



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Justice**
Corrective Services

Special Operations Group

Pre-Selection Test
2023

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1 Special Operations Group

To join the Special Operations Group (SOG) you must meet strict medical, physical and psychological screening standards. Part of this process requires you to successfully complete a Pre-Selection Test.

The required standard for all fitness tests must be reached to achieve a pass for that element. This, and the physical (medical) evaluation, assesses the capability of each candidate to undertake required training programs and become a Special Operations Group (SOG) Officer.

SOG Officers naturally prioritise their personal health and fitness, understanding that sound body and mind are critical to providing an effective and safe emergency response service. Some scenarios can involve lengthy periods of strenuous activity (e.g. cell extraction, non-compliant prisoner restraint, riot control).

Officers may also be required to move rapidly or run short distances, walk, bend, lift and carry objects whilst dressed in restrictive clothing, such as personal protective equipment and Breathing Apparatus (BA).

Therefore, the most suitable candidates for the SOG view physical fitness as a lifestyle choice and regularly partake in exercise and physical training, and participate in team or individual sports, fitness activities, outdoors pursuits and/or arduous work.

2 Pre-Selection Test

The information in this booklet is provided to assist those preparing to attend the Pre-Selection Test.

Candidates are required to demonstrate a high level of physical and mental endurance throughout training, and whilst on the job, in order to effectively provide an emergency response service.

Some scenarios demand lengthy periods of strenuous activity (e.g. cell extraction, noncompliant prisoner restraint, riot control). Candidates may also be required to walk, run, bend, lift and carry heavy equipment whilst wearing restrictive clothing, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA).

3 Key SOG Officer attributes

A SOG Officer must possess several characteristics and traits to enable them to operate effectively in what can be a high risk and dynamic work environment. They include the following:

- **Teamwork:** process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. Teamwork is often a crucial part of the role, as it is often necessary for colleagues to work well together, trying their best in any circumstance.
- **Physical Endurance:** refers to your body's physical capability to sustain an exercise for an extended period. It's made up of two components: cardiovascular endurance and muscular endurance.

- **Leadership:** the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organisation.
- **Communications:** the transmission or exchange of information, knowledge, or ideas, by means of speech, writing, mechanical or electronic media. As a SOG Candidate these skills will be critical in the conduct of effective operational tasks and administration.
- **Problem Solving:** a thinker who focuses on the problem as stated and tries to synthesize information and knowledge to achieve a solution.
- **Resilience:** perhaps the most important attribute.

3.1 What is Resilience?

Some definitions of resilience:

- **Psychological Resilience** - is the ability to successfully cope with a crisis and to return to pre-crisis status quickly
- **Mental Toughness** - is a measure of individual resilience and confidence that may predict success in sport, education and the workplace.
- **Mental Fortitude** - defined as the ability to focus on and execute solutions when in the face of uncertainty or adversity

3.2 Why is it important?

If we can manage physical, psychological, and emotional adversity and make the right decisions by developing resilience, adopting the appropriate mindset, improving mental toughness and developing leadership skills – then we will greatly improve our performance levels, increase our capacity and contribute more to our community.

The Pre-Selection is therefore designed to ensure candidates are able to withstand the rigor of the SOG Specialist Selection Course (SSC), as well as the physical and mental demands of any prolonged emergency response.

4 Pre-Selection Test

Becoming a SOG Officer requires a rigorous screening process, with the Pre-Selection Test being a key component of the recruitment process.

The program exposes candidates to a range of challenging activities to assess their mental and physical capabilities.

The Test:

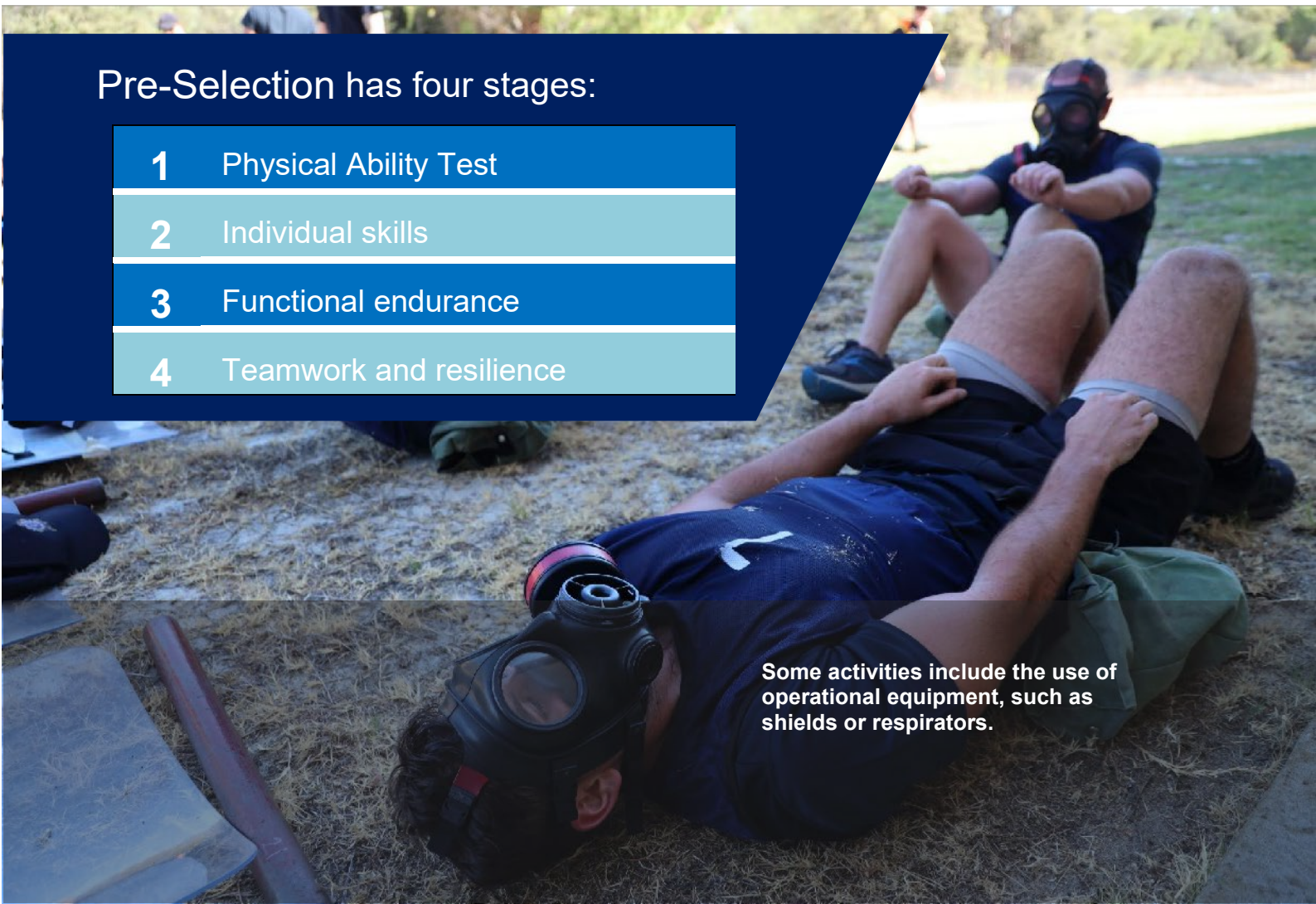
1. Ensures candidates are capable of completing the Specialist Selection Course and do not have an elevated risk of injury
2. Identifies candidates suitable for progression in the recruiting process

In the longer term, high standards of physical fitness and resilience are crucial for SOG members. All SOG Officers must be capable of achieving and maintaining a minimum level of physical fitness as a function of individual operational readiness. During their service, SOG Officers are required to undergo regular physical fitness assessments to ensure they are maintaining the required level of fitness.

Officers who cannot meet these standards after remedial training may be discharged from the SOG.

Pre-Selection has four stages:

- 1 Physical Ability Test
- 2 Individual skills
- 3 Functional endurance
- 4 Teamwork and resilience



Some activities include the use of operational equipment, such as shields or respirators.

4.1 Warning and removal process for candidates deemed to be not at required standard.

If a candidate is observed failing to meet the required standard during an assessed activity, the following process will occur:

- Assessing officer will issue a verbal warning to the candidate
- Assessing officer will notify Officer Conducting the Activity (OCA) of warning and observed performance shortfall or issue.
- The OCA (or a senior member if more than one warning being issued) will move to a position to enable independent assessment of candidate performance
- OCA will monitor remainder of assessment and any subsequent warnings issued
- OCA will debrief the candidate at completion of activity in relation to successful completion or failure of activity.
- Candidate will sign acknowledgement of removal from training in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome or review of performance. This will be countersigned by the OCA and retained on file.

We will assess your mental and physical endurance and resilience, as well as your ability to adhere to instruction whilst under stress.



