Beep Test / Shuttle Run	Aerobic capacity (typically level 9.6 or service-specific)
Ladder Raise	Upper-body strength, coordination, technique
Hose Drag	Full-body strength, grip endurance, leg drive
Rescue Tool Hold	Shoulder endurance, grip strength, stability
Dummy Drag	Lower-body strength, grip, cardiovascular fitness
Tunnel Crawl	Mobility, claustrophobia management, endurance
Stair Climb (some services)	Leg endurance, cardiovascular fitness under load

Note: The exact tasks, order and standards vary between FRV, CFA and interstate services. The key challenge is performing multiple physically demanding tasks in sequence with minimal recovery. This requires both strength and sustained work capacity.

12-WEEK PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Fire service fitness tests demand a combination of strength, endurance and work capacity. Your training should reflect this - you need to be strong AND fit, not just one or the other.

WEEKS 1-4: Build Strength & Aerobic Base

- Establish 4-5 training sessions per week (2-3 strength, 2-3 cardio)
- Complete a baseline assessment: beep test, max pull-ups, grip hold time
- Begin strength training focused on: deadlifts, squats, rows, overhead press
- Build grip endurance (dead hangs, farmer carries, towel pull-ups)
- Start running 2-3x per week (easy runs + one interval session)
- Include loaded carries (sandbag, kettlebell) to simulate task demands
- Book a FITRME baseline assessment to identify weaknesses

WEEKS 5-8: Build Work Capacity

- Introduce circuit-style training to simulate PAT demands (minimal rest)
- Increase beep test training (practice 20m and 15m shuttle formats)
- Progress grip training: longer holds, heavier carries, rope climbs
- Add sled pushes/pulls to simulate hose drag demands
- Include stair climbing with load (weighted vest or backpack)
- Practice sustained effort: 10-15 minute circuits with strength movements
- Mid-point progress test: compare to baseline

WEEKS 9-12: Simulate & Peak

- Simulate PAT-style circuits: multiple tasks, minimal rest, timed
- Practice specific tasks if possible (ladder work, hose handling, dummy drags)
- Maintain strength while building fatigue resistance
- Complete full beep test practice (aim for level 10+ for margin)
- Practice performing grip-intensive tasks when already fatigued
- Full PAT simulation at Week 10 to confirm readiness
- Book a FITRME retest to verify improvement and readiness
- Light taper in final 3-4 days before assessment

TRAINING TIPS & KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Beep Test / Aerobic Capacity

- Aim for Level 10+ in training (well above the ~9.6 standard)
- Run 3x per week: one long run, one interval session, one tempo run
- Practice the shuttle run format with audio regularly
- Include rowing or cycling for additional aerobic volume without impact
- Build the ability to maintain effort when already fatigued

Strength & Power

- Deadlifts and squats: build full-body strength for lifting and dragging tasks
- Overhead press and rows: shoulder and back strength for ladder and tool work
- Pull-ups and chin-ups: upper-body pulling strength
- Loaded carries: farmer walks, sandbag carries, sled work
- Focus on strength-endurance: moderate loads for higher reps (8-15 range)

Grip Endurance (Critical for Fire)

- Dead hangs: work up to 90+ seconds
- Farmer carries: heavy loads for 40-60m without dropping
- Towel pull-ups and thick-bar work
- Rope climbs if available
- Practice gripping when hands are fatigued (end of workout)
- Aim to maintain grip under fatigue - this is the key differentiator

Work Capacity / Circuit Training

- Train circuits that combine strength and cardio with minimal rest
- Example: deadlift x 8, 200m run, farmer carry 40m, sled push 20m - repeat 3-4x
- Build tolerance for performing strength tasks when breathing hard
- Practice pacing: start controlled, maintain effort throughout
- Simulate the PAT format: 5-6 tasks back-to-back with 30-60s transitions

Test Day Checklist

- Get 7-8 hours sleep the night before
- Eat a substantial but familiar meal 2-3 hours before
- Arrive early and warm up thoroughly (focus on shoulders, grip, legs)
- Wear gloves if permitted (check with your service)
- Pace yourself through the circuit - controlled aggression, not panic

- [] Breathe deliberately between tasks - use transitions to recover
- [] Grip management: shake out hands between tasks when possible

HOW FITRME PERFORMANCE CAN HELP

FITRME Performance uses professional VALD testing equipment to objectively measure the strength, power and endurance qualities that fire service PATs demand. Our testing identifies your specific weaknesses so you can train with purpose.

What We Test

- [] Lower-limb strength and power for ladder climbs, hose drags, rescue tasks (ForceDecks)
- [] Upper-body and grip strength endurance for tool holds and hose work (ForceFrame)
- [] Hamstring strength for sustained physical tasks under fatigue (NordBord)
- [] Movement quality screening to reduce injury risk during preparation (HumanTrak)
- [] Speed and acceleration for shuttle run performance (SmartSpeed)

Book Your Assessment

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