



Special Operations Group

Specialist Selection Course Suitability Testing

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1 Special Operations Group

All prospective candidates for prescribed positions within Corrective Services must demonstrate wellness to prescribed standards. Part of this process requires them to successfully complete a fitness appraisal.

A set standard for all fitness tests must be reached to achieve a pass mark. This, and the physical (medical) evaluation, assesses the capability of the candidates to undertake required training programs and become a Special Operations Group (SOG) officer.

SOG Officers naturally prioritise their personal health and fitness, understanding that sound body and mind are critical to providing an effective and safe emergency response service. Some scenarios can involve lengthy periods of strenuous activity (e.g., cell extraction, non-compliant prisoner restraint, riot control).

Officers may also be required to run, walk, bend, lift and carry objects whilst dressed in restrictive clothing, such as personal protective equipment and Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA).

The most suitable candidates for the SOG Officer therefore view physical fitness as a lifestyle choice and partake in regular exercise and physical training, and regularly participate in team or individual sports, fitness activities, outdoors pursuits and/or arduous work.

2 Entry Level Fitness Testing

The Stage 1 Fitness Test includes four main components:

- 20 metre Shuttle Run/ Beep Test (aerobic fitness);
- Agility Test;
- Grip Test (average strength of both hands); and
- SOG Physical Abilities Test (PAT).

The minimum fitness standards are:

Gender	Beep Test	Agility Test	Grip Test (Avg both hands)	PAT
Male Under 40 yrs	Level 7.1	13 seconds	40 kg	Under 10 minutes
Male 40 yrs & over	Level 6.1	13 seconds	40 kg	Under 10 minutes
Female Under 40 yrs	Level 5.1	14 seconds	26 kg	Under 10 minutes
Female 40 yrs & over	Level 4.1	14 seconds	26 kg	Under 10 minutes

To meet these standards, we strongly encourage candidates to commence a training and fitness regime as soon as possible.

2.1 Beep Test (Shuttle Run)

Turn & Repeat



Start Position.

The candidate will stand behind one of the marked 20-metre lines prior to the start of the first auditory cue (“beep”).

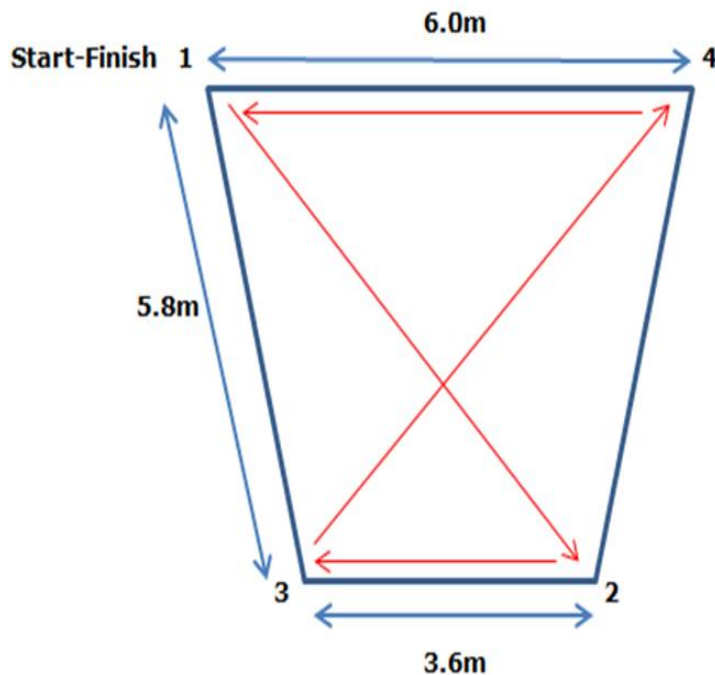
1. Candidates will walk-run between the two parallel lines, 20-metres apart, with one foot crossing over or on the line at the completion of each lap. Speed will progressively increase by 0.5 km/h at each stage.
2. Speed control is achieved with auditory cues (“beeps”) with the time between cues being shortened at the end of each minute.
3. For each single “beep” within any level, the candidate should be at one end of the 20-metre shuttle, and should commence running to the other end when the next cue is heard.
4. The candidate will continue until the required standard has been achieved or he/she is not able to maintain the required pace (determined by failure to maintain the timing pattern for two consecutive single “beeps”).

