

ARMY BODY COMPOSITION PROGRAM AND STANDARDS

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 7, 2026

Army Directive 2026-06 (Army Body Composition Program and Standards) aligns the Army Body Composition Program (ABCP) with medically validated, streamlined approaches to promote consistency, fairness and the overall health of the joint force. The directive establishes WHtR as the Army's sole body composition assessment.

THE STANDARD

All Soldiers will be screened twice a year, and a WHtR of less than, but not equal to 0.55 satisfies the requirement. To determine WHtR, waist circumference is measured at the navel (belly button) in inches, and divided by the height, in inches. All Soldiers must have a WHtR screening recorded in the Army Training Information System (ATIS) within 90 days of the AD publishing date.

NON-COMPLIANCE

A WHtR of 0.55 or higher results in enrollment in the ABCP and a flag.

SECOND CHECK

A second WHtR measurement by a different team on the same duty day is required prior to any administrative action.

COMMANDER AUTHORITY

Commanders may direct a WHtR assessment at any time if they believe a Soldier may not meet the standard.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

The requirement to appoint an administrator to run the ABCP has been rescinded, as commanders will continue to directly oversee program execution.

180-DAY ASSESSMENT

The Army will conduct a 180-day review of the WHtR standard, and no separations for WHtR failure will occur until the review is complete and further guidance is disseminated.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

[Q] Why is the Army transitioning to only using the WHtR and no other secondary assessment like in the past?

[A] The transition to WHtR replaces legacy height-weight tables and secondary tape tests with a single, modern fitness metric for several key reasons:

- More accurate health predictor: Scientific research shows WHtR is a superior predictor of long-term cardiovascular and metabolic health risks compared to legacy methods.
 - Fairness and biological rigor: WHtR accommodates a wider variety of physical body types fairly while maintaining readiness standards.
 - Simplicity: A single, straightforward calculation reduces administrative friction for leaders.
 - Focus on overall readiness and lethality: It aligns the Army with the Secretary of War's goal to standardize fitness metrics across the joint force.
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[Q] What is WHtR?

[A] WHtR is a straightforward measurement used to assess lifestyle health and risk of cardiovascular diseases.

- WHtR specifically assesses the distribution of body fat, providing a more nuanced predictor of cardiovascular disease and overall mortality.
 - The Office of the Secretary of War established a WHtR of less than, but not equal to 0.55 as the standard for all Soldiers, ensuring they maintain a healthy body composition conducive to the physical demands of serving in the armed forces.
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[Q] What are the benefits for Soldiers and effectiveness towards readiness in using WHtR?

[A] The new assessment ensures that Army's health standards are based on the most current medical science, which better promotes long-term Soldier health and survivability.

- Reduces human error and subjectivity in assessing an individual's body composition, standardizing the assessment process across the entire joint force.
- Provides a fair, universal standard for all Soldiers without requiring overly complex adjustment tables.

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- By accurately identifying those at risk, commanders can better direct Health-and-Holistic Fitness resources to maintain a deployable, lethal force.

[Q] What is the new body composition standard?

[A] The new body composition standard is a WHtR of less than, but not equal to 0.55. It is recorded to a precision of three decimal places. The WHtR will not be rounded, and any subsequent digits after the third decimal place will be disregarded (.549 is a passing score; .550 is a failing score). All Soldiers will be screened at least twice per calendar year.

[Q] How is the Waist to Height Ratio (WHtR) measured?

[A] Waist circumference is measured at the navel (belly button), in inches. That number is then divided by height, in inches.

[Q] What happens if a Soldier does not meet the screening standard after the initial and subsequent Waist-to-Height Ratio (WHtR) measurements?

[A] If a Soldier does not meet the initial WHtR measurement requirement, a confirmation measurement must be conducted on the same duty day by a different team. If the Soldier still fails to meet the screening standards after this second measurement, they will be enrolled in the Army Body Composition Program (ABCP) and flagged accordingly. An ABCP flag is non-transferable.

[Q] Are the height and weight tables still in effect?

[A] No. The WHtR screening replaces the height and weight tables previously used to screen Soldiers.

[Q] Can Soldiers request a tape test or another body fat method to challenge WHtR results?

[A] No. All previous body fat assessment methods, including the tape test, have been rescinded. WHtR is the sole authorized body composition assessment method.

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[Q] What forms are used to record WHtR?

[A] WHtR is recorded on DA Form 5500 and in ATIS. DA Form 5501 is no longer used.

[Q] Is there a deadline for recording WHtR screenings in Army systems?

[A] All Soldiers must have a WHtR screening recorded on a DA 5500 within 90 days of the Army Directive's publishing date. Leaders will record a Soldier's WHtR in ATIS using the Leader Tool.

[Q] When does this new policy take effect?

[A] The policy is effective immediately, upon AD publication.

[Q] Does this policy apply to cadets?

[A] Yes. The WHtR standard applies to USMA and Senior ROTC cadets.

[Q] What happens to Soldiers currently enrolled in the ABCP?

[A] Soldiers will now be assessed using WHtR. Soldiers remain enrolled until they meet the WHtR standard. No separation actions for WHtR failure will occur until the Army completes a 180 day assessment and issues further guidance.

[Q] What is satisfactory progress considered while enrolled in the ABCP?

[A] Soldiers remain enrolled until they meet the WHtR standard.

[Q] Will Soldiers receive a medical evaluation when enrolled in ABCP?

[A] Active Component and Active Guard Reserve Soldiers will receive a commander-directed medical exam to rule out underlying medical conditions. Reserve Component Soldiers may request an exam at their own expense.

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[Q] Is the performance based body composition exemption for high Army Fitness Test (AFT) scores still in effect?

[A] No. The exemption for Soldiers scoring 465 or higher on the AFT has been rescinded. All Soldiers must meet the WHtR standard regardless of fitness test performance. AD 2025-17 is inactive.

[Q] When can units conduct WHtR screenings in relation to the AFT or CFT?

[A] Units must allow at least seven days between a Soldier's AFT or CFT and their WHtR screening. Commanders may modify this when operational demands require it.

[Q] What effect does this change have on pregnant or postpartum Soldiers?

[A] Existing medical exemptions to body composition standards remain in effect for pregnant and postpartum Soldiers.

[Q] What is the 180 day assessment period mentioned in the directive?

[A] The Army will conduct a 180 day assessment of the WHtR standard to evaluate its accuracy, fairness and impact on readiness, and determine whether refinements are needed.

[Q] Are commanders required to appoint an NCO to oversee the ABCP?

[A] No. Commanders directly oversee the program. The regulatory requirement to appoint an administrator for the program has been rescinded.