



Recommendation 83.1

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Dear Acting Captain Altorfer,

Our office has completed its review of the materials related to Recommendation 83.1 that have been submitted to us as part of the collaborative reform process. After reviewing the package and information provided by the Department, the California Department of Justice finds as follows:

Recommendation 83.1:

The SFPD should work with City HR to reinstitute a valid PAT [physical ability test] that is aligned with current policing and state POST (California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training) requirements within 180 days of this report.

Response to 83.1:

As a threshold matter, the City of San Francisco’s Department of Human Resources (DHR) controls and administers the PAT as part of the hiring process for SFPD officers. At the time this recommendation was made by the U.S. Department of Justice, DHR was transitioning from administering a trigger pull test to administering a hand grip test, as part of the overall PAT (SFPD’s PAT involves three other tests: sit-ups, push-ups and a wall agility run). SFPD noted that, partly in response to the high failure rate of female applicants with the trigger pull test, DHR and SFPD worked with a third-party entity to study whether DHR could replace the trigger pull test with the handgrip test without compromising the fairness or validity of this component of the PAT. During a three-and-a-half month period, from October 8, 2016 through January 22, 2017, DHR administered both tests to Academy recruits to determine whether it could transition to the handgrip test without any adverse impact on protected classes. The study concluded that DHR could transition to the handgrip test and DHR formally did so on July 30, 2017.

Because the PAT was going through a transition for a months-long period of time, the U.S. Department of Justice appeared to have been under the impression that SFPD had suspended the PAT, which is the reason it issued this recommendation. In fact, as SFPD notes in this package, DHR has administered the PAT test uninterrupted since 2014.

SFPD notes that POST does not specifically require law enforcement agencies to administer a PAT but SFPD nonetheless chooses to do so, consistent with Finding 83 which noted that a “selection process that does not include a physical abilities test is not optimal because physical skills are important for police officers” and that “PATs are supposed to ensure a police officer's ability to perform effectively and simulate police officer work.”

Because POST does not require a PAT as part of hiring, it has not suggested that law enforcement agencies include any specific components in any PAT. However, SFPD notes that POST does require a physical assessment as part of





any academy and that SFPD exceeds POST's requirement by providing 75 physical conditioning sessions during the course of the Basic Academy, which is more than twice the 36 sessions required by POST.

In 2017, SFPD established a SFPD/DHR Recruiting and Hiring Committee that would meet quarterly to assess current hiring practices and compare them to nationwide contemporary best practices. The Committee consists of the Officers-in-Charge of the Staff Services Division and the Basic Academy, the Sergeants of the Background Investigations and Recruitment Units, and the DHR Public Safety Team. SFPD notes that DHR was regularly providing the Committee with data on PAT, among other forms of data, up until the end of 2019. However, because of staffing and pandemic-related duty changes at DHR, DHR has not provided data on the PAT throughout 2020. Because PAT data is within the control of DHR, the Review Committee's inability to evaluate the data on a quarterly basis will not be weighed against SFPD for purposes of this review. Importantly, SFPD has provided evidence (i.e. meeting minutes) reflecting that the Review Committee nonetheless continues to evaluate the testing components on a quarterly basis, even without testing data.

Cal DOJ notes that the minutes indicate that SFPD is considering eliminating the PAT for lateral hires in part because it would streamline the hiring process. While this potential decision may be construed as inconsistent with Finding 83, it will not be weighed against SFPD for purposes of this review because it is not directly relevant to this recommendation.

Based on the all of the above, the California Department of Justice finds SFPD in substantial compliance with this recommendation.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. Thank you.

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Finding #83: The SFPD's is not administering a physical ability test (PAT). The SFPD sought to update or eliminate the PAT requirement to repeatedly pull a firearm trigger. As a result, the entire PAT must be redesigned and validated. As of the date of this report, the PAT is not part of the selection process and was therefore not a part of the assessment. However, a selection process that does not include a physical abilities test is not optimal because physical skills are important for police officers. PATs are supposed to ensure a police officer's ability to perform effectively and simulate police officer work. However, some elements of the test for SFPD applicants may be outdated and inconsistent with emerging practices.

Response Date: 12/01/2020

Recommendation # 83.1: The SFPD should work with City HR to reinstitute a valid PAT that is aligned with current policing and state POST requirements within 180 days of this report.

Executive Summary: When finalizing the DOJ Collaborative Reform report, the DOJ was under the impression that the PAT was interrupted for the implementation of the hand grip test in substitution of the trigger pull test. In fact, it was only a transitional period from one testing component to another. DHR has been running the PAT uninterrupted since January 25, 2014.

Compliance Measures

1. Evidence that department collaborated with City HR to reinstitute a PAT.

The San Francisco Department of Human Relations (DHR) is the city agency that controls and administers the Physical Abilities Test (PAT) for the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). DHR has changed the PAT for the SFPD twice in the last seven years. Prior to changing the test, DHR completed extensive evaluation studies. DHR collaborated with the SFPD to complete the evaluations, validate the proposed testing changes and initiate the new tests.