Incorrect Method/Standard

Candidate will fail this test under the following conditions:

- ☒ Candidate can no longer keep to the required pace.
- ☒ Candidate fails to maintain the timing pattern for two consecutive single “beeps”
- ☒ Candidate fails to place one foot on or over the 20-metre line

2.2 Agility Test



Start Position.

The candidate will start by standing at *cone 1* with hand in contact with the cone and feet behind the line.

Action

1. On the whistle the candidate will run as fast as they can to cone 2 and kneel down (sitting on heels). Buttocks should be touching the heels.
2. Get up, run to cone 3 and lie down (on back). Both shoulders should be touching the ground.
3. Get up, run to cone 4. Touch the cone.
4. Run back to cone 1. Touch the cone.
5. Course must be completed in the designated time.

Incorrect Method/Standard

Candidate will fail this test under the following conditions:

- ☒ Candidate fails to touch the side of each cone in sequence at the designated marked area.
- ☒ Candidate's buttock fails to touch heels (@ Cone 2)
- ☒ Candidate fails to lay flat on back (@ Cone 3)
- ☒ Candidate fails to complete the agility course in the designated time.

2.3 Grip Strength Test

The Grip Strength Test measures the maximum isometric strength of the hand and forearm muscles. The standards reflect maximal capacities providing indication that candidates have the basic capacity to grip and utilise and/or retain specific items related to the custodial environment such as handcuffs, batons, keys etc. Grip strength is also a key requirement during any incident that may involve the physical restraint of an offender.

Start Position

Hold the dynamometer in the hand to be tested. The base should rest on first metacarpal (heel of palm), while the handle should rest on middle of four fingers.



Stand straight (to attention) with feet slightly apart and the arm placed alongside the body. The Dynamometer should be facing out and must not contact the body or clothing.

1. Squeeze the Dynamometer with maximum isometric effort, and maintain it for 3 - 5 seconds. No other body movement is allowed.
2. Complete the process again with the same hand. The Assessor will record the better of the scores over the 2 attempts.
3. Repeat with the other hand. The assessor will take the better of the scores for each and obtain the average.

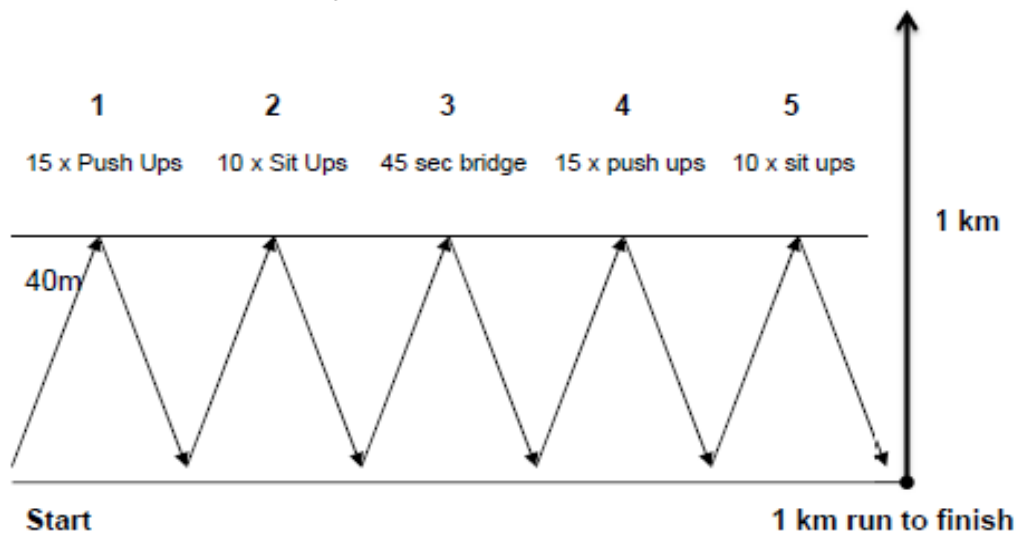
Incorrect method/standard

The candidate will fail this test under the following circumstances:

- ☒ Candidate does not achieve the designated level.
- ☒ Candidate allows the Dynamometer to touch their body or clothing
- ☒ The candidate bends the arm during the action of squeezing the Dynamometer
- ☒ The candidate swings the arm during the action of squeezing the Dynamometer

2.4 SOG PAT (Physical Ability Test)

SOG PAT (Maximum time 10 mins)



On the whistle the candidate will run to the 40 metre marker and complete 15 push-ups.

