



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE**

6 March 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR DACOWITS

FROM: HQ USSF/S1
2020 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-2020

SUBJECT: USSF DACOWITS RFI Response RFI #8

QUESTION #8

The Space Force was established three years ago under the Department of the Air Force. In December 2022, via RFI 7, the Committee asked the Military Services to provide updates to their physical fitness training programs. The Space Force was unable to provide a response at that time, due to the information being pre-decisional. The Committee requests a written response from Space Force on the status of their physical fitness training program (include a copy of the physical fitness assessment plan and body composition measurements). Additionally, provide justifications for each event/objective contained within the Space Force fitness assessment plan, to include body composition measurements.

DISCUSSION:

The USSF physical fitness program, one element of service's Holistic Health Approach (HHA), is still pre-decisional. Details of the USSF fitness program remain under consideration by the Under Secretary of the Air Force and the Vice Chief of Space Operation. USSF anticipates releasing guidance no later than March 2023.

The other two elements of HHA are performance health optimization and education. Performance health optimization includes the Space Force Body Composition Program (BCP) as well as components of skills-based preventive medicine. The Space Force BCP is detailed below. Education includes prevention skill-building for Guardians, encompassing the career cycle of the service member. Prevention skill-building has an evidence base to promote shared protective factors and increase positive behaviors.

In accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 1308.03, *DoD Physical Fitness/Body Composition Program*, 10 Mar 2022, the Space Force "will design, implement, supervise, and tailor PF/BC programs to suit the particular needs and mission of [the] Military Service, consistent with established scientific principles of physical training." [DoDI 1308.03, Para 3.1b]

The BCP was approved, and guidance was disseminated to the force on 13 January 2023. The program requires uniformed military members to have an annual body composition assessment within their birth month and uses a waist-to-height ratio to calculate body composition by dividing waist circumference by height. Measurements are taken at the thinnest part of a person's waist.

Guardians will be required to assess annually within their birth month or no later than twelve months from their last assessment.

Waist-to-height ratio is a gender neutral screening tool for assessing health risks associated with abdominal obesity that is backed by scientific literature across diverse populations. Other options were ruled out due to bias to specific populations, inability to consistently replicate measurement, or feasibility (cost; training/sustainment burden to execute measure; and impact on a Guardian's time, to include time away from the mission). Analysis of numerous studies using waist-to-height ratio calculations for over 300,000 individuals demonstrated waist-to-height ratio was a better predictor of diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease compared to standalone waist/abdominal circumference measurements or body mass index calculations.

Implementation of the body composition program starts on 1 April 2023 with a one-year adaptation period and a "baseline assessment." This program provides a military standard for body composition and an associated health risk predictors to meet service requirements. In alignment with the US Air Force, the Space Force has set the following standard for uniformed service members.

- a. Meeting Standard (Low Risk/Optimal; Moderate Risk): (WHtR < 0.55)
- b. Not Meeting Standard (High Risk/Sub-Optimal): (WHtR \geq 0.55)

Uniformed Service members who fail the body composition measurement are entered into a Service-directed remedial program and are referred to medical authorities for evaluation upon entry in remedial training. The medical evaluation will recommend Service member for continued physical training or specify medically limiting circumstances.