

Obstacle Course. FAC: 1799

CATCODE: 179923

OPR: AF/A3S

OCR: N/A

Updated: 23 AUG 2024 (Date approved from HAF)

1.1. Description. The obstacle course is a facility that has low obstacles that must be negotiated quickly. DAFMAN 36-2611, *Air Force Obstacle Course Program*, defines this type of course as a Category I (CAT I) Physical Training Course. CAT I obstacles do not exceed four feet in height (above ground). Running the obstacle course challenges the airman's basic motor skills and physical condition. Obstacle course running develops physical capacities and fundamental skills and abilities that are important to airmen in combat operations. Airmen must be able to crawl, jump, dodge, traverse, climb, vault, and balance in order to accomplish certain missions. They may have to do all these things while carrying field equipment for long periods of time without exhaustion or injury, even after fatigue has set in. Obstacle courses are different from confidence courses (CATCode 179921) and the leadership reaction courses (CATCode 179922).

1.2. Requirements Determination. Not all installations require an obstacle course. Typically, installations that host training programs have a need for an obstacle course.

1.3. Scope Determination. Obstacle course layout and the number of obstacles may vary. A course with 10 to 15 obstacles is adequate. Obstacle courses are typically not standardized because of varying site conditions; however, the individual obstacles within the course are standardized for both construction and negotiation. Obstacles are designed to challenge the trainee's physical abilities. Course layout should take advantage of existing natural obstacles and terrain (streams, hills, trees, rocks, and other land features) where possible. Since obstacle courses can be run against time, they should not be made dangerous. No automation is required for this facility. Operations and storage building, latrines, running water, and parking are associated with the obstacle course facility. Count each complete course as one (1) each.

1.3.1. The primary users of obstacles courses are typically trainees attending formal training programs. Also, organizations and individuals not in training may use the facility with permission. Obstacle courses provide an alternate form of physical training, enhances confidence in physical skills, and develops fundamental warrior ethos.

1.4. Design Considerations. Obstacles must comply with DAFMAN 36-2611 guidance. See **Table 1.1** for a list of potential types of obstacles. This is not a comprehensive list of all possible obstacles. The obstacles listed comply with guidance and are physically located at the Officer Training School (OTS), Maxwell AFB, Alabama. Use of obstacles not addressed in DAFMAN 36-2611 must be coordinated with the MAJCOM obstacle course program manager (OCPM) and may require AF/A3S (the OPR) approval. **Table 1.1** also includes support facilities and infrastructure.

1.4.1. The obstacle course shall be designed to meet construction and safety standards. Per DAFMAN 36-2611, obstacles should be designed to original U.S. Army engineering standards where trainee's physical aspects are challenged yet incorporates safety considerations to prevent major or debilitating injuries as much as possible. Professional architect-engineer services and construction contractor support should be considered to enable the proper design and construction of obstacle courses. Consult the base Civil Engineer for assistance.

1.4.2. Obstacle courses are typically constructed from timber on a grass or earth surface. Fall zones around and under obstacles must be constructed of material that can

absorb the impact of someone falling off the obstacle. Use sand, ground rubber, saw dust or water.

1.4.3. Safety equipment (nets, pads, ground covering, etc.) should be incorporated into the design. Consider the need for inspection, maintenance, and replacement of safety equipment during the design process.

1.4.4. Established design guidance, plans/specifications, and sketches should be referenced when developing course obstacles and layout plan. Organizations can also site adapt existing designs from previous obstacle course projects. The OTS obstacle course and assault course obstacles under four feet high are excellent examples to follow. Also, recommended obstacle design specifications are contained in the U.S. Army Safety Program found at: <https://adminpubs.tradoc.army.mil/pamphlets/TP385-1.pdf>.

1.5. **Maintenance.** Only qualified personnel trained to perform structural maintenance will perform obstacle course maintenance. This maintenance may be performed by installation civil engineer or by a contractor qualified to perform such a task. Self-help maintenance of obstacles is authorized but, the obstacle will remain off-limits until certified by a qualified structural engineer.

Table 1.1. Obstacle course may include, but is not limited to, the following obstacle tasks. The obstacles listed are located at the OTS obstacle course and assault course sites.

Obstacle	Description
Hand Walk	Traverse horizontal rails using only arms and hands
High Crawl	Crawl through obstacle pit using high crawl position
Low Crawl	Low crawl through pit under obstacle
Easy Balancer	Walk or run up inclined log then down declined log
Balancing Logs	Walk on a set of three inclined/declined logs
High Stepper	Step over horizontal logs with hands over head
Monkey Bars	Traverse hand over hand bars over pit or water obstacle
Over and Under	Crawl over and under series of high and low horizontal logs
Culvert Crawl	Crawl through a series of culverts (concrete pipe sections)
Low Wall	Climb up and over wall
Horizontal Weaver	Alternating over and under logs without lowering feet to the ground
Longest Half-mile	Rush and cover at barricades
Cable Bridge	Walk on cable while holding rope handrails
Back Crawl	Back crawl through pit under obstacle
Rope Swing	Rope swing over water obstacle
Tangle Foot	Step through a series of horizontal rope obstacles
Island Hopper	Jump from one log stump to another without falling to the ground
Swing, Stop and Jump	Rope swing onto horizontal log, stop, then jump to the ground
Six Vaults	Vault or belly roll over horizontal logs using both hands
Cable Crossing	Traverse cable using only hands and legs/feet over water obstacle
Support Facilities and Infrastructure	
Operations and Storage Building	User Justified
Men's and Women's Latrines	User Justified
Running Water	User Justified
Parking Lot	User Justified