



Information on PARE



Royal Canadian
Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale
du Canada

Canada 

An Occupational Test

The RCMP physical ability requirement evaluation (PARE) is an occupational test that measures the essential physical capacities to perform satisfactory police work.

The PARE is based on research derived from the work of Mr. Doug Farenholtz of the British Columbia Justice Institute. Farenholtz, using a scientifically accepted method of task analysis, identified nine physical activities required by police officers in the pursuit of their duties, these were:

walking	carrying	jumping
pushing	lifting	climbing (stairs, hills)
pulling	vaulting	running

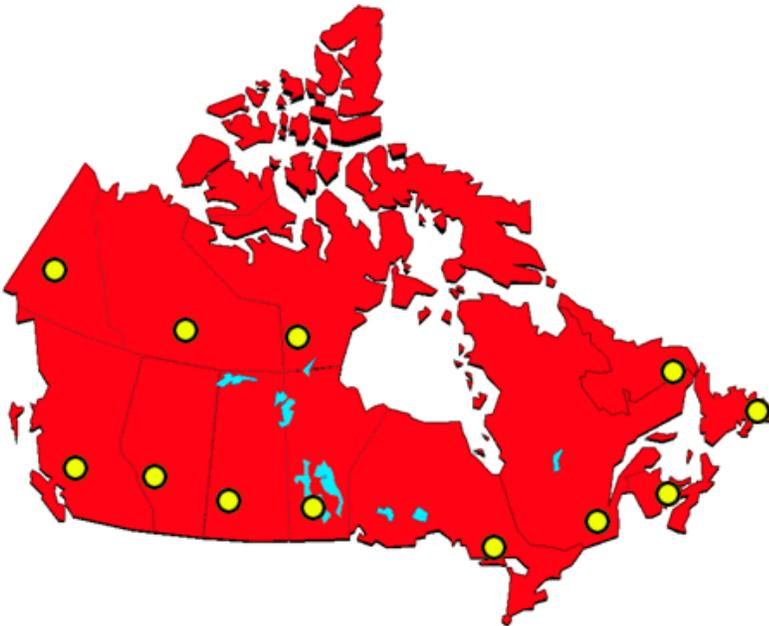


It was identified that police officers, from time to time, have to show the ability of gaining and maintaining physical control over suspects, intervene in family disputes, and become involved in search and rescue operations.

All of these tasks involve the activities listed above. Although rare, these are unavoidable and therefore form a crucial part of police work. Records also show that police officers will deal with males 7 times out of 10.

Physical Control: A Universal Police Task

Similar descriptions of the physical activities performed by police officers were obtained by other independent studies throughout North America.



It appears that the physical aspects of police work can be described by the nine (9) physical activities formally identified, whether the duty is performed in B.C., Alberta, Yukon, N.W.T., Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, N.S., N.B., P.E.I., or Newfoundland et Labrador.

Also, in all of these geographic areas, police officers are expected to physically control suspects when needed. From the perspective of police officers, administrators and the public, physical control of suspects was felt to be an essential task of police work.

From POPAT to PARE

Based on the task analysis, the Police Officer Physical Ability Test (POPAT) was developed and later modified to the Physical Ability Requirement Evaluation (PARE).

