

27 July 2015

AR 600-9, The Army Body Composition Program

Frequently Asked Questions:

Question (Q): Who is authorized to grant a waiver (exception to policy) to the provisions of AR 600-9, the Army Body Composition Program (ABCP)? What items should be included in the waiver request packet?

Answer (A): The only authority for waivers to the mandatory requirements and legal stipulations within AR 600-9 is the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Headquarters Department of the Army. The waiver packet must contain endorsements from the chain of command including a cover memo recommending approval or disapproval, signed by the Soldier's O6 Brigade Commander or equivalent. Copies of the contents of the unit's ABCP file maintained to monitor the Soldier's compliance must be included along with any medical documentation, all AR 600-9 required counseling statements, a copy of the DA Form 268 Flagging action, and finally a memo from the local Installation servicing JAG office stating that their office has no legal objections to the G-1 waiver request moving forward.

Q: Can the commander or attending physician approve exemptions to AR 600-9?

A: No. The Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, is the proponent for the Army Body Composition Program (ABCP). Commanders must provide counseling to Soldiers to establish a personal weight /body fat goal and implement the ABCP. Healthcare personnel assist commanders and supervisors by providing weight reduction/nutritional counseling, identification of pathological conditions that require medical treatment, and evaluating Soldiers with medical limitations. The DA Form 3349, Physical Profile Form, will not be used to excuse Soldiers from the provisions of AR 600-9. AR 600-9 contains a standard memorandum for completion by a physician if there is an underlying or associated disease process that is the cause of the overweight condition. Please review section 3-3 entitled "Exemptions" in AR 600-9 for a broader discussion of this topic.

Q: Are units required to conduct unit weigh-ins at least seven days apart from the APFT?

A: No. Commanders are allowed to schedule the ABCP screening weigh-in whenever they determine a date and time best synchronizes with the unit training plan and strategy. Previous policy required that the two events be scheduled together on the same day. This is no longer the case. Commanders are now advised that scheduling them too close together may adversely affect a Soldier's performance on the APFT. Ultimately, it is up to Commanders to schedule these events in a manner that best suits the needs of the unit and its assigned Soldiers. The only mandatory program

stipulation is the requirement that all soldiers be screened for body composition compliance IAW AR 600-9 not less than once every six months.

Q: Why is the current tape test method the Army standard for measuring body fat?

A: The Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1308.3, DOD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures (5 Nov 02), mandates use of circumference method ("Tape Test") for all three military departments. The Tape Test is accurate, inexpensive and field expedient. It is now the standard across all of DOD.

Q: Are deployed Soldiers exempt from meeting body fat standards per AR 600-9?

A: No. There is no exemption from body standards while deployed, or upon return from deployment, except in the case of pregnancy and medical conditions as outlined in AR 600-9.

Q: Is the Gulick tape authorized to use to measure body fat?

A: No. Acceptable tape measures are made of non-stretchable (fiberglass) material. Cloth and metal measuring tapes are not acceptable and not authorized for use. Cloth measuring tapes start stretching with first use and get progressively less accurate over time. Metal Measuring tapes do not conform easily to body contours and make the determination of body fat % less accurate. The Gulick tape has a weighted end that may get stretched over time, thereby making measurements inaccurate. The approved measuring tapes are inexpensive and can be ordered easily through the unit supply chain by utilizing either the federal stock number (FSN) 5210-01-238-8103 or national stock number (NSN) 8315-01-238-8103.

Q: What is the approved weight scale national stock number, and what class of supply does it fall under?

A: National stock number (NSN) for the Army weight scale is 6670-01-097-6167 and can be ordered through the normal unit supply chain. The weight scale is class 8 medical equipment.

Q: Are weight scales required to be calibrated? How often and by whom?

A: Yes. Weight scales must be calibrated annually. Calibration can be accomplished at the nearest Army Test, Measurement and Diagnostic Equipment (TMDE) to the unit's location. The Army TMDE agency is part of the Army Material Command (AMC). Please review AR 600-9, appendix B, section B-2. *b.* for a more detailed discussion.

Q: Is there a G-1 approved auto calculator or application the field can use to calculate body fat?

No. Currently the DA Form 5500/5501 does not support the logic that is needed to calculate body fat using the same rounding rules (to the hundredths digit) as the manual calculation. Due to this discrepancy and to ensure the method for calculating body fat is standardized, auto calculators will not be used. This is particularly important as the

body fat data could be used to support a potential legal/separation action. NOTE: Army G-1 continues to work to find an automated solution.

Q: How do you round when using the body fat calculation formula to determine body fat percentage? See instructions highlighted in **YELLOW** below.

