

TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



	TITLE: SELECTION OF OFFICERS	NUMBER: 413
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	New X Amends Rescinds	General Order 413, dated August 29, 2011
AUTHORITY: Chief Ronald A. Ricucci	ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: 31.3.3, 31.3.4, 32.1.1-32.1.7, 32.2.1-32.2.10	TOTAL PAGES: 12

01 Purpose: To set guidelines and procedures for the selection of police officers.

02 Policy: It is departmental policy to utilize a job-related, useful, and nondiscriminatory selection process that results in the appointment of police officers who best possess the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for an effective and respected law enforcement agency.

03 Management of the Process: The Chief of Police or designee is responsible for general management of the entry-level and lateral police officer selection process. The Chief's responsibilities include but are not limited to: (CALEA 31.1.1)

- A. Establishing eligibility requirements for employment.
- B. With the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator, announcing job vacancies and posting selection criteria.
- C. Providing over-all administration of the application processing chain.
- D. Coordinating administration of the selection process and ensuring the selection process is valid, useful and nondiscriminatory, and that records and files are established and maintained as documentation.
- E. Coordinating with the International Personnel Management Association on any legal issue arising out of testing. The IMPA maintains data on development, validity, adverse impact and psychometric analysis of tests.
- F. Developing, administering and evaluating selection process components.
- G. Ensuring that all elements of the selection process are administered, scored, evaluated and interpreted in a uniform manner within the job classification. (CALEA 32.1.3)
- H. Arranging special training in personnel matters for the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator, and other employees assigned to recruitment activities, especially as concerns equal employment opportunity. (CALEA 31.1.2)
- I. Establishing eligibility lists for appointment and criteria for their maintenance and use.
- J. Conducting oral interviews with candidates.

K. Selecting candidates for appointment.

L. Determining whether or not officers on probation should be awarded permanent status, after one year.

M. Preparing for and coordinating the administering of the Oath of Office, with the City Clerk.

N. Conducting an annual review of the entire selection process including adverse impact analyses supplied by the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator. (CALEA 31.2.2)

04 Application and Selection Process: (CALEA 32.1.1) Announcements concerning police officer openings will include a description of duties and responsibilities, job prerequisites including those mandated by the state, and physical requirements. Those seeking employment will be given an application packet, consisting of a Letter of Acknowledgment from the Applicant Coordinator (TPPD Form 400-002a), the City of Takoma Park Application for Employment, the City of Takoma Park EEO Data Form, Statement of Employability (TPPD Form 400-001), a list of Documents Required From Applicant (TPPD Form 400-002b), a Waiver of Conditional Employment Offer (TPPD FORM 400-002c), and an Authorization to Release Military Personnel Records to the Takoma Park Police Department (TPPD Form 400-002e).

A. Phase I:

1. The an electronic application is received by the Police Department from the Office of Human Resources. The Recruitment/ Applicant Coordinator will review the application for completeness. Additional documents to include but not limited to birth certificate, citizenship, driver's license, and social security card may be requested in addition to the application. Original documents, except transcripts, will then be photocopied, and the originals will be returned promptly to the applicant.

2. Upon receipt, the application packet is given a detailed review by the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator, and the applicant is notified of any missing documents or his/her failure to provide original documents. Such documents must be submitted to the Department prior to the applicant taking the written test.

3. Applications are not routinely rejected because of minor omissions or deficiencies that can be corrected prior to the testing or interview process, but the corrections must be made promptly when brought to the applicant's attention and before scheduled tests and/or interviews are conducted. (CALEA 31.3.4)

4. If the application packet is otherwise deficient and/or indicative of disqualifications, the applicant will be notified in writing within 30 days. The applicant cannot reapply until he/she meets the qualifications

5. The written test is given to qualified entry-level applicants. All applicants will be notified in writing of the test date and location two weeks in advance. Applicants who fail the written test will be notified within 30 days and they may reapply after the 30-day period. **Note:** The written test is waived for lateral police officer applicants who do not require attendance in a Maryland certified police academy.