1. The candidate will run back to the start line, turn and run back to the 40mtr marker and complete 10 sit-ups.
2. The candidate will run back to the start line, turn and run back to the 40mtr marker and complete a 45 second prone bridge.
3. The candidate will run back to the start line, turn and run back to the 40mtr marker and complete 15 push-ups.
4. The candidate will run back to the start line, turn and run back to the 40mtr marker and complete 10 sit-ups.
5. The candidate will run back to the start line, and then complete a 1-kilometre run.

Incorrect Method/Standard

Candidate will fail this test under the following conditions:

- ☒ Candidate fails to run the full distance to the designated 40 metre marker/cone or back to the start line.
- ☒ Candidate fails to complete the push-ups, sit-ups or prone bridging to the required standard.
- ☒ Candidate fails to complete the PAT 1 in the designated time (10 minutes).

2.5 Correct Techniques

2.6 Push-ups

Push-ups are a test of upper body strength and endurance, as well as stabilising abdominal strength. They provide an indication of whether candidates have the basic capacity to support their own body weight or carry weight (e.g., breathing apparatus).

Start Position.

The candidate will adopt a push up position with the toes on the ground, feet together, arms shoulder width apart with palms flat. The back should be straight and the head looking forward or down and arms fully extended (the “up” position).



Action

1. From the “up” position, lower body until the elbows bend to a 90 degree angle. The body should remain generally in a straight line and parallel to the ground. This is the “down” position.



2. Keeping the body generally in a straight line, the arms are then extended so that the body returns to the “up” position.
3. Returning to the “up” position constitutes one repetition.
4. The push ups must be conducted in a continuous movement to the designated standard.

Incorrect method/standard

An incorrect push-up includes:

- ☒ Bobbing
- ☒ Bottom in the air
- ☒ Back arched
- ☒ Elbows are not bent at a 90 degree angle in the “down” position.

2.7 Sit-ups

Sit-ups provide an indication of whether candidates have the basic abdominal strength and endurance in supporting the body through a range of tasks. A strong abdominal region will assist in reducing the incidence of back injury when combined with correct lifting/dragging techniques.

Start position.

The candidate is to lie flat on their back, legs at a 45 degree angle, with feet resting flat on the ground. Both hands should make a fist, and arms should be fully extended with wrists resting on the front of your thighs. This is the “down” position.



Action

1. The neck and upper body are flexed in succession to raise the upper body. As the upper body is raised to the “up” position the hands slide up over the knees until the wrists touch the knees.
2. The body is then lowered until the shoulder blades touch the floor, thereby returning to the “down” position, constituting one repetition.
3. The chin is to be kept as close to the chest as possible to stabilise the head. The head is not to be jerked forward.

Incorrect method/standard

An incorrect sit-up includes:

- ☒ Hands lifted from the thighs/knees or jerked forward as a means of increasing leverage or used to pull the body up;
- ☒ Head is jerked forward;
- ☒ Heels or buttocks are lifted from the ground;
- ☒ Candidate fails to complete a repetition.

2.8 Muscular endurance prone bridge

Prone (face down) bridging tests the strength of the anterior and posterior muscles of the trunk (core muscles), as well as stabilising muscles of the upper and lower body. It is an indication that candidates have the basic capacity to support their own body weight or carry weight (e.g., breathing apparatus).

Start position.

The starting position for the prone bridge is similar to the push up, except the elbows are bent and the forearms are flat on the floor. Hands can either rest on the floor, be held together with the fingers interlaced, or clinched in fists (see picture).



Action

1. The candidate is to use their elbows and toes to push up and hold the body off the floor, keeping the back flat, abs tight and body completely straight.
2. The candidate is to hold this position for the 45 second requirement/component of the Physical Abilities Test (PAT) 1.

