

Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)

June 2023

Requests for Information # 6

**Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion (MPE)
Branch, MP Division
Manpower and Reserve Affairs
Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps**





RFI #6 Physical Fitness Standards

RFI 6.a.: "Provide an overview of your Service's Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment process for the past 5 years. If the process has changed within this time period, provide the impetus for the change(s), as well as describe what exactly was modified."

Response: Current body composition evaluation process: All Marines conduct semi-annual weigh in. If a Marine is found to be out of height/weight standards, a body composition evaluation is conducted utilizing the circumference (tape) method. Measurements are taken three times by two separate evaluators. Marines who exceed the body fat percentage standards via the circumference method will have body fat verified using bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA). Marines who exceed BIA verified body fat standards are assigned to the body composition program.

Changes in the USMC Body Composition Program 2017-2022	
2017	<u>Performance exemption:</u> 285 or higher out of 300 on fitness tests exempts Marines from body composition standards; <u>Performance allowance:</u> 250 or higher earns additional 1% body fat allowance; <u>BMI maximum increase</u> for female Marines from 25 to 26.
2019	<u>Postpartum exemption period changed from 6 to 9 months</u> before being required to adhere to body composition and fitness standards
2021	<u>Postpartum Marines granted 12-month exemption</u> from body composition and fitness standards
2022	<u>Max body fat % increased by 1% for female Marines; BIA body fat verification</u> required before assignment to BCP or administrative separation due to MCBCMAP failure

Impetus for changes: USMC human performance policies are in a constant state of analysis, assessment, and modification if warranted.

The performance exemption/allowance changed was informed by fitness test data which showed some Marines who exceed body composition standards can perform very well on fitness tests.

Changes for Marines who are post-partum were justified by current research on return to exercise and physically demanding tasks for this population.

Incorporation of BIA and increase in body fat % were informed by results of a US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine study.



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RFI 6.b: *“Cite the anthropometric research utilized to support your Services’ Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment policy.”*

Response: Current Policy: DODI 1308.3

- Hodgdon, J.A. and M.B. Beckett (1984). Prediction of Percent Body Fat for U.S. Navy Men From Body Circumferences and Height. Report No. 84-11, Naval Health Research Center, San Diego, CA

- Hodgdon, J.A. and M.B. Beckett (1984). Prediction of Percent Body Fat for U.S. Navy Women from Body Circumferences and height. Report No. 84-29, Naval Health Research Center, San Diego, CA

-Potter AW, Nindl LJ, Pazmino A, Soto LD, Hancock JW, Looney DP, Tharion WJ, McEttrick DM, & Friedl KE. (2022). US Marine Corps body composition and military appearance program (BCMAP) study. US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, MA, 01760, USA, Technical Report, T23-01.



RFI #6 Physical Fitness Standards

RFI 6.c: "Provide photos that demonstrate how Service members' body fat is assessed (by gender)."

BIA Body Fat Assessment



Circumference Method (tape)

Male Neck Measurement



Female Neck Measurement



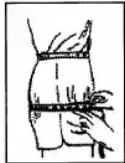
Abdomen Measurement



Waist Measurement



Hip Measurement



RFI 6.d: "What is the margin of error associated with your Services' Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment process (e.g., percentage range)?"

Response: The circumference method has a margin of error of 3-4%. The BIA has a margin of error of 1-3%.



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RFI 6.e: “Explain whether the method of Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment has either increased or decreased separations (broken down by gender). Provide data/metrics for the last 5 years.

Response: USMC separations for failing the MCBCMAP have generally decreased over the past five years and remain significantly low as a percentage of the total force. The impact of recent changes to the MCBCMAP are still undetermined.

Separations (active and reserve)

