

1. Why does CCPS require body fat analyses to determine minimum wrestling weights?

National federation and state rules have changed regarding weight certification and weight management. CCPS is responding to those changes to create more responsible, safer, healthier weight management among wrestlers.

2. What are the main parts of the weight certification process?

The wrestler's current weight, age, hydration level, and height will be used to calculate what the wrestler would weigh if he achieved a 7% level of body fat (12% for females). The lowest weight class that the wrestler may certify/compete will correspond to what the wrestler would weigh if he achieved a 7% level of body fat (12% for females) while retaining proper hydration.

3. Where does the minimum body fat percent of 7% for males and 12% for females come from?

These are the recommended minimums of the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) National Medicine Advisory Committee. Research in sports medicine observed these to be the lower limits among elite athletes performing at peak efficiency. Negative physiological changes have been reported below these levels.

4. Does a wrestler need to reduce to a 7% (12% for females) level of body fat in order to be competitive?

Absolutely not. In fact, the large majority of wrestlers, including the top wrestlers, will compete at weight classes well above that which corresponds to a 7% level of body fat. Remember, 7% is a minimum percentage, not a recommended percentage.

5. Is this a sudden change?

No. CCPS began requiring all wrestlers to undergo body fat analyses in 2003. It is a safer and more precise way to determine a minimum weight class. NFHS regulations will require all wrestlers in the country to have body fat assessments to determine minimum weight classes beginning with the 2006–07 season.

6. Why is there a need for this process?

National studies continue to show excessive weight loss and "bouncing" (rapid weight loss followed by subsequent gorging) among a significant number of wrestlers. Studies show these practices to be harmful. Professional medical organizations and national wrestling organizations strongly endorse the process implemented by CCPS.

7. What potential harmful effects may result from excessive weight loss?

Decreases in academic performance, athletic endurance, and strength have been observed. Also, bodily functions, including internal temperature control mechanisms, may be compromised. An increased incidence and vulnerability to eating disorders is another potential result.

8. How will a safe minimum weight class be determined?

The current height, weight and level of body fat is used to calculate what the wrestler would weigh at a 7% level of body fat (12% for females). The corresponding weight will be used to determine the lowest weight class in which the wrestler may compete.

9. What will CCPS use to measure a wrestler's body fat?

The Tanita TBF-300W Body Fat Analyzer. This is a reliable, valid instrument that is used to conduct similar tests on wrestlers in many states to determine their minimum wrestling weight. The instrument is safe, noninvasive, more precise than calipers, and consistent for all wrestlers.

10. Is the Tanita TBF-300W safe?

Although there are no known health risks from using the Tanita scale, individuals using a pacemaker or internal electrical medical devices should not use this product. The weak electrical signal may cause such internal devices to malfunction.

11. How does the Tanita TBF-300W work?

The instrument is similar in appearance to a bathroom scale, with a keypad attached that allows variables to be entered including height, gender, and age. The instrument works on the principle of bioelectric impedance, which involves sending a very small electric signal through the body. When the individual steps on the scale, his feet are in contact with two small pads. The signal begins at one pad, is conducted through the water contained in the body, and ends at the other pad. Lean muscle has much more water than fat tissue and allows the signal to pass easily. Fat contains significantly less water and causes impedance or resistance to the signal. The amount of time it takes to complete the circuit determines the percent of body fat. The slower the time, the higher the amount of body fat.

12. Who will conduct the tests?

Trained athletic trainers and professionals will conduct the body fat analyses. A physician will be present to certify the minimum weight class for each wrestler.

13. If the percent of body fat is the major criteria for certification, why is a physician's signature still required?

State athletic association regulations, as well as the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), require that a physician certify a wrestler's lowest weight class.

14. Why is a hydration test necessary prior to the body fat analysis?

Bio impedance methods for determining body fat composition, such as the Tanita TBF-300W, require that the individual be properly hydrated for a valid, reliable reading. An improper level of hydration will slow the speed of the electric signal, resulting in a flawed reading. The individual will show to have a higher level of body fat than he or she actually has. All wrestlers must "pass" a Urine Specific Gravity (hydration) test with a reading of 1.025 or greater immediately prior to having their body fat density measured on the Tanita TBF- 300W. The urine will be analyzed exclusively for its level of hydration, and immediately discarded.

15. What if a wrestler is not properly hydrated?

If a wrestler is not properly hydrated (a Urine Specific Gravity of 1.025 or greater), he or she will not be able to have his or her weight certified. He will have to retake the test at another time.

16. Will what one eats or drinks affect the hydration test?

Certain items including caffeine, chocolate, and alcohol tend to act as diuretics and could result in excess water loss or otherwise impede the electric signal used to measure the percent of one's body fat. Information regarding hydration tips is available.

17. What is the cost to wrestlers/parents for the body fat analysis/weight certification?

There is no cost to parents and wrestlers for the CCPS sponsored weight certification program.

18. What is required from parents and wrestlers?

Wrestlers must arrive at the designated time/place with a signed parent permission form and student ID. Wrestlers should be properly hydrated, and should wear gym shorts and t-shirts.

19. Do other wrestlers in the state have to undergo a similar weight certification process?

Wrestlers at all Maryland public high schools must have a body fat composition test and a physician's signature to certify them for a minimum weight class. The weight certification form used by CCPS is similar for all Maryland public schools.

20. How may one obtain information on a healthy, nutritious diet for a wrestler?

This information is available on the MPSSAA web site (www.MPSSAA.org). The nutrition plan described is adopted from the California High School Athletic Association nutrition education program for wrestlers.

21. What if a wrestler's calculated weight at a 7% level of body fat (12% for females) is between two weight classes?

The higher of the two weight classes will be designated, unless the calculated weight at 7% body fat (12% for females) is within 2% of the lower weight class. The attending physician may "round down" to the lower weight class if within 2%. If the attending physician does not consider it appropriate to "round down," the wrestler may appeal this decision to his or her family physician. The family physician may certify the wrestler at the lower weight, but only if the wrestler's projected weight at a 7% level of body fat is within 2% of a lower weight class.

22. Where can I get additional information?

The Cecil County Public Schools Athletics Website contains specific information regarding many details and aspects of the wrestling certification process. (<http://www.ccps.org/Page/200>). This information may also be obtained from the coach.

23. Suppose a wrestler is naturally below the 7% minimum for males or the 12% minimum for females?

First, this is very rare. The wrestler's physician must verify in writing that the wrestler is naturally under a 7% level of body fat. There would be no "rounding down". The wrestler would certify for the weight class at or immediately above his natural weight.

Stay Hydrated
Stay Healthy



WEIGHT CERTIFICATION

A Guide for Parents and Wrestlers

Frequently Asked Questions

