

VESTAL FIRE DISTRICT

Firefighter Physical Fitness Training Program Policy

Adopted: September 23, 2026

Revised:

Policy #:	402.00
Policy:	Firefighter Physical Fitness Training Program Policy
Effective Date:	September 23, 2026
Authority:	New York Town Law § 176(10); NYS Comptroller Opinion 92-4
Cross-reference:	

1. Policy Statement

The Vestal Fire District recognizes the importance of physical fitness to the safe and effective performance of firefighter duties. The District may provide eligible active volunteer firefighters with access to a fitness facility designated by the Board of Fire Commissioners, subject to the eligibility, participation, and administrative requirements of this policy, to support firefighter health, conditioning, and operational readiness.

2. Purpose

The Program is intended to help participating firefighters maintain or improve strength, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, mobility, and physical conditioning reasonably related to the safe and effective performance of firefighter duties. The Program is not intended to provide general recreational or personal wellness benefits.

3. Definitions

For purposes of this policy.

Member in Good Standing: An active volunteer firefighter who satisfies applicable membership, response, training, participation, and conduct requirements and is not suspended from membership or participation.

Designated Fitness Facility: A facility selected and approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners in accordance with this policy and the District's Procurement Policy.

Program: The District-sponsored Firefighter Physical Fitness Training Program established by this policy.

Program Administrator: The individual designated by the Board to perform routine administrative duties under this policy.

4. Program Authorization and Administration

The Board of Fire Commissioners shall designate the Designated Fitness Facility and approve the Program's contractual arrangements, membership terms, membership rates, and annual funding.

The selection of the Designated Fitness Facility shall comply with General Municipal Law § 104-b and the District's Procurement Policy. Before District funds are

expended, the Board shall determine that the Program provides physical conditioning opportunities reasonably related to firefighter duties, appropriate supervision or oversight, reliable attendance reporting documentation, and reasonable value to the District.

The Board may designate a Program Administrator to verify eligibility, enroll approved members, review attendance, process routine exception requests, and perform other routine administrative duties under this policy. The Program Administrator may not designate another facility, approve membership rates, enter into contracts, or authorize expenditures unless the Board specifically authorizes it.

No Chief Officer, member, or Program Administrator may enter into a contract or otherwise create a financial obligation on behalf of the District unless authorized by the Board.

The Board may limit enrollment based on available funding, facility capacity, operational need, or another Board-approved criterion. The Board may change the Designated Fitness Facility, modify Program requirements, rates, or funding, or may suspend or discontinue the Program at any time, subject to any existing lawful contractual obligations.

Participation does not create a vested right or guarantee continued enrollment or funding.

5. Eligibility and Enrollment

To participate in the Program, a member must:

- Be an active volunteer firefighter and a member in good standing;
- Have met all participation requirements from the prior calendar year, including:
 - Fire call response minimums
 - Training attendance requirements
 - Department activities participation
- Complete the District-required annual firefighter physical; and
- Sign the Member Acknowledgment before enrollment.

Eligibility shall be verified before enrollment and at least annually thereafter. The Board may establish prorated or alternative eligibility standards for new members, members returning from approved leave, or members who did not serve the entire preceding calendar year. The Program Administrator shall apply Board-approved eligibility standards consistently.

The Program Administrator shall enroll each approved member with the Designated Fitness Facility.

Program access is personal to the participating member and may not be transferred or shared.

6. Participation Requirements

To ensure responsible use of District funds:

- Except during an approved exception period, each participating member shall

use the Designated Fitness Facility at least six times during each full calendar month of enrollment.

- Visits may not be carried forward from one month to another. Partial-month requirements may be prorated.
- Usage will be monitored periodically, either monthly or quarterly, based on reporting available from the Designated Fitness Facility.
- The Designated Fitness Facility or member must provide attendance documentation when the District requests it.
- Participants shall comply with the Designated Fitness Facility's rules and safety requirements and follow applicable medical or occupational health restrictions applicable to them.

7. Non-Usage and Exceptions

Unless an approved exception applies, failure to meet the monthly participation requirement may result in:

- First occurrence: Informal reminder
- Second occurrence: Formal notice
- Third occurrence: Suspension from the program for a period determined by the Program Administrator, subject to Board review; and
- Continued noncompliance: Termination from the program by the Board.

Before suspension or termination for non-usage, the member shall receive notice of the deficiency and a reasonable opportunity to provide documentation of an exception or to correct an administrative error.

The Program Administrator may approve a reasonable exception for injury, illness, medical or occupational health restrictions, family or work hardship, military service, extended travel, an approved leave, or another reasonable circumstance permitted by Board-approved standards. Exceptions outside those standards require Board approval.

Members should request an exception as soon as practical.

A member requesting a medical exception is not required to disclose a diagnosis or detailed medical information. The District may request limited documentation sufficient to establish the need for and the anticipated duration of the exception.

8. Cost Responsibility

The District shall contract with and pay the Designated Fitness Facility directly for the standard membership cost as approved by the Board.

The District will not reimburse members for memberships, outside fitness program fees, training fees, services, or any other fitness-related expenses at the Designated Fitness Facility or any other facility or fitness program. Members may not submit personal receipts for payment.

Members are responsible for personal training, premium services, family memberships, childcare, tanning, massage, supplements, clothing, equipment, cancellation fees, and other personal expenses or optional expenses not expressly

included in the Board-approved contract.

No member may enter into a contract or incur a financial obligation in the District's name.

9. Conduct, Safety and Insurance

Participants shall conduct themselves professionally and comply with all applicable rules of the Designated Fitness Facility, the District, and the Fire Department.

The Board may take immediate action in cases involving fraud, misuse, safety concerns, or misconduct. If any of the following occur, the Program Administrator may immediately suspend Program access pending Board review: fraud; sharing or transferring Program access; falsifying attendance records; unsafe conduct; harassment; or other misuse. After review, the Board may terminate a member from the Program. Suspension or termination from this Program is separate from any disciplinary action that may be taken under other applicable rules or bylaws.

Participation is voluntary and does not replace required firefighter training, medical examinations, occupational health restrictions, or fitness-for-duty determinations.

Members shall exercise within their abilities, follow facility safety rules, use equipment properly, and comply with restrictions issued by their healthcare provider or the District's occupational health provider.

A member shall promptly report any injury sustained while using the Designated Fitness Facility to the Program Administrator and shall comply with applicable District injury-reporting procedures.

Nothing in this policy guarantees coverage under the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law, workers' compensation, accident and health insurance, or any other insurance policy. Coverage determinations shall be made under applicable law and the terms of the relevant policy.

10. Annual Review

The Board, with assistance from the Program Administrator, shall review the Program at least annually, including member eligibility, participation, attendance, cost, facility performance, and the program's continued benefit to the District.

The Board may modify, suspend, or discontinue the Program based on the results of its review.

11. Acknowledgment

Each participating member shall sign the acknowledgment below before enrollment.

MEMBER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed this policy. I agree to comply with the policy, approved program requirements, Designated Fitness Facility rules, attendance requirements, and safety and conduct requirements. I understand that participation is voluntary, does not guarantee insurance or VFBL coverage, and may be modified, suspended, or discontinued by the Board.

Member Name (print): _____

Member Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Administrator: _____ Date: _____

By Order of the Board of Fire Commissioners
Vestal Fire District
Date approved: September 23, 2026