

# Prison officer health assessment information

Being a prison officer can be physically and mentally demanding. To ensure you can perform the role safely, you must pass a pre-employment health assessment.



## Medical assessment

To pass this assessment, you will need to achieve the basic medical benchmarks listed below.

### Body Mass Index (BMI)

- ✓ BMI between 18.5 and 40.  
*Applicants outside this range may be considered when evaluated with other functional tests.*

### Cardiovascular health

- ✓ Blood pressure at or below 140/90.

### Respiratory (lung function)

- ✓ Normal spirometry result.

### Vision

- ✓ Meet driving standards of better than 6/9 in better eye and 6/18 in worse eye.  
*Visual correction required if below.*

### Hearing

- ✓ Pass audiogram test with hearing loss not exceeding average of 40dB.

### Alcohol and drug screening

- ✓ Negative results.  
*Positive results for prescribed medication require documentation.*

### Mental health

- ✓ Pass a mental health examination.

**Exceptions and adjustments may apply. For more information, please visit the [health assessment page](#) or speak to the recruitment team.**



## Physical capability assessment

The physical capability assessment attempts to simulate some of the tasks and duties that a prison officer may perform.

### Regular demands

- Continual standing, including movement control and interactions with offenders
- Daily walking and occasional running when responding to emergency situations
- Static tasks such as on computer-based workstations
- Frequent pushing and pulling of heavy security doors.

### Occasional demands

- Bending, reaching, squatting and kneeling
- Lifting and carrying items during searches and general duties
- Pushing and pulling, requiring moderate to high force
- Climbing steps, stairways and ladders into accommodation units and vehicles.






### Physical capability tests







You will perform the physical tests listed in the below table. You will need to achieve certain benchmarks to pass the assessment.

If you do not exercise frequently, you should start the training exercises at least 4 weeks prior to the assessment.

If you have any concerns, please consult a doctor before commencing your exercise or attending your assessment.

# Physical capability tests

Exercise	How you will be assessed	Minimum achievement	Training tips
<b>Push-up</b> 	<p>Complete full push-ups lying face down on your stomach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Position hands directly under your shoulders with hands and toes shoulder-width apart. Fully extend elbows.</li> <li>✓ Lower your upper body so your elbows bend to 90 degrees, keeping back and legs straight.</li> <li>✓ Push back up to the start position.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Kneeling is acceptable.</p>	15 consecutive push-ups.	<p>Practising a variety of push-ups to improve your core and upper body strength. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wall push-ups</li> <li>• Kneeling push-ups</li> <li>• Incline push-ups.</li> </ul>
<b>Plank</b> 	<p>Plank in the prone position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Place elbows directly under your shoulders, with your elbows and feet shoulder-width apart.</li> <li>✓ Push your body up, bearing the weight on forearms and feet.</li> <li>✓ Keep your back, legs and head in line.</li> </ul>	Hold the position with correct form for 60 seconds.	Do variations of the plank – including side plank and front plank – ensuring you perform them with good technique.
<b>YMCA step test</b> 	<p>Complete the YMCA step test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ In time with the beat (96 beats per minute), step one foot up on the bench (1st beat), step up with the second foot (2nd beat), step down with one foot (3rd beat), and step down with the other foot (4th beat).</li> <li>✓ Each step is 30 cm.</li> <li>✓ Continue for three minutes.</li> </ul>	One minute after the exercise, your heart rate will be measured. It should be less than or equal to 110 beats per minute.	<p>Increase your daily movement. Go on extended walks or jogs.</p> <p>Guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week for adults aged 18-64.</p>
<b>Grip strength</b> 	<p>Clench the dynamometer with one hand as hard as you can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sit with your elbow at your side.</li> <li>✓ Flex your elbow to 90 degrees, keeping your wrist neutral.</li> <li>✓ Squeeze the handheld dynamometer as hard as possible for three seconds.</li> </ul>	20 kg grip strength on each hand.	Do resistance training, incorporating variations of exercises like pull-ups.
<b>Floor to waist/ bench lift</b> 	<p>Lift a 20 kg weight from floor to waist height.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bend knees to lower your body to the level of the load.</li> <li>✓ Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and your back straight.</li> <li>✓ Use a firm grip to lift, keeping load close to your body.</li> </ul>	Lift a weight of 20 kg and complete 5 repetitions.	Do consistent weight training, working the weight up to a 20 kg load.

Exercise	How you will be assessed	Minimum achievement	Training tips
<b>Waist/bench to shoulder lift</b> 	Lift a 15 kg weight from waist height to shoulder height. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Feet shoulder-width apart.</li> <li>✓ Keep your arms close to your body.</li> <li>✓ Do not rotate your body while lifting.</li> </ul>	Lift a weight of 15 kg and complete 5 repetitions.	Research safe lifting to make sure your form is correct to prevent injury.
<b>Overhead press</b> 	Lift two 5 kg dumbbells from shoulder height to above your head. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Feet shoulder-width apart.</li> <li>✓ Grip weights with your knuckles facing upwards.</li> <li>✓ Raise elbows to shoulder height and bend at 90 degrees.</li> <li>✓ Press the dumbbells overhead until your arm is in a straightened position.</li> <li>✓ Pause slightly and return your arms to starting position.</li> </ul>	Perform 5 repetitions with two dumbbells of 5 kg (one in each hand).	Undertake upper limb strength resistance training.
<b>Bilateral carrying</b> 	Carry a 20 kg weight by your side over 10 metres. The weight will be distributed evenly between both hands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maintain a steady, upright position.</li> <li>✓ Do not allow the weight to move laterally or favour one side over the other.</li> </ul>	Carry the load of 20 kg over the 10-metre distance.	Resistance training.
<b>Unilateral carrying</b> 	Carry a 10 kg weight by your side in one hand over a 10-metre distance. Repeat this exercise in the other hand.	Handle a 10 kg load in the right and left hands (tested separately) over a 10-metre distance.	Resistance training.
<b>Sustained full squat</b> 	Perform a squat hold. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Place legs shoulder-width apart and raise arms in front of you to shoulder height.</li> <li>✓ Looking forward, keep your shoulders back.</li> <li>✓ Bend your knees and move your hips back into a sitting position until your thighs are parallel with the floor.</li> </ul>	Sustain a full squat position for 30 seconds.	The squat targets multiple muscle groups. To improve your capability, practise variations like a wall sit, squatting to a higher surface and body weight squats.
<b>Half kneel</b> 	You will adopt a kneeling position. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Start with one foot in front of the other.</li> <li>✓ Bend your front knee until it reaches 90 degrees, keeping your upper body in an upright position.</li> <li>✓ Sustain for 30 seconds and repeat on the opposite leg.</li> </ul>	Maintain position for 30 seconds.	Resistance training.