6. Qualified applicants will be notified in writing two weeks prior to their scheduled oral board interview. Applicants will be instructed to arrive one-half hour prior to their scheduled interview. During the half hour period, applicants will be instructed to write a one-page paper discussing why they want to be a law enforcement officer. This paper will be provided to the oral board members, who will evaluate the applicants' writing skills. All applicants will be notified immediately whether they passed or failed their oral board interview, and will be advised in writing within five working days of their oral interview score. Applicants who fail the oral board may reapply after 30 days.
7. Those applicants who pass the oral board will be scheduled for a ride-along. The Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator shall arrange a date and time with a Team Leader and Host Officer and notify the applicant. The Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator shall brief the Team Leader and Host Officer, identifying any specific areas of concern. Host Officers shall expose the applicant to realistic working conditions within the Department to enable them to determine if they want to be employed here. Absent prior notification, those applicants who fail to appear for their scheduled ride-along will be disqualified from the process. The Host Officers shall submit a memo, with input from the Team Leader, to the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator and giving their observations of the maturity of the applicant, his/her tolerance of diversity, and any hostile or overly aggressive behavior or attitude.
8. A meeting will be scheduled for each applicant with the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator. At that meeting, applicants will be fingerprinted, photographed, and provided with the Personal History Booklet. This booklet must be completed and returned to the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator within 2 weeks.
9. The Chief of Police will conduct an executive review of the entire application packets and determine which application(s) will be sent back to the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator for full background investigation(s) and required examinations. This determination depends upon the number of available, funded vacancies.

B. Phase II

1. The Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator will coordinate the conduct of background investigation(s).
2. Upon completion of a satisfactory background investigation, a polygraph examination, psychological examination, and medical background/physical examination (to include drug screening) will be ordered unless a failure in one negates further scheduling of the other(s).
3. Passing application packet(s) will be referred to the Chief of Police for a hiring decision/employment offer.

Note: The polygraph, psychological, and medical background/physical examination(s) are provided cost free to the applicant. An applicant who fails the medical exam may re-apply via a request to the Chief for reconsideration if the request is accompanied by evidence that he/she now meets the medical requirements. At no time in either Phase I or Phase II will any police employee make inquiry into whether or not an applicant is a disabled person or the nature of any indicated disability.

05 Prior Drug Abuse:

A. General Perspective – An applicant involved in prior or current **illegal** use, sale, manufacture, or distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, narcotic drug, or marijuana, as specified herein, has demonstrated character traits, judgment, behavior or activity which call into question his/her ability to perform the duties of a police officer. The substances include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. *Opiates* in the form of heroin or opium, which have no medical use, are typically related to criminal activity, and are not usually a drug of first use. Other opiates, such as morphine, codeine, etc., do have medical value and may be legally or illegally obtained and/or used.
2. *Depressants*, eg., barbiturates, benzodiazepines, methaqualone, etc., have a medical use and are readily available, both legally and illegally.
3. *Stimulants*, e.g., amphetamines, methamphetamine, etc., have a medical use and are readily available, both legally and illegally.
4. *Cocaine* may be used medicinally as a local, topical anesthetic; however, it is prominently used in abuse situations and has a rapid psychological addictive nature.
5. *Hallucinogenic*, e.g., Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), Phencyclidine (PCP), Mescaline, etc., have no medical value.
6. *Inhalants*, e.g., solvents, glue, paint, aerosols, amyl nitrates, etc., have no medical value.
7. *Cannabis*, e.g., marijuana, hashish, and any substance containing THC (the active chemical in marijuana and hashish), may or may not have medical value.