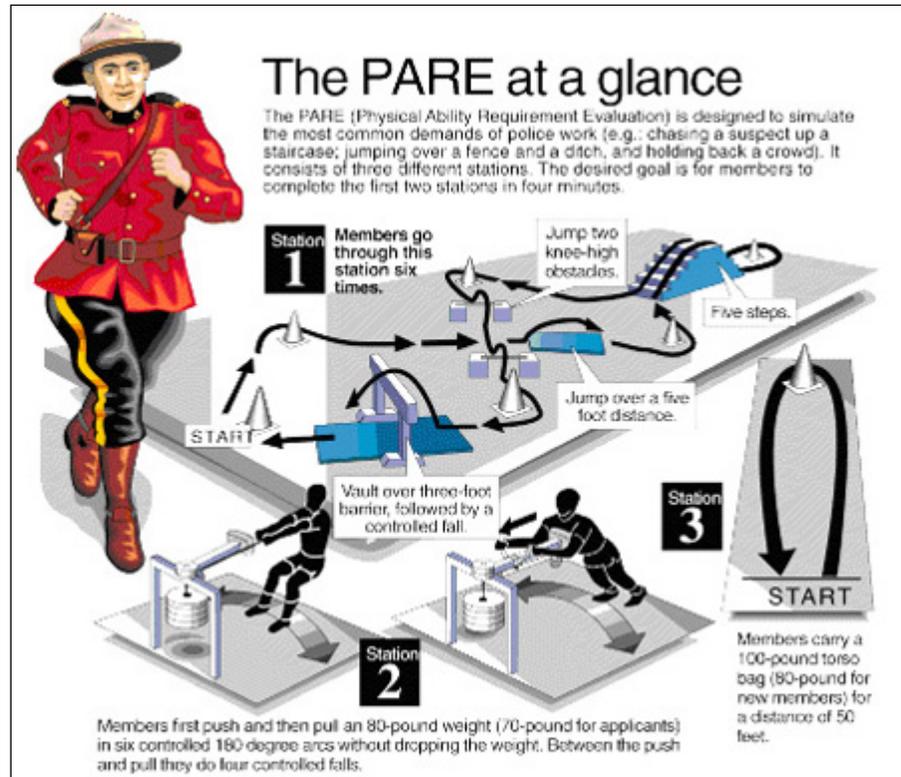
PARE simulates a scenario where a police officer must:

- 1) Get to a problem (foot chase).
- 2) Physically solve the problem (physical control).
- 3) Remove the problem (carry to safety).

PARE description:

PARE is divided into three sections:

1. Obstacle Course
2. Push/Pull Station
3. Torso Bag Carry



The first two stations (Obstacle Course and Push/Pull) are timed and must be completed in less than/equal to 4 minutes 45 seconds for applicants, and less than/equal to 4 minutes for members applying for specialized duties and cadets before graduating from Depot. The last section, the torso bag carry, is a pass or fail activity and is not timed.

PARE Protocol

PARE description by sections

1. Obstacle Course - Foot Chase

The first section of PARE consists of an obstacle run which the participant negotiates six times. The course is laid out in the following manner: (see diagram for course layout):

5-ft mat jump

From the start marker, follow the arrow to the second marker, turn right and jump over the 5-foot mat. The participant is assigned a five second penalty each time s/he touches any part of the mat.

Stairs

On landing, the participant turns left around the next marker and proceeds towards the stairs. The participant must run up and down the stairs, touching at least one step on the way up, the top platform, and

one step on the way down. The participant then proceeds towards the next marker and runs back to the stairs going up and down again.

18-in hurdles

Upon landing, the participant then moves to the next marker, turns left, jumps over the 18-inch hurdles en route to the next marker. If the participant knocks over a hurdle, s/he is assigned a two-second penalty.

Vault jump

The participant then runs around the left side of the marker and turns right heading towards the start marker. Before reaching the start marker, the participant must vault over a 3-ft high railing. Participants must land in control on both feet on the opposite side of the vault, then fall on either their stomach (stomach, chest, hips on the ground) or back (both shoulder blades down on the ground), alternating front or back on each lap. After each controlled fall the participant must get up without assistance and proceed around the start marker to complete the lap.

The participant must complete six laps before starting the next section.

2. Push/Pull Section (physical control)

Upon finishing the obstacle run, the participant moves immediately to the push/pull station, which consists of a specific push/pull unit. The participant may perform this activity in the order s/he chooses, push first and then pull, or vice versa. Since the push is more difficult to perform, it is recommended to do this activity first.

Push Activity

Upon reaching the push/pull unit, the participant grasps the handles and pushes the weight (70 lbs for applicants or 80 lbs for members) off the base of the machine, then moves right or left completing a 180° arc. Six arcs must be completed. If the participant allows the weight to touch the base, the particular arc must be repeated.