5 Stage one – Physical Abilities Test (PAT)

Candidates are required to demonstrate general aerobic and basic physical function. The aim of the SOG Physical Ability Test (PAT) is to confirm that a potential candidate is at a sufficient level of fitness to safely continue on the Pre-Selection and to commence training. Aspiring candidates must pass this assessment to move onto the next stage.

Please be aware that:

- The PAT represents the minimum standard required for SOG entry.
- Even if candidates successfully pass the PAT and the Pre-selection, they must maintain their fitness training to increase their physical capacity and lower the risk of injury or failure after appointment/qualification – all SOG Officers must pass this basic fitness assessment annually.
- Participants on the Specialist Selection Course will be required to meet the PAT standard immediately as part of the course.
- When participating in the PAT you should apply your best effort and not rely on achieving the minimum standard, because PAT results are a factor in merit-based selection.

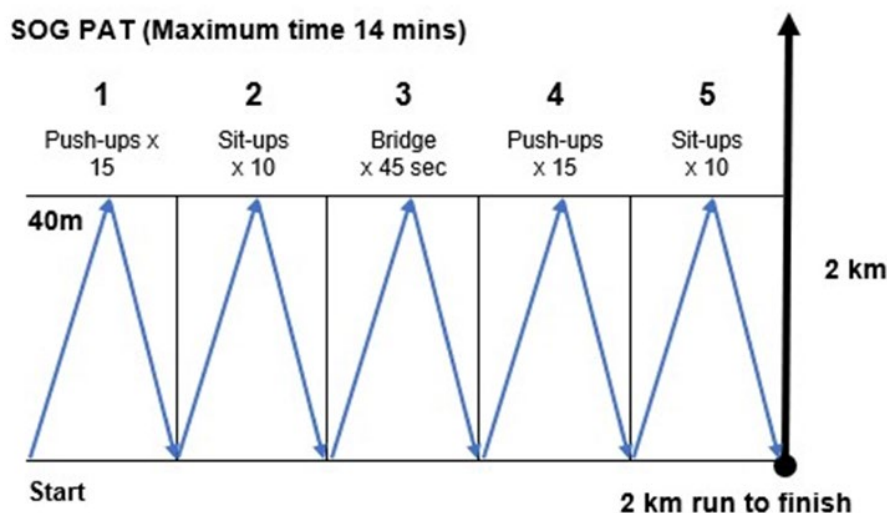
A demonstration of the approved techniques shall be given to all candidates prior to the conduct the PAT. The correct techniques and standards are at Annex A.

All candidates shall conduct the techniques as demonstrated.

You must complete the whole PAT in 14:00 mins or under.

5.1 PAT conduct

Each candidate will stand behind one of the marked 40-metre lines prior to the start of the PAT. The PAT consists of a short distance 'shuttle' run, followed by a physical activity, followed by a shuttle run.



Serial	Action	Complete
1	On the whistle, run to the 40m marker/cone	15 push-ups
2	Run back to the start line/cone, turn and run back to the 40m marker/cone	10 sit-ups
3	Run back to the start line/cone, turn and run back to the 40m marker/cone	45 second prone bridge.
4	Run back to the start line/cone, turn and run back to the 40m marker/cone	15 push-ups
5	Run back to the start line/cone, turn and run back to the 40m marker/cone	10 sit-ups
6	Run back to the start line/cone	2-kilometre run

5.2 Initial warning and correction

If the candidate is using an incorrect technique during the performance of these fitness activities, they will be afforded three warnings. For safety purposes, if not corrected, they will be stopped at that point and deemed Not Yet Satisfactory (NYS) for the assessment.

5.3 Incorrect methods/standards

The candidate will fail the PAT under the following circumstances:

- Candidate fails to run the full distance to the designated 40mtr marker/cone or back to the start line/cone.
- Candidate fails to complete the push-ups, sit-ups or prone bridging to the required standard (as below).
- Candidate fails to complete the PAT in the designated time.

6 Stage Two – Functional Fitness Test – Pre-selection

It is expected that applicants maintain maximal effort and continued participation through this stage of the pre-selection. This stage is assessed on the candidate's ability to perform correct lifting techniques with continuous movement under load. This assessment is to be completed in two phases consecutively.

- Phase one: 80m Jerry can carry
- Phase two: 20m Dummy drag

6.1 Phase one

Candidates are to perform an 80m jerry can carry simulating the requirement to carry equipment to location. Candidates will carry 2 x 20 ltr jerry cans by their side whilst displaying correcting lifting and lowering techniques.