B. Prohibitions – An applicant is ineligible for employment as a Takoma Park police officer if he/she has:

1. Been convicted or otherwise found guilty of selling, manufacturing, or distributing a controlled dangerous substance, narcotic drug, or marijuana;
2. Ever illegally sold, produced, cultivated, distributed or transported for distribution, a controlled dangerous substance, narcotic drug, or marijuana;
3. Ever illegally used a controlled dangerous substance or narcotic drug, other than marijuana, for any purpose;
4. Illegally used marijuana or synthetic marijuana (e.g., K2, Spice, etc.) for any purpose within the 3 years prior to application for employment, or more than 5 times since becoming 21 years old, or more than 20 times lifetime.

C. Should an applicant's self-identification of a substance use be supported by proper medical documentation, the completed investigation will be forwarded to the City physician for evaluation and recommendation. The purpose of such a referral shall be to ensure the substance, while properly obtained, is or was not subject to abuse and/or the applicant is medically fit to fill the assigned position.

D. Improper use of any narcotic/drug by an applicant or sworn officer after application will be grounds for permanent rejection.

E. If an applicant is currently certified, or was previously certified, as a police officer in Maryland or any other state, the applicant is ineligible for employment as an officer of the Takoma Park Police Department if he/she illegally used, ingested, possessed, sold, produced, cultivated, distributed, or transported a controlled dangerous substance, narcotic drug, or marijuana on or after the date of his/her initial certification as a police officer.

F. An application will not be accepted from any individual who previously has been rejected on two occasions for substance abuse. Re-application will be accepted if:

1. the individual has abstained from usage for the period specified; and
2. the indicated frequency requirements are met.

06 Additional Grounds for Rejection:

A. Additional grounds for rejection of a candidate include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Six or more current points against his/her driver's license prior to appointment.
2. Misleading and/or false information supplied by the applicant to background investigators or administration.
3. A high incidence of at-fault accidents.
4. Personal history form not completed or inaccurately filled out.
5. Evidence of repeated violent behavior.
6. A history of the commission of misdemeanors.
7. A credit history that shows an irresponsible pattern of being financially overextended and making payments late or not at all.
8. An employment history that shows a pattern of tardiness and/or sick leave abuse, an inability to work well with others, unfavorable counseling and documentation, substantiated complaints of harassment or violence, unsatisfactory work performance, or unsatisfactory evaluations.
9. Cumulative comments from neighbors, friends, associates, co-workers, and relatives that indicate personality traits, attitudes, beliefs, and/or ethics of the applicant are not compatible with police work.

B. Disqualification - A felony conviction disqualifies an individual for employment with the Takoma Park Police Department. Failure to complete any phase of the testing procedure, including failure to submit completed forms, will result in disqualification. An applicant found ineligible for appointment to a position will be informed in writing, within 30 days of the decision.

07 Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator Responsibility: The Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator can be assisted by other police officers, including minorities, in the selection process as background investigators. The Coordinator or designee will:

A. Post job announcements and recruitment notices for all sworn personnel. The announcements/notices will:

1. provide a description of the duties, responsibilities, requisite skills, educational level, and other minimum qualifications or requirements;
2. advertise entry-level and/or lateral vacancies through electronic, print, or other media;
3. advertise the department as an equal opportunity employer on all employment applications and recruitment notices; and
4. Advertise official application filing deadlines. (CALEA 31.3.1)

B. Seek the cooperative assistance of community service organizations and/or community organization key leaders in the posting of sworn officer job announcements. (CALEA 31.3.2)

C. At the time of formal application, inform candidates in writing of:

1. all elements of the selection process; (CALEA 32.1.4a)
2. the expected duration of the selection process; and (CALEA 32.1.4b)
3. the department's policy on re-application. (CALEA 32.1.4c)

D. Ensure continuing contact between applicants and the Department as the selection process advances from initial application to final employment disposition. (CALEA 31.3.3)

E. Schedule applicants to participate in various components of the process.

F. As appropriate, advise an applicant of the need to submit missing portions of the Personal History Statement booklet.

G. Notify a candidate in writing if he/she does not meet minimum standards for employment and/or a candidate is not selected for the position. (CALEA 32.1.5).