Incorrect method/standard

The candidate will fail this test under the following circumstances:

- ☒ Body is not held up off the floor for the desired period of time (45 seconds);
- ☒ Body is not maintained in a straight line, resulting in excessive arching of the back;
- ☒ Any portion of the candidate's body, apart from the elbows, forearms and toes makes contact with the ground.

3 Specialist Selection Course (SSC) Suitability Testing

The information below is a guide to assist those of you who make it through to the Specialist Selection Course Suitability Testing (SSC BT) phase.

SOG Officers are required to demonstrate a high level of physical and mental endurance throughout training, and whilst on the job in order to effectively provide an emergency response service.

Some scenarios demand lengthy periods of strenuous activity (e.g., cell extraction, non-compliant prisoner restraint, riot control). Officers may also be required to walk, run, bend, lift and carry heavy equipment whilst wearing restrictive clothing, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA).

4 Resilience

4.1 What is Resilience?

- The power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after bent, compressed or stretched
- Ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like, buoyancy

Some definitions of resilience;

- **Psychological Resilience** - is the ability to successfully cope with a crisis and to return to pre-crisis status quickly
- **Mental Toughness** - is a measure of individual resilience and confidence that may predict success in sport, education and the workplace.
- **Mental Fortitude** - defined as the ability to focus on and execute solutions when in the face of uncertainty or adversity

4.2 Why is it important?

If we are able to manage physical, psychological and emotional adversity and make the right decisions by developing resilience, adopting the appropriate mindset, improving mental toughness and developing leadership skills – then we will greatly improve our performance levels, increase our capacity and contribute more to our community.

The SOG SSC BT is therefore designed to ensure candidates are able to withstand the rigor of the SOG Specialist Selection Course (SSC), as well as the physical and mental demands of any prolonged emergency response.

The SSC BT will involve three phases:

4.3 Phase One

A series of physical strength and endurance exercises, including:

- Cadence push-ups – at least 21 is required, however maximum effort is recommended;
- Cadence sit-ups – at least 30 is required; however maximum effort is recommended

- 2 x Chin ups and a 30 second hold whilst wearing a 7kg weighted vest;
- 2.4km run in under 12:00 mins

4.4 Phase Two - Individual circuits

This phase will involve various body weight, sprints and torsion bar workouts, which are designed to simulate the task of using and carrying essential response equipment, such as CABA, Method of Entry (MOE), PPE and riot equipment.

This phase will assess the candidate's upper and lower body strength and muscular endurance, as well the ability to adhere to instructions whilst under stress.

4.4.1 Torsion Bar Circuit

Candidates will be required to conduct a circuit using the torsion bar, the circuit will include exercises such as shoulder press, tri-cep extension, front raise, squat to a cadence.



Figure 1 - Torsion Bar

4.4.2 Respirator Circuit

Candidates will also be required to complete one circuit whilst wearing a respirator. This is designed to test for "Gas Mask Phobia", a term used to describe the feelings of claustrophobia associated with wearing a protective mask.

It is characterised by feelings of panic, inability to get air, sweating and hyperventilation. Gas Mask Phobia has the potential to significantly impair a person's ability to perform core job functions of the SOG.



Figure 2- Respirator

4.5 Phase Three - Teamwork/individual scenarios

Phase three scenarios are designed to assess the candidate's mental, physical and decision-making skills whilst under duress and physical demands. This phase will also test for upper and lower body strength and endurance, grip strength, shoulder stability and cardiovascular fitness.

The three segments are:

Stretcher carry

- This exercise simulates evacuating an injured person from an incident.

Equipment carry

- This exercise simulates staff being required to carry equipment over a distance.

Communications Drill

- This phase will test candidates abilities retain information provided to them whilst working under duress.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate leadership, teamwork, judgment, communication and adaptability skills during this phase.

5 Decision Panel

It is expected that candidates maintain maximal effort and continued participation in all tasks.

- **No feedback will be provided to the candidate on the day.**

At the completion of the SOG SSC BT, a Decision Panel will convene to review all results and assess each candidate's performance, attributes and resilience.

Document version history

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0.2	Ben Leadbeatter	Updated following review	27 Feb 2020
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Related documents

Document title	Document reference no	Revision date
SSC Suitability Testing Manual	N/A	27 Feb 2020
Corrective Services Fitness Manual	N/A	