

## MEDICAL EXAMINATION FAQs – PART 7

### CARDIOPULMONARY FITNESS STATION

**Q-1: What is tested at the Cardiopulmonary Fitness (Stairmill) Test Station?**

A-1: At the Cardiopulmonary Fitness Test station, you will take a test on a stairmill to determine your ability to meet the aerobic demand of EMT tasks. This test is often referred to as the “stairmill test.”

**Q-2: Must I pass an examination before I can take the stairmill test?**

A-2: Before you can begin the stairmill test, an FDNY nurse will review your completed computerized medical questionnaire and the results from the Vital Signs, electrocardiogram (EKG), and Pulmonary Function Test stations to check for any medical conditions that may make it unsafe for you to proceed with the stairmill test. Such conditions may include:

- A systolic blood pressure exceeding 140 (mmHg) or a diastolic blood pressure exceeding 90 (mmHg);
- An irregular heartbeat;
- A bone fracture that occurred within the last 12 months;
- The chronic use of prescribed medication including, but not limited to, blood thinners, beta blockers, anticoagulants, sedatives, and narcotics;
- A history of heart disease, including a heart stent;
- A history of stroke;
- Morbid obesity;
- Recent surgery; or
- A history of pulmonary disease.

**Q-3: What happens if the FDNY nurse who reviews my information determines that I should not proceed with the stairmill test?**

A-3: If an FDNY nurse, in his/her medical opinion, believes that you should not proceed with the stairmill test, you will be verbally notified that you may not take the stairmill test until an FDNY physician reviews your condition(s) and/or medical test result(s). In that case, an FDNY physician will examine you and review the medical test results and/or conditions, and make a decision about whether you can safely proceed with the stairmill test.

**Q-4: If an FDNY physician determines that it would be unsafe for me to take the stairmill test on the day of the medical exam, may I take the stairmill test another time?**

A-4: If an FDNY physician determines that it would be unsafe for you to take the stairmill test, you will be permitted to schedule another stairmill test when the condition has been properly treated and has resolved.

**Q-5: What happens during the stairmill test?**

A-5: You will climb on the stairmill for a total of five minutes. For the first minute, you will climb at a rate of 50 steps per minute. For the next four minutes, you will climb at a rate of 58 steps per minute. The five- minute period will be continuous – there will be no break.

A uniformed member of the FDNY will be present to act as a spotter, and the test will be observed by FDNY medical personnel (a physician, a nurse practitioner, a physician assistant, paramedic or a registered nurse).

**Q-6: What would cause me to fail the stairmill test?**

A-6. You will fail the test if any of the following occurs:

- You voluntarily stop before you have completed the five minutes; or
- You step or fall off the stairmill for any reason before the end of the five-minute period; or
- You touch any part of the stairmill with one or both of your hands, arms, or any other body part; or
- BHS personnel observe signs of dizziness or physical distress (for example, clutching one's chest, loud audible wheezing, uncontrolled coughing, vomiting or retching).

**Q-7: If I fail the stairmill test or it is determined that it would be unsafe for me to take the stairmill test, can I still complete the other 11 stations?**

A-7: You will be allowed to complete the remaining stations unless an FDNY physician has determined that it is not safe for you to continue with the other parts of the medical exam. The stairmill test (or an alternative test that BHS advises is acceptable) must be successfully completed, however, before you can be appointed as an EMT.

**Q-8: If I fail the stairmill test, may I take the stairmill test another time?**

A-8: If you fail the stairmill test, you will be evaluated by an FDNY physician. Based upon the physician's assessment, you will be permitted to schedule a retest.

**Q-9: If I am eligible to take the stairmill test a second time, how long will I have to prepare for it?**

A-9: You will be scheduled for a second stairmill test to take place between 30 and 45 days after the first stairmill test so that you have time to improve your physical conditioning.

**Q-10: Is the second stairmill test the same?**

A-10: Yes, the second stairmill test is the same as the first stairmill test.

**Q-11: If I don't pass the stairmill on the second try, can I take the stairmill test a third time?**

A-11: Yes, you will have three attempts to pass the stairmill test. If you fail the stairmill test on the third attempt, you will be issued a Notice of Proposed Disqualification (NOPD).