H. Maintain applicant files and card files.

I. Administer and score a written examination, which is documented to have validity, utility and minimum adverse impact. Time limits, oral instructions, practice problems, answer sheets and scoring formulas will be carried out identically for all applicants as described in written policy. The Coordinator will also advise the applicant of his/her score.

J. Maintain control over selection materials and ensure that all elements of the process are administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner. (CALEA 32.1.3)

K. Store selection materials in locked files located in a secure area when not being used and dispose of any selection materials in a manner that prevents disclosure of the information within. The application, background investigation, and selection records of all candidates not selected for appointment will be securely maintained in accordance with the minimum period specified in the department's approved Records Retention Schedule. (CALEA 32.1.6 and 32.1.7)

L. Arrange re-testing of any unsuccessfully completed portion of the process after one year has elapsed, and the applicant reapplies for employment.

M. Distribute Personal History Statement booklets to all applicants, and review the booklets for required information. Fingerprint and photograph all applicants.

N. For those applicants appointed to entry-level or lateral sworn positions, facilitate administering of the Oath of Office, preparing applications for MPTC Certificate and Training Standards Compliance Cards, and issuing uniforms and equipment in accordance with General Order 410.

08 Job Relatedness:

A. All elements of the selection process for sworn personnel use only those rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related and have been documented as having validity, utility and a minimum adverse impact. The elements of the selection process measure skills, knowledge, abilities and traits needed to perform that particular job. (CALEA 32.1.2)

B. The validity of the selection process is determined in one or more of the following ways: content validation; criterion-related validation; and construction validation. The validity of the officer selection process primarily will be determined by a content validation process, but the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator will ensure, insofar as possible, that criterion-related and/or construct validation strategies will be employed. The Coordinator will also:

1. Measure adverse impact, if any, in the selection process on a continuing basis. Selection rates for each race, sex and ethnic group will be compared to those of the group having the highest selection rate.

2. Ensure that any component of the selection process provided and/or administered by private-sector vendors or organizations will meet the requirements of validity, utility and minimum adverse impact, and comply with the requirements of the Equal Employment Opportunity and Americans with Disability Acts.

3. Ensure that tests and their administration and scoring are documented as having validity, utility and minimum adverse impact.

09 Minimum Qualifications for Employment: To be considered for employment, any police officer applicant must:

- * be at least 21 YOA and be a US citizen;
- * possess a high school diploma or graduate equivalency diploma from a recognized institution;
- * have visual acuity of 20/20 with or without glasses or contact lenses for sworn officers operating patrol vehicles; and
- * possess a valid driver's license issued by the State of his/her residence, and be eligible to obtain a State of Maryland driver's license.

10 Testing: All applicants, except those who are currently certified police officers in the State of Maryland, must successfully complete the written examination.

- A. Unless additional test dates are ordered by the Chief of Police, entry-level police examinations will be administered annually, when needed, through the selection process.
- B. Eligible applicants will be notified by the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of a test date.
- C. All examinations will be administered by the Coordinator.
- D. To be admitted to the testing site, an applicant must have proper picture identification as verified by the Coordinator or designee.
- E. Whenever possible, tests will be scored immediately. A candidate must receive a score of 70% on the written examination to be considered for a police officer position. Minimum passing scores may be adjusted downward by the Chief of Police, based upon a finding of adverse impact.
- F. An applicant will be advised of the test score in writing within five working days of the test date.

11 Oral Interviews: Oral interviews will be conducted with every applicant who passes the written examination. The purpose of the interview is to evaluate an applicant's over-all suitability for policing, including evaluation of communications skills, interest in policing and over-all competence and bearing.

- A. Interviews will be conducted by the Chief of Police or his/her designee, and two other designated panel members. Whenever possible, minorities and female officers will be included. Prior to the interview, the applicant will write a one-page paper on why they want to be a police officer. This will assist in a review of their writing skills.
- B. Interviews will be scheduled by the Coordinator, who will ensure that applicants have two weeks advance notice of the date and time of their interview.
- C. Each applicant will be asked identical questions from a sheet of prepared questions. Responses will be rated independently by panel members. Applicants must receive a combined minimum score of 70% to pass the oral interview.

