



**Policy for the use of Physical Competencies Assessment rooms for
Hazardous Area Response Teams**

DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

Purpose of the document: To define the Trust's processes and procedure for the safe use of Physical Competencies Assessment Rooms for Hazardous Area Response Teams.

Sponsor Department: Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response

Author/Reviewer: Head of CBRN and HART. To be reviewed by December 2014.

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05/12/13	0.5	Head of CBRN and HART and IG Manager	Further amendments
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***Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

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OP070	Physical Competencies Assessment Rooms for Hazardous Area Response Teams	Page 2 of 18
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (LAS) provides the emergency ambulance service to the capital. With this comes some unique challenges and threats, not just from terrorism or extremists but by the very nature of the size and diversity of its population.
- 1.2 As part of the many assets and resources available within the LAS to respond to this array of challenges is the Hazardous Area Response Teams (HARTs). HART are dedicated teams which provide response to casualties in hazardous or difficult to access areas. This includes working at height, within collapsed buildings and structures, on water, or when there has been an accidental or deliberate release of a hazardous substance.
- 1.3 Those LAS staff undertaking this activity receive comprehensive training to which they maintain minimum competencies, assessed on a regular basis.
- 1.4 By the nature of this work HART staff are required to be physically fit and maintain a minimum level of fitness to ensure they remain safe and competent to fulfill this demanding role. As part of the recruitment process, staff are required to pass a Physical Competence Assessment. This Assessment has been nationally agreed and tests the candidate's fitness to a level commensurate with the expected workload. All HART staff are expected to undertake an Ongoing Physical Competence Assessment every six months. The LAS therefore has a responsibility to ensure that facilities are available to support staff in maintaining the required fitness level.
- 1.5 For this reason the LAS has provided Physical Competencies Assessment (PCA) rooms at each of the two HART bases (East and West London).
- 1.6 The PCA rooms provide equipment and machinery to support staff in maintaining this minimum level of fitness and this policy is to ensure that these rooms are used safely and appropriately.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy provides the framework for the safe use of the Physical Competencies Assessment (PCA) rooms within the East and West HART stations.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure all HART staff maintain a level of fitness in line with the requirements laid down in the Ongoing Physical Competence Assessment.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The **Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Strategy Group**:
 - Ensure the Policy is applied to all staff

OP070	Physical Competencies Assessment Rooms for Hazardous Area Response Teams	Page 3 of 18
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- Receive reports on a 6 monthly basis on compliance with the Policy
- Receive reports on a 6 monthly basis on pass rates on the Ongoing Physical Competence Assessment

3.2 The **HART Manager**:

- will ensure that all reported accidents are investigated
- will ensure that all equipment defects are repaired and resolved.
- will ensure that an annual qualified external assessment is made of all PCA room equipment.
- will ensure that at least one member of each HART is provided with relevant training to qualify them as a Fitness Assessor
- will ensure that all staff using the PCA rooms have undergone a PCA induction

3.3 The **Fitness Assessor**:

- will support the HART manager in the investigation of any accidents reported
- will undertake weekly equipment checks and complete relevant inspection records
- will ensure that all staff wishing to use the PCA rooms undertake induction training
- will ensure staff using the PCA room are aware of relevant health and safety rules
- will undertake basic maintenance if required as instructed by supplier/warranty (e.g. oil running machine rollers etc.)
- will ensure staff sign an achievement record for equipment within PCA room
- take account of any disability or any other factor that could limit the use of any of the equipment within the PCA Room (i.e. spectacles)

3.4 The **User**

- will ensure that they have undertaken PCA induction training prior to use of the PCA room
- will ensure that a brief inspection of the equipment about to be used is made
- will ensure all equipment is wiped down after use and the PCA room is left tidy
- will ensure that accidents and defects are reported
- will ensure all trip hazards such as yoga mats are removed when not in use
- if the user feels unwell or experiences dizziness, nausea or sudden onset of pain they should stop exercise immediately and inform the HART manager
- will ensure that they adhere to the Standard Operating Instructions (Appendix 2) and this Policy for use of the PCA room
- will not use the PCA Room if they are suffering from any injury or illness that could be exacerbated by the use of any of the equipment

4. PCA room equipment

- 4.1 The equipment provided within each of the PCA rooms is done so at the cost of the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (Standard Equipment List – Appendix 1).
- 4.2 Staff shall not bring other items of exercise equipment into the PCA room, including free weights, skipping ropes and gym/Swiss balls.
- 4.3 Staff are permitted to bring personal items of equipment into the PCAs room including ankle/wrist weights, belts and back supports.