Controlled Falls

Once the push activity is completed, the weight is lowered with control. The participant then moves away from the unit about 2 feet and performs a controlled fall on the front executing a push-up like movement. The participant then comes to a standing ready position and executes a second fall, this time on the back, shoulder blades on the ground. A sit-up like manoeuvre is required to come back up to the standing ready position. This sequence, front and back falls, is repeated until the participant has completed 2 front falls and 2 back falls.

Pull Activity

Once the sequence of falls is completed, the participant grasps the rope and pulls so the weight plates lift off the base of the machine and then moves right or left. Six arcs are completed without allowing the weight to touch the base. If the weight touches the base, that particular arc must be repeated.

3. Torso Bag Carry (carry to safety)

The weight carry section of PARE is a pass/fail activity; it is not timed. The participant must be able to pick up a weight (80 lbs for applicants or 100 lbs for members), and carry it over a distance of 50 feet. This activity should begin 1-2 minutes after completion of the timed part of the test. Participants failing the weight-carry section fail PARE.

What does your PARE time mean ?

The interpretation chart represents the reciprocal relationship between physical abilities and the risk of failure or injury. The risks / abilities that are associated with PARE are interpreted in light of what percentage of the police "client" population would be on equal footing with participants with regard to their physical abilities. (Based on the work of Retired S/Sgt. Doug Farenholtz and the late Jean Bonneau, former RCMP Chief of Health Promotion, who found that on average, the inmates perform PARE in 3 min. 57 sec plus or minus 18 seconds).

The graph represents a relationship between physical abilities and physical risks. The top numbers represent PARE times starting at 4 min 33s on the far right and moving along a continuum to 3 min 21s. The bottom percentages represent the number of people who would fall in each of the different time brackets based on a normal distribution (most people are close to the average, fewer are on the extremes). Note the PARE standard is set at 4 minutes.

The graph of physical abilities and physical risks shows the likelihood of the police "client" being apprehended or evading apprehension. As the PARE time increases (moving to the right), the police officer risks being outperformed by the "client".

The converse is also true. As PARE time decreases, the physical risks associated with a lack of physical ability decrease (the police officer performs the gross motor skills and abilities with little physical risk). Physical risks are highest when the police officer's time on the PARE is above the 4-minute standard or below 50% of the abilities of the "clients". Physical abilities are the greatest and physical risks are the lowest when PARE time is below 3 min 20s.

So... the better you are able to perform the abilities found in PARE, the lower your risk of physical injury.

Time Chart

What does your PARE time mean ?

Physical risks and abilities					
Time (entrance criteria for applicants: 4:45)					
3:21	3:39	3:57	4:15	4:33	
high level of physical ability	considerable ability	increased ability	some ability	little ability	negligible physical ability
negligible physical risk	little risk	some risk	increased risk	considerable risk	high level of risk for physical injury or failure
			4:00 standard	training program needed	
2.5%	16%	50%	84%	97.5%	
% of police clients with same PARE results					
Recommended amount of physical activity in KCAL/week					
3,000 excellent	2,000 very good	1,500 good	900 fair	400-0 needs improvement	
Type and level of physical activity					
intense intervals	moderate intervals	jogging	brisk walking	slow walking	

PARE Tips

Here are tips about improving your performance on PARE.

Circuit Portion

- Pace yourself! Maximum heart rate is reached by lap 4!
- Avoid wide turns around the cones; any extra steps cost time!
- Look forward (not down) when jumping over the mat.
- Take every second step on the stairs.
- Keep the momentum coming down the stairs by pushing off the last step and move towards the next cone (try not to jump off the stairs with two feet flat on the ground).
- Jump over the sticks like they were hurdles (kick feet out to sides). Count the number of steps between sticks (not too many steps) and try to stay with this number throughout each lap.
- Get over the vault any way you can. Remember that putting a foot on the vault may be useful, but it can also slow you down.
- When landing after the vault, land with feet parallel to the vault so you do not have to replant and then go down.
- When falling flat on your chest, stomach and hips, use the momentum from your fall to help you get back up.
- When getting up from your stomach, use your arms and legs at the same time. You do not have to get up in any specific manner, just start moving towards the cone.