SAMPLE (WOMEN)

The equation for women is:

$$\% \text{ body fat} = [163.205 \times \text{Log}_{10} (\text{waist} + \text{hip} - \text{neck})] - [97.684 \times \text{Log}_{10} (\text{height})] - 78.387$$

Measurements: Neck=15 inches; Waist=42 inches; Hip=44 inches; Height=64 inches

- A. Solve: $[163.205 \times \text{Log}_{10} (71)]$. Take the $\text{Log}_{10} (71) = 1.85$ (when using a calculator, be careful not to use \ln key (natural log). Instead, enter 71 and press the LOG key. **Round this number to two decimal places.**
- B. Solve: $[97.684 \times \text{Log}_{10} (64)]$. Take the $\text{Log}_{10} (64) = 1.81$ (when using a calculator, be careful not to use the \ln key (natural log). Instead, enter 64 and press the LOG key. **Round this number to two decimal places.**
- C. Solve the equation:

$$\% \text{ body fat} = (163.205 \times 1.85) - (97.684 \times 1.81) - 78.387$$

$$= 301.93 - 176.81 - 78.387$$

$$= 47\% \text{ (actual number is } 46.73\%; \text{ round to the nearest whole \%)}$$

SAMPLE (MEN)

The equation for men is:

$$\% \text{ body fat} = [86.010 \times \text{Log}_{10} (\text{waist} - \text{neck})] - [70.041 \times \text{Log}_{10} (\text{height})] + 36.76$$

Measurements: Neck=16 inches; Waist=49 inches; Height=69 inches

- A. Solve: $[86.010 \times \text{Log}_{10} (33)]$. Take the $\text{Log}_{10} (33) = 1.52$ (when using a calculator, be careful not to use \ln key (natural log). Instead, enter 33 and press the LOG key. **Round this number to two decimal places.**
- B. Solve: $[70.041 \times \text{Log}_{10} (69)]$. Take the $\text{Log}_{10} (69) = 1.84$ (when using a calculator, be careful not to use the \ln key (natural log). Instead, enter 69 and press the LOG key. **Round this number to two decimal places.**
- C. Solve the equation:

$$\% \text{ body fat} = (86.010 \times 1.52) - (70.041 \times 1.84) + 36.76$$

$$= 130.74 - 128.88 + 36.76$$

$$= 39\% \text{ (actual number is } 38.62\%; \text{ round to the nearest whole \%)}$$

Q: If a Soldier has a miscarriage during pregnancy, what is the guidance in regards to her APFT and weigh-in?

A: The DOD Directive 1308.1 (30 Jun 04), Physical Fitness and Body Fat Program, states pregnant service members shall not be held to the standards of physical fitness and body fat testing until a minimum of six months after pregnancy termination. In accordance with AR 40-501, convalescent leave after a termination of pregnancy (for example, a miscarriage) will be determined on an individual basis by the attending physician.

Q: Are “love handles” measured when you obtain abdominal circumference? A:

A: No. For males AR 600-9 describes the abdominal circumference site as being at the level of the “belly button”, and for females at the point of minimal abdominal circumference, usually located about halfway between the navel and lower end of sternum (breastbone). Consistency in measurement is an important aspect of doing the tape test correctly. Deviation from the prescribed techniques may lead to incorrect body fat measurements and an incorrect assessment on whether a Soldier is making progress in losing body fat. Please review AR 600-9, appendix B, section B-3., *a. b. & c.*

Body circumference measurements must always be done exactly as described in AR 600-9 to ensure consistency and fairness each time a Soldier is measured.

The locations to measure the various body circumferences are based on standard body sites determined by scientists who studied how best to measure body fat in males and females. That said, moving the tape up or down when measuring the waist to ensure that the tape includes or avoids a roll of body fat is not a good practice and deviates from the scientific recommendations. It is neither appropriate nor fair to change the location of the tape based on a person’s body shape.

Q: To what accuracy are the circumference tape measurements recorded? What is the rounding rule? What about wide variances during the three repetitive

A: DA Forms 5500/5501 require measurement to the nearest ½ inch (.50). Round up or down to the nearest ½ inch (.50). All three of the sequentially completed sets of measurement cannot exceed a variance of one inch. If any one of the three measurements differs by more than one inch, take an additional measurement. Then average the closest three measurements.

Q: When does the DA Form 268 flagging action for AR 600-9 ABCP noncompliance go into effect?

A: Under the provisions of AR 600-9, the DA Form 268 flagging action must be completed within three working days of the Soldier being found noncompliant. The affected soldier must be informed in writing within two days of initiation of the DA Form 268, or within a total of 5 working days from the day of the weigh-in screening.