5. Authority to use the PCA Rooms

- 5.1 Staff wishing to use the PCA rooms must be employees of the LAS and must first undertake formal PCA induction training. To obtain this training, speak to the Fitness Advisors / HART manager to arrange an assessment and training. Individual risk assessments must be carried out for pregnant women before they are able to use the PCA rooms to ensure it is safe for them to do so. The PCA Room is only available to staff who have to, as part of their duties, undertake an Ongoing Physical Competence Assessment.
- 5.2 A Fitness Advisor will provide users with induction training on the use of equipment and relevant health and safety rules.
- 5.3 The Trust will ensure that there is a minimum of one trained Fitness Advisor per HART to provide all initial induction training.
- 5.4 All staff should be familiar with the PCA room Standard Operating Instructions which will be clearly displayed in the PCA room.
- 5.5 All staff using the PCA Room agree to be monitored remotely by CCTV.

6. PCA Room opening hours

- 6.1 Both PCA rooms will be available 24/7.

7. Accidents

- 7.1 All accidents or incidents occurring in the PCA room that cause injury to persons or damage to equipment must be managed in the most appropriate way and immediately reported to the individual's line manager and Fitness Assessor.
- 7.2 An LA52 should be completed and an investigation into the accident will be carried out in accordance with normal procedures.

8. Reporting defects

- 8.1 If a defect or hazard is discovered on an item of equipment, that item, or the whole PCA room is to be taken out of use. The person identifying the fault or damage must place a “Faulty Equipment - Do Not Use” notice on the equipment. Copies of these notices are kept adjacent to the PCA room door. All defects/hazards must be reported to the HART Manager or Duty Supervisor immediately.
- 8.2 For a non gym equipment defect or hazard in the PCA room inform the Estates Department using HEAT defect logging process.

9. Inspection/maintenance of equipment

- 9.1 The PCA room and equipment will be inspected weekly by the Fitness Assessor. This inspection will be recorded in the PCA room inspection folder in the PCA room near the door.
- 9.2 A full inspection of each piece of equipment by a qualified external assessor will take place annually. The inspection certificate will be displayed on the wall of the PCA rooms.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN				
Intended Audience	All LAS HART and other local staff likely to use the PCA rooms			
Dissemination	Available to all staff on the Pulse and in hard copy in each of the PCA rooms			
Communications	Policy to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document. An up to date copy will be in hard copy in each of the PCA rooms.			
Training	<p>The LAS will provide relevant training to the Fitness Assessors, which will constitute at least one member of staff per HART.</p> <p>Each member of staff wishing to use the PCA rooms must have PCA induction training before using any equipment. This training will be provided by the Fitness Assessors.</p>			
Monitoring: Any reports relating to accident or incident will be investigated. The views of the target group will be sought 3 months after the go live date in line with the Equality Analysis.				
Aspect to be monitored	Frequency of monitoring AND Tool used	Individual/ team responsible for carrying out monitoring AND Committee/ group where results are reported	Committee/ group responsible for monitoring outcomes/ recommendations	How learning will take place
PCA room equipment	Weekly Using the PCA room weekly inspection form kept in each PCA room.	The designated Fitness Assessor for each PCA room. Reports made to Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Strategy Group	EMT	HART Manager to arrange fault rectification.
	Annually	Qualified external assessor and reports made to Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Strategy Group	EMT	HART Manager to arrange fault rectification.
Accidents	Following each accident	HART Manager and Safety and Risk Department and reports made	EMT	Feedback and reports from LA52 and Accident Book

		to Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Strategy Group		
Ongoing Physical Competence Assessment pass rates	6 monthly by assessing staff competence	HART Operations Officers and HART Training Officers and reports made to Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Strategy Group	EMT	By analysis of Achievement Records

PCA room equipment.