If there is a requirement for a change in direction, jerry cans are to be correctly lowered prior to facing the new direction then immediately continuing with the carry.

6.2 Phase two

Candidates are to perform a 20m dummy drag simulating the requirement to perform a casualty evacuation. Candidates will drag an 80kg dummy whilst displaying correcting lifting and lowing techniques.

Note: Instructors are to monitor correct form (lifting, lowing and posture during jerry can carry and dummy drag) of the candidates to reduce the risk of injury/fatigue.

Phase One	Action	Complete
1	80 metre walk with jerry can carry	with 2 x 20ltr jerry cans
2	20 metre dummy drag	with 80 kg dummy

7 Stage Three – Functional endurance circuits

This stage will involve various body weight and endurance workouts, which are designed to simulate the task of using and carrying essential response equipment, such as breathing apparatus (BA), Method of Entry (MOE), PPE and riot equipment including riot shields.

This stage will assess the candidate's mental and physical endurance and resilience, as well the ability to adhere to instructions whilst under stress.

7.1 Torsion Bar Circuit



Candidates are required to complete a circuit incorporating a torsion bar.

The circuit will include exercises such as shoulder press, tri-cep extension, front raise, squat to a cadence

The circuit comprises a series of sets of the above exercises with a 200 m run in between each set

Bar weight is:

- 7 kg for people 70 kg or under **or**
- Approximately 10 kg for those over 70 kg in body weight

7.2 Duration and Required Performance Standard

Candidates will complete a total of four complete torsion bar workouts, each consisting of approximately four minutes work.

Candidates will be required to maintain the cadence set by the instructor.

The candidate will be subject to the same warning and removal process should they not meet the required standard or if they are using an incorrect technique (see 4.1).

Candidates will also be removed from the assessment for safety purposes, if they fail to use the correct technique or if they are experiencing any medical signs or symptoms of being unable to continue safely.

7.3 Respirator Circuit

Candidates are required to complete a circuit while wearing a respirator

This is designed to test for 'Gas Mask Phobia', a term used to describe the feelings of claustrophobia associated with wearing a respiratory protective mask

This condition, whilst rare, may affect some candidates. It is characterised by feelings of panic, inability to get sufficient air, sweating and hyperventilation.

Gas Mask Phobia has the potential to significantly impair a person's ability to perform core job functions of the SOG.

Candidates not able to perform assigned tasks whilst wearing a respirator and/or carrying the issued Armadillo shield during components of the circuit will not progress further with assessment testing.



7.4 Duration and Required Performance Standard

The candidate will be subject to the same warning and removal process should they not meet the required standard or if they are using an incorrect technique (see 4.1).

The candidate will be deemed to have not completed the assessment to the required standard if:

- The mask is removed at any point during the circuit.
- The candidate fails to complete the necessary repetitions of the stipulated exercises.

This will result in instant removal from the assessment.



8 Stage Four – Teamwork and Resilience Activities



Candidates are required to complete teamwork and resilience activities

The stretcher carry circuit is designed to test the candidate's ability to follow limited instructions, quickly assimilate into and perform as a part of a team.

Candidates will also complete an individual endurance circuit, requiring them to continue around a circuit while carrying a load. This tests strength, endurance and resilience.

Both activities place candidates under a degree of physical and mental duress, that may be encountered during the conduct of an operational task.

8.1 Teamwork Activity

Candidates are required to act promptly on limited instruction, establishing and working as a team to complete a challenging task.

The task may include a simulated casualty and equipment evacuation. The circuit is conducted in a challenging environment. The ability to effectively work in a team to accomplish tasks is a key attribute.



8.2 Duration and Required Performance Standard

Candidates will complete the activity in its entirety to be deemed successful in this component. Candidates will be required to complete the tasks while complying with the instructions provided by the instructor. Candidates will be deemed to have not completed the task to the required standard if:

- They fall behind or drop out of the group.
- Sustain an injury that precludes them from completing the assessment.
- Voluntarily withdraw; **or**
- Fail to demonstrate the required attributes of leadership and resilience.



9 Decision Panel

It is expected that candidates maintain maximal effort and continued participation in all tasks. **No feedback will be provided to the candidate on the day.**

At the completion of the SOG SSC Pre Selection, a Decision Panel will convene to review all results and holistically assess each candidate's performance and suitability for further specialist training within the SOG.