Note: You should be able to run a mile and a half in 12 minutes and bench press at least 30 kg (70 lbs) before attempting PARE.

Push and pull exercises

When pushing,

- Try keeping the pad tight against your upper chest so you do not lose leverage.
- Cross your feet over; do not shuffle.
- Turn your hips and run. Keep your body in a straight line from your shoulders to your feet.
- Keep your elbows at shoulder-height. Do not drop them below your shoulders.
- Push the weight up as high as possible while keeping your elbows slightly bent.

When pulling,

- Bend elbows, "sit" in a squat and keep your back perpendicular to the floor.

Torso Carry

- Keep your abdominals tight. Avoid flexing forward at the waist with your head down.
- Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Keep your chin up and your back straight. Try to maintain your spine's natural curve.

- Don't lean forward; bring the bag close to your body.
- Keep the bag close to your body as you move.

Remember: Always perform a good warm-up prior to the start of PARE. Include an aerobic phase of 8 to 10 minutes to increase your heart rate and increase muscle temperature. Include some PARE-specific exercises (jumping, turning, sprinting, etc). These warm-up movements will prepare your body for the higher intensity exercise and reduce the risk of premature fatigue due to the accumulation of lactic acid in your muscles.

Policy on PARE and Physical Training

Here are some excerpts from key RCMP policies on Fitness and Lifestyle.

General

The RCMP supports a Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program which includes fitness initiatives, personal health management and enhancement of training skills, and encourages the development and maintenance of healthy lifestyles.

Duty permitting, up to one hour per shift week of "time away from normal duty" will be granted to each member for physical fitness and healthy lifestyle practices.

Physical Ability Testing

All regular members are required to undergo PARE every two years, as part of the Periodic Health Assessment, unless medically exempted by an RCMP designated physician. The regular members should strive towards completing PARE within four minutes.

A more specific job-related test may be required for special squads and used as a prerequisite for assignment and continuation in specialized duties. Frequency of tests will vary according to job needs and health risks and hazards.

Fitness and Lifestyle-Enhancement Program

The Fitness and Lifestyle-Enhancement Program is the basis for the PARE. It is composed of fitness development and lifestyle education.

The Fitness Development component includes:

- fitness appraisal and counseling,
- exercise and conditioning guidelines,
- exercise safety and injury prevention, and
- research and technical advice.

Periodic fitness appraisal and counseling helps maintain optimal physical ability in providing safe and effective police services.

The Lifestyle Education component states that:

- Divisions will provide the services of health professionals to promote healthy lifestyles, health enhancing practices and safe work practices, through health promotion/prevention and counseling activities.

What do members think ?

National PARE Survey

Have you ever wondered what RCMP members think of the PARE ?

Between 1998 and 2003, the Fitness and Lifestyle Advisors sent 2,504 surveys across the country to members who had completed the PARE. Almost half (49%) responded to the survey and 75% of the responders, successfully met the PARE standard.

Here is what the responders said:

Six months before the PARE

- A total of 55% worked out at least three times a week,
- 30 % once or twice a week and
- 15% rarely or never.

Three months before the PARE

A total of:

- 77 % maintained their level of physical activity
- 20 % increased their level of physical activity

At the time of the PARE

Respondent's physical condition was:

- 58% good or very good
- 33 % average
- 8 % poor or very poor

Participating in PARE

A total of:

- 75% enjoyed or greatly enjoyed taking the PARE.
- 99% felt they received the instructions and encouragement they needed to complete the test.

Three months after PARE

A total of:

- 76 % maintained their level of physical activity
- 14 % increased their level of physical activity

The importance of fitness in policing

A total of:

- 79 % feel it is very important for police officers to be fit
- 21% feel it is important for police officers to be fit

Representation of PARE

A total of:

- 71% feel PARE is representative (48%) or very representative (23%) of the type of physical activities that may be encountered in police work.

Members participating in PARE are supportive of this important element of police readiness.