- 2 Platform Treadmill
- 2 Elliptical Cross Trainer
- 2 Upright Bike
- 1 Concept Rower

- 1 Lat Pulldown / Vertical Row 113kg/250lb
- 1 Leg Press / Calf Raise 113kg/250lb
- 1 Leg Extension / Leg Curl 113kg/250lb
- 1 Multi Press 113kg/250lb
- 1 Abdominal / Low Back 113kg/250lb

- 1 Multi Adjustable Bench
- 1 Dual Pulley Functional trainer

Free weights -

Barbells from 7.5kg 10kg 12kg 15kg 17.5kg 20kg 22kg 25kg 27kg 30kg or variation
Bar 10kg 15kg 20kg 25kg and 30kg

PCA room Standard Operating Instruction

1. In the interests of risk reduction, the following instructions are to be observed by all persons using the PCA room.
 - (a) The PCA room may be used only by those who have undertaken induction training.
 - (b) Exercising or fitness training is not to be undertaken unless an individual has received induction training.
 - (c) Suitable clothing is to be worn at all times, i.e. shorts or track suit and suitable footwear. Improvised kit or training without tops or footwear is not permitted. Changing facilities should be used at all times, i.e. changing in toilets is not permitted.
 - (e) Personal jewellery should be removed before starting training exercises. Rings should be taped over if they cannot be removed. Individuals are reminded to collect personal belongings before leaving the PCA room. The Trust does not accept responsibility for the loss of, or damage to personal effects.
 - (f) No glass, only suitable plastic drinking bottles are permitted within the PCA room.
 - (g) Machines are to be used in situ and not moved around the room
 - (h) No other equipment should be brought into the PCA room except personal equipment such as ankle/wrist weights, belts and back supports etc.

Routine User Inspection - Before exercising, the equipment should be checked. The inspection should include the following:

Machine - stable, including seats and exercising positions.

Cables - sound, properly connected and not frayed.

Weight selector pins (to support weights) provided and not bent or damaged.

Weight selector pins properly located to support weights.

Pulleys correctly fixed and free running.

Hand and feet positions properly located and not worn or missing.

Karabiners connecting hand held accessories are closed and positioned correctly

2. If a defect or hazard is discovered the item of equipment/PCA room is to be taken out of use and the relevant notice displayed by the person reporting the defect or hazard. For defective equipment inform the HART Manager or Duty Supervisor. For any non gym equipment defect/hazard within the PCA room inform the Estates Department using the HEAT defect logging system.

Any accident occurring within the PCA room that cause injury must immediately be managed and reported to the individual's line manager and the Fitness Assessor and a LA52 completed.

3. Any equipment displaying the notice 'Faulty equipment - do not use' is not to be used:

It is the user's responsibility to make sure that all equipment is left tidy and has been properly wiped off after use, using the paper towels provided. Mats should be neatly placed to avoid trip hazards.

If you are the last person to leave the PCA room please ensure the lights are turned off, all windows are closed and the door is locked when not in use.

OP070	Physical Competencies Assessment Rooms for Hazardous Area Response Teams	Page 10 of 18
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Periodical fitness assessments to monitor your progress can be arranged by making a request for an appointment with one of the Fitness Advisors.

4. Volume controls for audio visual equipment must be set to reasonable levels to prevent nuisance to other users and persons in adjacent accommodation.
5. HART staff using the PCA room, whilst on duty, will ensure that they do not delay call activation times by having uniform / IRU ground kit easily accessible.

Protective Marking	Not protected
Ref Number/File Name	HART0015
Title	Risk Assessment for Physical Competence Assessment Rooms (PCA Room)
Version	1.1
Summary	This Risk Assessment covers the use of PCA Rooms on both HART Stations. It considers personal injury to staff whilst using the equipment provided.
Author(s)	Marc Rainey
Creating Dept.	CBRN/HART
Owning Dept.	Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response
Date Created	14 th February 2014
Review Date	20 th Feb 2015

Generic Assumptions

The following generic assumptions are made in the assessment of risk relating to the Physical Competence Assessment Rooms.

