

# Fit For Duty

## New Peer Fitness Trainer Curriculum includes more hands-on training.

Historically, the fire service has paid more attention to apparatus and fire stations than the men and women who provide emergency services. This has been the approach, unfortunately, despite the fact that fire fighting is one of the most physically demanding and dangerous occupations in North America.

As a result, fire fighter performance has suffered, and there are substantial personal and economic costs associated with fire fighter injuries and deaths.

The goal of the IAFF Wellness-Fitness Initiative (WFI) and the Peer Fitness Trainer (PFT) certification program has been to make sure IAFF members stay fit, healthy and capable of handling the unpredictable, physically demanding nature of the job.

But the WFI and PFT programs go much further than that. Each of you is not just a fire fighter. You are also a father, mother, brother, sister, loved one or friend. These programs are as much about preparing you for the job as they are about preparing you for life — both on the job and into retirement.

Established in 2003 in conjunction with the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the IAFF has reviewed the latest research on fire fighter injuries and exercise science to completely overhaul the PFT curriculum. The new PFT certification curriculum goes well beyond the specific incident to focus on the mechanism of injury in tissue, ligaments, cartilage and the musculoskeletal system.

“Having this greater understanding of the injury has allowed us to develop a program to increase a fire fighter’s capacity to meet the demands of the job,” says General President Harold Schaitberger.

In addition, feedback from IAFF members who have completed the PFT certification revealed a need for less lecture and more hands-on training and program design. Now, the majority of the lecture portion of the course is online, allowing instructors to focus on areas that help ensure they are successful as soon as they return to their departments.

This new curriculum, officially released in March 2015, was first beta tested in three locations — Seattle, Indianapolis and

Calgary. With each delivery, the curriculum was adjusted to ensure IAFF PFTs have the tools to design fitness programs for their department members.

The next step is to create a continuing education course for PFTs. The IAFF is offering a one-day course at the 2015 John P. Redmond Symposium/Dominick F. Barbera EMS Conference. Visit [www.iaff.org/redmondems](http://www.iaff.org/redmondems) for details. ■



The new more interactive Peer Fitness Trainer certification program focuses on movement and exercise science, with lectures mostly online.



### How to Become a Peer Fitness Trainer

Peer Fitness Trainers (PFT) must be able to design and implement fitness programs, improve the wellness and fitness of department members and assist with the physical training of recruits.

PFT candidates must attend a five-day (M-F) workshop delivered through a network of host sites to assist in preparing for the PFT certification examination.

PFT candidates must be a fire fighter, EMS provider or employed by a fire

department and involved in a fitness program and have a valid CPR certification.

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) awards certificates to candidates who successfully pass the specialty certification examination.

For more information, contact the IAFF Division of Health, Safety and Medicine at (202) 824-1571. ■

