

CANADIAN ARMY PHYSICAL HEALTH AND FITNESS - INJURY PREVENTION

APPLICABLE TO

Personnel under command of the Commander Canadian Army.

REFERENCES

- A. General Safety Program – General Safety Standards, Volume 2, Chapter 39
- B. Canadian Army Performance Triad (CAP3)
(<http://strongproudready.ca/missionready/en/canadian-army-performance-triad-cap3/>)

GENERAL

1. Injury prevention as an extension of CA health and fitness is an important aspect of building and maintaining operational readiness in the CA. The ability of the CA to force generate soldiers for operations is significantly impacted on an annual basis by injuries caused by, or exacerbated by physical fitness training and activities. The number of knee, ankle and lower back issues, to name but three, that preclude CA team members from deploying on training and operations is noteworthy. Preventative measures merit deliberate consideration by all members of the CA team.

2. The purpose of this annex is to highlight responsibilities and expectations specific to injury prevention with respect to training and maintenance of CA physical fitness.

BACKGROUND

3. There are three general aspects of injury prevention that apply to all members of the CA team. All of these have been covered in detail in Annexes A, B and C to this CAO:

- a. Physical Fitness. CA team members should train to achieve and maintain a level of physical fitness that affords them the ability to successfully complete the FORCE Combat Individual Battle Task Standard (IBTS). While this is not an annual requirement for everyone within the CA, the basic principles are applicable to all. The tenets of FORCE Combat are purposely designed to ensure CA members have the requisite physical strength, cardio-vascular capacity, and core stability that will assist in reducing injuries while conducting training and when deployed on operations.

- b. Nutrition. Proper nutrition will ensure CA team members properly fuel their bodies for the demands of Army life. Healthy eating habits ensure the body has sufficient energy and nutrients to fuel operational demands but also ensures the body is able to repair minor injuries and avoid serious injury that might be caused or exacerbated by poor nutrition and eating habits.
- c. Sleep. A CA team member that is well rested is more alert, makes better decisions, has a higher level of resilience, has afforded their body time to repair minor injuries, and is less prone to lapses in judgement. There will always be times when lack of sleep is a valuable aspect of training; but as much as possible this should be deliberately planned acknowledging that a CA team member cannot be expected to learn new tasks, ideas and knowledge or safely execute complex activities if they are overly tired.

CHAIN OF COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

4. Commanders at all levels within the CA will:
 - a. Become familiar with references A and B.
 - b. Plan and organize physical fitness training to ensure it is progressive, realistic and achieves the stated aim of realizing and maintaining the required level of operational physical fitness.
 - c. Educate and discuss with subordinates the importance of injury prevention and the role of health and fitness in preventing injuries.
 - d. Understand the symptoms and causes of environmentally influenced injuries such as hypothermia, frost-bite, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
 - e. Put in place mitigation measures that address environmental conditions such as extreme cold/heat and ensure common sense is applied when considering the benefits versus the risks of physical exertion while training. It is equally important for members of the CA team to learn how to operate in extreme climatic conditions and part of routine CA training is education and experiential training on how to safely conduct activities involving physical exertion in those environments.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

5. All members of the CA team will:

- a. Conduct planned physical fitness training in order to maintain the required level of personal physical fitness.
- b. Become familiar with reference B.
- c. Learn to recognize the symptoms and remediation measures necessary for the treatment of environmentally caused injuries such as hypothermia, frost-bite, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
- d. Learn how to safely conduct activities involving physical exertion in harsh environmental conditions such as extreme heat/cold in support of training and operations.

PHYSICAL FITNESS RELATED COMPETITIONS

6. The CA conducts numerous physical fitness based competitions such as Mountain Man, Ironman and Bushman. Although participation is voluntary, the nature of CA team members is such that the competitive nature of a participant will often cause them to continue training and ultimately participate in the competition despite the onset of new or pre-existing injuries. While this may appeal to the sense of achievement of the individual, the result is often a CA team member left out of battle for many months in order to heal a preventable injury which is not supportive of maintaining CA operational readiness.
7. The following policy is now in effect for all CA fitness based competitions:
 - a. The applicable chain of command that owns the competition must publish and provide access to a suitable training plan for all potential competitors.
 - b. The training plan will include explanations/video on proper techniques for any high-risk, unusual aspects of the competition.
 - c. The training plan should include a confirmatory aspect to ensure the participant has properly prepared for the competition.
 - d. Participants must have a current and valid personal health assessment prior to commencing the competition.

CONCLUSION

8. Injury prevention is a fundamental responsibility of every member of the CA team. It is not an excuse for avoiding difficult activities, but it does mandate that individuals and the chain of command properly and deliberately prepare for challenging physical endeavours. It also tasks the chain of command with enforcing adequate preparation prior to undertaking demanding physical events.