All staff using the facilities will have completed an induction and have been deemed to be competent in the use of the equipment.

All staff will have completed a pre-use questionnaire during the induction.

No equipment other than that provided by the Trust will be stored or used in the PCA Rooms.

All equipment will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

All staff will sign in and sign out at the beginning and end of each session in the PCA Room.

A process for marking defective equipment and taking that equipment out of service is in place.

HEALTH & SAFETY MULTIPLE RISKS & ASSESSMENT REPORTING FORM LA166

Section 1

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR: The use of Physical Competence Assessment Rooms provided at HART East and HART West stations.

Section 2 RISK/HAZARD DESCRIPTION	Section 3 WHO MIGHT BE AFFECTED	Section 4 RISK IMPACT	Section 5 RISK LIKELIHOOD	Section 6 RISK GRADING	Section 7 RISK SCORE	Section 8 EXISTING CONTROLS	Section 9 RECOMMENDED UPGRADE OF CONTROLS AND TIMESCALE (ACTION PLAN)
Risk of staff using the PCA Room who have not undertaken the PCA Room Induction	Staff and visitors					The doors to the PCA Rooms are secured with a keypad lock mechanism. Only LAS employees who have completed formal PCA Induction training and signed the relevant Achievement Record are to use the facility. Duty HART Supervisors will routinely monitor the use of the PCA Room during their duty and challenge any person they believe may not have completed the formal PCA Induction.	

<p>Risk of injury caused to staff while using equipment provided in the PCA room</p>	<p>Staff</p>				<p>All staff are to complete a Health Screen Questionnaire during the formal PCA Room Induction. This Health Screen identifies any pre-existing medical conditions that may prevent the candidate from using the facility or restrict their use of some of the equipment. In the case of restriction, the Fitness Assessor will put a specific program in place for the candidate that will take account of the candidate's condition while allowing them to exercise. During the Induction, the use of all machinery and equipment is explained and all candidates are required to demonstrate competency to the Fitness Assessor on each item of</p>	
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						<p>equipment. The Fitness Assessors are available, depending on rostered shifts to discuss further the use of any approved equipment. Users are informed during the PCA Induction that they should stop exercise immediately and seek medical aid should they experience dizziness, nausea, or sudden onset of pain. Users are also informed that they must not use the PCA Room if they are suffering with an injury or illness that could be exacerbated by the use of any equipment.</p>	
Slips trips and falls	Staff					<p>During the formal PCA Room Induction, hazards such as floor mats are discussed with the candidate. Users are instructed to move floor mats to</p>	

						<p>their approved storage area when not in use. Users are required to demonstrate competence in all items of approved equipment including the method of mounting and dismounting from equipment. The importance of wearing recognised gym equipment, including training footwear is explained to all users.</p>	
<p>The risk of injury from damaged or faulty equipment</p>	<p>Staff</p>					<p>The Fitness Assessor will check all equipment on a regular basis. During the formal PCA Room induction, users are instructed to complete a visual inspection of equipment prior to use. Users are also required to wipe equipment down after use and at the same time, complete a further visual inspection of the</p>	

						equipment. Any defect must be reported to the Management Team and a sign placed on the equipment stating 'Faulty equipment –Do Not Use'. A Defect Book is available in each PCA Room to report defects.	
The risk of injury to staff resulting from the use of unapproved equipment	Staff					The importance of using only approved equipment is explained to the candidate during the formal PCA Room induction. Although users are permitted to use their own ankle/wrist weights and belt/back supports, they are not permitted to bring other items of fitness equipment into the Room.	
Risk of dehydration to staff whilst using the PCA Room equipment	Staff					The risk of dehydration is explained in detail to staff during the formal PCA Induction. Users are encouraged to bring	

						<p>their own bottled water into the PCA Room for use during exercise. Staff are informed during the PCA Induction that they should stop exercise immediately and seek medical aid should they experience dizziness, nausea, or sudden onset of pain.</p>	
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Dated: Assessors Name/s: Assessors Signature/s:.....
Multiple Risks & Reporting form LA166-March 2007