D. An applicant who fails to appear for a scheduled oral interview without acceptable justification, and who does not notify the station, will be disqualified from further participation.

E. Applicants will be advised in writing within five working days of their oral interview score.

12 Background Investigations: A background investigation is conducted to determine an applicant's character, psychological profile and suitability for employment. Parts of the background investigation, e.g., criminal history checks or other online record checks, may be initiated upon receipt of necessary authorizations, releases and/or waivers from the applicant. However, the actual field investigation will not begin until the applicant has passed the oral interview phase of the process.

A. Background investigations will be conducted and/or coordinated by the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator for all positions, sworn and non-sworn, in the department with the exception of the Chief of Police. Training will be offered in background investigations as budget conditions allow.

B. Whenever possible, the investigation will be conducted in person, but mail and/or telephone inquiries may be substituted when long distances are involved. The Coordinator may request assistance from out-of-state agencies in conducting an investigation.

C. After reviewing all submitted forms and applications, the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator will schedule an appointment with the applicant to go over all questions and clear up any misunderstandings.

D. At a minimum, every background investigation will include:

- * local, state and federal criminal records check
- * driver's license and registration check
- * credit bureau report
- * verification of at least three personal references
- * interviews with past and current employers to include review of any personnel files or other written documentation
- * home visit with the applicant and family
- * neighborhood check
- * (certified officers only) weapons qualification scores
- * (certified officers only) ASP Baton training records
- * (certified officers only) OC Spray training records
- * (certified officers only) all other training records

E. Materials to be specifically excluded from the background investigative report are:

- * in the area of residence and neighborhood checks, any general statement not supported by specific details
- * in the area of employment, general statements not supported by specific details or documents
- * in the area of education, I.Q. and other aptitude test scores
- * in the area of credit, information relating to legitimate debts, except information leading to a pattern of gross indebtedness will not be excluded

* in all areas, medical history or questions relating to any disability

13 Polygraph Examinations: If a conditional job offer is made by the Chief of Police, the Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator will schedule the candidate for a polygraph examination, after receiving the candidate's permission and advising the candidate of pertinent questions which will be asked. Polygraph examinations will be administered and interpreted by a trained examiner only as a supplement to the investigatory process, and only when approved by the Chief of Police. Applicants will be informed in advance, in writing, of the questions having a bearing on the selection process. The polygraph, as well as any other means of detecting deception, will not be the single determinant of eligibility for appointment to probationary status.

14 Psychological Testing:

A. Since law enforcement work is highly stressful, a psychological assessment, which is valid, useful and nondiscriminatory, is needed to screen out applicants who might not carry out heavy police responsibilities or be able to endure the stress of the working conditions. Only a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist will administer a written psychological test to the applicant and interpret the results thereof. The Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator will ensure that interpreted results of the test are referred for secure storage in a locked cabinet and room with other applicant paper work for a minimum of five years, under strictest security.

B. Psychological tests will be scheduled by the Coordinator upon completion of a favorable background investigation and a conditional job offer has been made. The psychological tests consist of:

1. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI);
2. California Psychological Inventory (CSI); and
3. Interview with the psychologist.

C. The Recruitment/Applicant Coordinator will facilitate arrangements for scheduling the tests and interview between the applicant and the psychologist. Thereafter, the psychologist will prepare and submit a written psychological profile report. This report will be kept in strictest confidence, becoming part of the applicant's background investigation and subject to secure storage in a locked cabinet and room.

15 Medical Examination: Licensed physicians will be used to certify the general health of candidates who have been given a conditional job offer, and the City will bear the cost of required blood or other laboratory work. Included in the physician's evaluation of an applicant will be a physical fitness examination, using valid, useful and non-discriminatory procedures. Physical fitness is a candidate's body conditioning as measured by examination results evaluated according to the person's age, weight and height. This process includes a drug screening.

