

Make Your Move

Tough training regimen prepares Hanford Patrol

Chances are that, if you are a Hanford employee and can run a mile in 8 minutes and 30 seconds or less, you are a Hanford Patrol security police officer. Not many other jobs on site have the stringent physical requirements that the Hanford Patrol demands of its members.

So how do these men and women stay in shape to meet these requirements? Once in the Patrol, they exercise to maintain and further develop the physical abilities they had when they were recruits. And all of the more than 200 members of the Hanford Patrol, from the youngest in their early twenties to the oldest in their early sixties, must stay in shape and pass the physical-fitness exams annually.

Hanford Patrol has two officer grades on site: Security Police Officer 3 and Security Police Officer 2. Both grades have to be able to respond to emergencies, and federal regulations mandate that the officers be allowed time during working hours to exercise. Among the other physical requirements is the one-mile run to be completed in 8 minutes and 30 seconds for SPO 3, and the half-mile run to be completed in 4 minutes and 40 seconds for SPO 2. Another tough requirement is the 40-yard dash, which must be completed in 8 seconds for an SPO 3 and 8.5 seconds for SPO 2. No sweat, you may say, but Hanford Patrol officers have to start that dash from a prone — lying on their stomachs — position.

“It’s tough to become a security police officer,” said Captain Jerry Rodgers, fitness coordinator for the Hanford Patrol. The background checks, interviews and physical requirements serve to narrow the ranks of recruits considerably.

Rodgers works with recruits at the Hanford Patrol Academy to teach them the principles of a good exercise program during a six-to-eight-week training session, similar to a military boot camp or basic training. Once they become security police officers they are responsible for keeping up their exercise program and training. From then on, they join the ranks of the Hanford Patrol whose fitness Rodgers helps monitor.

Hanford Patrol maintains four exercise facilities in various locations on the site, in addition to the largest and most well-outfitted facility at the Hanford Patrol Academy. In these facilities, the treadmills, stationary bicycles, weights, “Stairmasters” and heavy bags provide the equipment to help the SPOs maintain the aerobic exercise and strength training that allows them to do their jobs. Some of the officers train outdoors, too. A sign on the road leading to the Hanford Patrol Academy warns drivers to be on the lookout for joggers.



Hanford security police officers train in a team event involving an “officer down” scenario with shooting. Teammates run with a 190-pound dummy from one range to another.

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Although they train for their allotted time during working hours, at any time during the day you can find SPOs training in the facilities after or before their shifts as well.

“Many of the security police officers work hard on their training after hours,” said Rodgers. “They log onto any computer workstation onsite to record their training time.”

Rogers has trained with each new group of recruits since 1991 when he started working with Hanford Patrol. He is a health fitness instructor certified by the American College of Sports Medicine.

Security police officers undergo regular training that puts their physical abilities to the test. Running obstacle courses in full gear, and testing marksmanship under a variety of conditions and in combination with obstacle courses, measure strength, endurance and performance under physical stress.

Although most of us will never need to cover a mile in eight-and-half minutes, aren't you glad that the security force that is charged to protect special nuclear material, government property, classified information and all of us is working hard to stay fit and do their jobs? ■