Information provided by DHR: Human Performance Systems, Inc. (HPS) began a validation study in May 2012. It took nearly 20 months to complete the validation study for the new PAT. The study began with site visits and Ride-Alongs with six Q-2 Police Officers from various Stations and shifts. These observations were then used to create the job analysis survey which was completed by over 150 Q-2 Police Officers. The job analysis found that eight physical abilities were required to perform essential Q-2 Police Officer tasks. A predictive validation study was conducted on Academy recruits from Recruit Classes 234, 235 and 237. At the conclusion of the validation study, Police Chief Greg Suhr was presented with four events that would comprise the SFPD PAT. Those four events were: a trigger pull component, sit-ups, push-ups and a wall agility run. DHR began administered the "new" PAT on January 25, 2014. The final report was titled "Development and Validation of Physical Performance Tests for City of San Francisco Q-2 Police Officers". See attachment 1 for the full report.



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Information provided by DHR: In the last few years the trigger pull component was replaced with a dynamometer grip strength test. A study began in October 2016 by Human Resources Research Organization (HUM Pro). The study took approximately nine months before the implementation. Both the trigger pull and hand grip tests were administered to 537 Q-2 Police Officer candidates from October 8, 2016 through January 22, 2017. 145 Recruits from Classes 252-255 were also administered the trigger pull and hand grip tests. HUM Pro provided DHR with their findings in a report titled "Examination of the Handgrip Test." DHR decided to replace the trigger pull test with the dynamometer grip strength test. The DHR Public Safety Team Staff and SFPD Staff worked together to transition the testing components. DHR began using the Hand Grip Test on July 30, 2017 to replace the trigger pull component. See attachment 2 for the full report.

From July 30, 2017 to present, these are the four components for the PAT: dynamometer grip strength, sit-ups, push-ups and a wall agility run. Below is a link to the SFPD website PAT information section which also includes a video displaying each of the four PAT testing events.

<https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/your-sfpd/careers/sworn-job-openings/physical-ability-test>

See **Attachment 1** Human Performance Systems Inc. Report

See **Attachment 2** Human Resources Research Organization Report

2. PAT requirements comport with state POST requirements.

"Cal DOJ asked that SFPD add an example at the end of compliance measure 2 to support the statement that SFPD is consistent with POST requirements related to the physical conditioning program and testing at the Academy. Cal DOJ also asked about the lack of DHR data for the past several months and if SFPD has requested that data. SFPD explained that it has made several requests for the data and will supplement the package with that information. Hillard Heintze added that SFPD has done an exceptional job on the substance of this recommendation and should not shy away from acknowledging that."

Information provided from POST website: The majority of law enforcement agencies do administer a physical ability test (PAT) in some form; however, POST does not require this type of test as entrance exam for the hiring process. As such, POST has no standards or guidelines for administering a PAT entrance exam.

<https://post.ca.gov/peace-officer-candidate-selection-process>

As stated above in the **Finding**, physical skills are important for police officers so it is optimal for agencies to conduct a PAT. The SFPD chooses to conduct a PAT. The SFPD's PAT is controlled and administered by DHR. The four components for the PAT are: dynamometer grip strength, sit-ups, push-ups and a wall agility run.

<https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/your-sfpd/careers/sworn-job-openings/physical-ability-test>



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POST does, however, require the administration of a physical conditioning program during the academy. POST requires a physical ability test at the conclusion of the POST-required physical conditioning program in the Academy. The San Francisco Police Department comports with state POST requirements related to a required physical conditioning program and subsequent test during the Police Academy.

The SFPD conducts a physical assessment of the recruits, in the first week of the Academy. Then the Academy staff initiates the physical conditioning program. POST mandates 36 physical conditioning sessions be conducted during the Academy. The SFPD exceeds that mandate, and provides approximately 75 physical conditioning sessions during the Academy. The SFPD conducts the POST mandated test during week 22 or 23 of the Academy. The SFPD has a very high passage rate for this test. This is due to the fact that we commit to the success of our recruits and provide more than double the required number of physical conditioning hours prior to testing to ensure our recruits are prepared. There has only been one failure in the past year.

These are the POST required testing components: Perform the Work Sample Test Battery (WSTB) perform push-ups, perform sit-ups, complete a 1.5 mile run and complete a body composition measurement. The WSTB includes running a 99 yard obstacle course, drag a 165 pound dummy 32 feet, run 5 yards to a 6' chain link fence, climb over the fence and run 25 yards, complete that same run with a 6 foot solid fence and the last component is a 500 yard run. The SFPD also provides the POST mandated Academy classroom presentations covering fitness related topics including injury, illness, nutrition, stress coping strategies and mental health.