16. Successful Candidates for Entry-Level Employment: The names of candidates who successfully complete all components of the selection process will be placed on a register of eligibles. The Chief of Police may select the best-qualified individual for appointment. A candidate's name will remain on the register for a period not to exceed one year. The Chief of Police will contact selectees in writing to advise them of his decision to appoint them to Probationary Status as a Police Cadet, and when to report for employment processing, and indicate procedures for deferring or declining the appointment. Upon graduation from the Academy, the cadet shall assume probationary status as a Police Officer.

17. Lateral Entry: Lateral entry from outside the Department is available for all sworn and civilian positions in the specialist, managerial, administrative and chief executive levels. Lateral entry is also available to any state certified police officer graduate from a police academy for the rank of private only. The salary for certified officers is based upon experience and qualifications and subject to negotiations.

18. Probationary Period:

A. Each new police officer appointee must successfully complete a one-year probation. The twelve-month probationary period begins from the date of appointment as a police Officer. To be retained, the employee must receive a score of above average or better on a Performance Evaluation, which will be completed by their immediate supervisor immediately following the probationary period.

B. The job performance of probationary officers will be evaluated by valid, useful and nondiscriminatory procedures as certified by the Operations Commander.

C. A probationary officer may contest his/her performance evaluation, and is entitled to an interview between him/herself and the rater's immediate supervisor. An exception to this rule exists where the Chief of Police is either the rater or the rater's supervisor.

D. The probationary period may not be extended, according to regulations of the Maryland Police Training Commission, which state: "The probationary period shall end when a person has served as a police officer for an amount of days totaling 1 year."

E. The adverse impact of conversions from probationary status to permanent status will be evaluated and minimized by the Chief of Police.

F. Officers may be terminated for medical or psychological disqualification or background unsuitability during the probationary period, as well as for job performance.

G. There is a six-month probationary period for all police civilian personnel, to include clerks, dispatchers, and parking enforcement officers.

19 Re-evaluation of Candidates Not Appointed: A candidate who fails is not necessarily excluded from further consideration.

A. Candidates who have been deemed ineligible for appointment based on other than the oral interview may appeal the decision by submitting in writing, within fifteen calendar days of the date of notification of ineligibility, a written request for reconsideration by the Chief of Police. In the appeal, the applicant may include additional relevant information. The Chief will inform the appellant of his final decision within thirty calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

B. Candidates who have been deemed ineligible for appointment to probationary status based on the oral interview may request one re-test. Requests for re-testing must be submitted in writing to the Chief of Police, within fifteen calendar days of the date of notification of ineligibility. The re-testing session will be held within thirty days of receipt of the request, and results of the re-test will be final.

C. Candidates may be required to complete an updated medical examination, psychological examination, polygraph examination or background investigation if more than 120 calendar days have elapsed between the initial examination and the date of appointment.

D. A candidate who does not appeal the process may re-apply after one year from the date of notification of the unsuccessful application or test or oral interview. If the candidate subsequently qualifies, he or she will be placed on the department's eligibility list. Candidates will be hired only when an authorized vacancy exists.

20. Files and Records: Records and documents relating to the selection process, both for appointees and unsuccessful applicants, will be established, retained for a minimum of five years and disposed of in strict accord with all applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations governing privacy, security, and Freedom of Information access requirements. Selection materials will include background investigation materials, reports on a medical examination, reports on a psychological examination, reports on a polygraph examination, notes and documents from an oral interview, adverse impact records and data analyses, and other miscellaneous documents used in developing, administering and evaluating selection process components. Applicant files for persons who are employed with the agency will be retained in a separate locked filing cabinet in the central archives until employment is terminated. When employment is terminated, the applicant file will be joined with the personnel file. Materials to be destroyed by shredding will be monitored as directed by the Administrative Services Commander.