Note: The above should be treated as a **guide only**, and may be amended or altered to suit climatic, ergonomic or internal training requirements without notice.

Candidates will receive a detailed brief related to the standards required, and demonstration of all assessed components of the selection course before the commencement of each individual activity.

Annex A

Techniques and standards

1. Push-up

Briefing

Push-ups provide an indication of upper body strength and endurance, as well as stabilising abdominal strength. The standards are not meant to reflect maximal capacities it is an indication that candidates have the basic capacity to support their own body weight or carry weight, for example, breathing apparatus.

Correct method/standard

The candidate will adopt a push up position with the toes on the ground, feet together, arms shoulder width apart with palms flat. The back should be in neutral alignment with the head, shoulders, hips, knees and feet in a straight line and the arms should be extended, this is known as the “up” position.

Action

1. From the “up” position the arms bend to a 90-degree angle from the shoulder to elbow. The body should remain generally in a straight line and parallel to the ground. This is the “down” position.
2. Keeping the body generally in a straight line, the arms are then extended so that the body returns to the “up” position.
3. Returning to the “up” position constitutes one repetition.
4. The push-ups must be conducted in a continuous movement to the designated standard.



Figure 1 - The start and up position



Figure 2 - The down position

Incorrect method/standard

The candidate will fail this test under the following circumstances:

- failure to demonstrate the correct method; candidate will be asked to stop and the test will be terminated.
- Candidate does not achieve the designated level.

An incorrect push-up includes:

- Bobbing
- Bottom in the air
- Back arched
- Arms are not bent at a 90-degree angle from the shoulder to elbow in the “down” position.

2. Sit up

Briefing

Sit-ups test abdominal body strength and muscular endurance. The standards are not meant to reflect maximal capacities it is an indication that candidates have the basic abdominal strength and endurance in supporting the body through a range of correctional tasks. A strong abdominal region will assist in reducing the incidence of back injury when combined with correct lifting/dragging techniques.

Correct method/standard

Start position. The candidate is to lie flat on their back with the shoulders and head being in contact with the ground, legs at a 45-degree angle, the feet can be flat or raised as long as the HEEL remains in contact with ground and arms fully extended with palms resting on thighs. This is the “down” position.

Action

1. The neck and upper body are flexed in succession to raise the upper body. As the upper body is raised to the “up” position the hands slide up over the knees until the wrists touch the knees.
2. The body is then lowered until the shoulder blades and head touch the floor, thereby returning to the “down” position, constituting one repetition.
3. The chin is to be kept as close to the chest as possible to stabilise the head. The head is not to be jerked forward.



Figure 3 – the start and down position



Figure 4 – the up position

Incorrect method/standard

If the candidate is using an incorrect technique, they will be afforded three warnings. For safety purposes, if not corrected they will be stopped at that point and deemed NYS for the assessment.

For safety purposes the candidate will fail this test under the following circumstances:

- the hands are lifted from the thighs/knees or jerked forward as a means of increasing leverage or used to pull the body up.
- the head is jerked forward.
- the heels or buttocks are lifted from the ground.

3. Bridge

Briefing

Prone (face down) bridging tests strength of the anterior and posterior muscles of the trunk (core muscles), as well as stabilising muscles of the upper and lower body. It is an indication that Candidates have the basic capacity to support their own body weight or carry weight, for example, breathing apparatus.

Correct method/standard

The starting position for the prone bridge is similar to the push up, except the elbows are bent and the forearms are flat on the floor. The palms can either rest on the floor, or they can be together with the fingers interlaced.

Action

1. The Candidate is to use their elbows and toes to push up and hold the body off the floor, keeping the back flat, abs tight and body completely straight.
2. The candidate is to hold this position for the 45 second requirement/component of the Physical Abilities Test (PAT).



Figure 5 - The bridge position

Incorrect method/standard

The Candidate will fail this test under the following circumstances:

- the body is not held up off the floor for the desired period of time (45 secs);
- the body is not maintained in a straight line, resulting in excessive arching of the back; **or**
- any portion of the Candidate's body, apart from the elbows, forearms and toes makes contact with the ground.

The activity starts at the direction of the supervisor and ends when:

- the Candidate is unable to maintain the required position.
- the Candidate has held the position for the required amount of time; **or**
- the activity supervisor terminates the activity based on safety concerns.

Incorrect method/standard

If the candidate is using an incorrect technique during the performance of these fitness activities, they will be afforded three warnings. For safety purposes, if not corrected, they will be stopped at that point and deemed NYS for the assessment.