<https://post.ca.gov/Physical-Ability-Testing-FAQs>

<https://post.ca.gov/regular-basic-course-training-specifications> (Scroll down to LD32 Lifetime Fitness to see POST course requirements)

See **Attachment 1** Human Performance Systems Inc. Report

See **Attachment 2** Human Resources Research Organization Report

See **Attachment 3** POST Website screenshots related to PAT requirements

See **Attachment 4** POST Training and Testing Specifications for LD32 Lifetime Fitness

3. Evidence that standard PAT practices were reviewed and incorporated, if appropriate, prior to reinstating PAT.



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As stated in CM #2, POST does not have a guideline to review for "standard PAT practices". The extensive reviews that DHR conducted before implementing changes to SFPD's PAT in 2014 and 2017 are documented in CM #1.

See [Attachment 1](#) Human Performance Systems Inc. Report

See [Attachment 2](#) Human Resources Research Organization Report

4. Evidence of efforts with City HR to reinstitute PAT occurred prior to April 12, 2017.

During the time that DOJ was conducting their initial review of the SFPD, DHR was continuously administering a PAT and at the same time DHR was conducting their evaluation and data collection related to replacing the trigger pull test with the dynamometer grip strength test. When finalizing the DOJ Collaborative Reform report, the DOJ was under the impression that the PAT was interrupted for the implementation of the hand grip test in substitution of the trigger pull test. In fact, it was only a transitional period from one testing component to another. DHR has been running the PAT uninterruptedly since January 25, 2014. Attached is an email from Jen Lo (DHR) to the SFPD Recruitment Team notifying them of all PAT dates from April 2017-December 2017 so that respective calendars could be updated at that time. This is an example of DHR conducting continuous PAT testing during this time.

Since 2017, DHR has provided SFPD with PAT testing data at the SFPD/DHR Recruitment & Hiring Committee Meetings. DHR's data is shown in an accumulative format. It includes how many applicants scheduled their PAT test, how many actually attended the testing, passage rate, failure rate and how many applicants completed an acceptable substitute test at another location and then had their scores forwarded to DHR. The data is also broken down by race and gender. Attachment 6 is the first set of data provided to SFPD for the PAT testing. The date on the report is 6/30/2017, which would be quarterly updated data between 4/1/2017-6/30/2017. This shows that DHR was conducting continuous PAT testing during the time in question.

The SFPD Staffing and Deployment Unit collects the testing data provided from DHR and analyzes it. Besides the SFPD/DHR Recruitment & Hiring Committee Meetings, the testing data is reviewed at various other times during the year. The information is often requested by SFPD Command Staff and outside city agencies, i.e. the Police Commission, the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor's Office. Attachments 7 and 8 are two different examples of recent SFPD presentations regarding testing. They both show that PAT testing was continuously conducted during 2017.

See [Attachment 5](#) DHR Email includes PAT testing dates

See [Attachment 6](#) DHR PAT testing report for 6/30/2017

See [Attachment 7](#) SFPD Demographic Data Review PowerPoint (pages 8-9)



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See **Attachment 8** DHR Application and Testing Process presentation (pages10-11)

5. Ongoing review of PAT process and continuous improvement loop established.

The SFPD/DHR Recruitment & Hiring Committee meets quarterly. This meeting serves as the regularly scheduled venue to review of all components of the hiring process. This includes testing data review. The SFPD relies on DHR to bring application data, NTN written test data, PAT test data and Oral Boards test data for review. DHR has consistently provided that data for SFPD to review up until December 2019. Due to Staffing changes at DHR and COVID-19 related personnel duty changes at DHR, their data has not been entered into their tracking system for the year 2020. The DHR Public Safety Team continues to attend the regularly scheduled Recruitment & Hiring Committee meetings but has not provided updated testing data for this year. SFPD has requested this data numerous times throughout 2020 and DHR has responded each time that they will provide the data as soon as they are able to. See attachment 9 for the 2020 meeting minutes. The meeting minutes show that DHR representatives were present at the meetings but 2020 testing data was not presented. The minutes also show that the Committee reviews the testing components even if DHR doesn't bring the most current data. The Committee always strives to improve the hiring process for applicants. Attachment 10 is PAT testing data provided from DHR in 2019. Attachment 11 is a Unit Order establishing the SFPD/DHR Recruitment & Hiring Committee Meetings. This Unit Order ensures that the meetings will continue.

As stated in CM #4, besides the SFPD/DHR Recruitment & Hiring Committee meetings, the testing data is reviewed at various other times during the year. The information is often requested by SFPD Command Staff and outside city agencies, i.e. the Police Commission, the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor's Office. Attachments 7 and 8 are two different examples of recent SFPD presentations regarding testing. They both show ongoing review and analysis of SFPD testing processes.

See **Attachment 9** Minutes from meeting

See **Attachment 10** DHR PAT testing reports

See **Attachment 11** Unit Order 17-05

See **Attachment 7** SFPD Demographic Data Review PowerPoint

See **Attachment 8** DHR Application and Testing Process presentation