

# TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



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**01 Purpose:** To establish policies and procedures for the promotion of sworn personnel in the Takoma Park Police Department. Non-sworn personnel are referred to the City Code for information on promotion. This General Order will serve as a manual governing the promotion process, and one copy will be provided to each applicant for promotion.

**02 Policy:** It is the policy of the City of Takoma Park and this police department, to encourage employees to develop job-related skills, acquire additional work knowledge, and make known their qualifications for promotion to a position of increased responsibility. Officers will be notified of vacancies and the proper procedures for applying and qualifying. In making judgments on any application for promotion, the Department will take into consideration the employee's knowledge, skills and abilities that would contribute to successful performance at a higher level. The promotional process will provide qualified officers the opportunity to receive a fair and job-related review for higher-level positions, will assure maximum identification of advancement potential, and will produce information, which officers may use to further their careers. All components of the process will be valid, useful and have minimum adverse impact.

**03 Procedures:** The Chief of Police, who administers the Promotional Process, is responsible for developing and implementing an effective promotional process. A designee may be assigned to implement the process. The Chief of Police is responsible for ensuring that all phases of the process are carried out properly, specifically including:

- A. Establishment of eligibility requirements for competition in the process.
- B. Announcement of the process and processing applicants for promotion.
- C. Development and administration of job-related, nondiscriminatory promotional exam components.
- D. Establishment of eligibility lists for promotion and criteria for use, and maintenance of such lists.
- E. Selection of candidates for promotion.
- F. Administration of the promotion probationary period, using information and recommendations received from a probationer's superior.

**G.** Following completion of the process, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the process in meeting officers' needs and meeting legal, professional and administrative requirements for validity, utility and fairness.

**H.** Compliance of all promotional procedures with the Equal Employment Opportunity policies and practices of the Department and the City of Takoma Park.

**I.** Ensuring security of all promotional materials including tests, answer keys, interview panel questions, etc. by maintaining all elements in a secured location in the station or off-site by any contractor developing the process, access to which is only available to the Chief of Police or designee.

**04 The Promotional Process:** The process to select officers to serve in the ranks of Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant will be carried out as follows:

**A.** The Chief of Police will issue a written announcement of the process, describing the rank(s) open to competition, eligibility requirements, the exam components, the knowledge, skills and abilities to be measured by the exam components, the basis for determining who will compete in each exam component, the numerical weight assigned to each exam component, the review and appeal procedures to be followed by competitors, the structure and duration of the eligibility list, and the closing date for receipt of applications for participation in the promotion process. The written announcement will be provided to all sworn officers.

**B.** All officers will submit a cover letter and resume, which together will serve as the application to participate in the process. The cover letter should state the applicant's qualifications to meet eligibility requirements for the rank to which they aspire. Approved applicants will be informed of the established schedule of promotional process components. Disapproved applicants will be informed in writing of the reason(s) for disapproval and what is needed to be eligible in the future. No re-application process is established. The resume and cover letter will be scored and are a part of the process.

**C.** Examinations and/or assessment center evaluations, both written and oral, will be administered to all competitors and scored. The resulting scores will be used to produce a rating for each competitor of "Well Qualified" or "Qualified". The Chief of Police will establish these two categories for each rank by grouping closely related scores of the candidates or another method described in the announcement of categories.

The eligibility list for each rank will be prepared in terms of the two rating categories. Names within an individual category will appear in alphabetical order.

**D.** Participants achieving a composite score at or higher than the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile will appear in one of the two categories. Participants scoring lower than the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile will not be ranked. Participant score is based on a total of 100 points. Each part of the process will have a point value assigned. The breakdown of point values will be announced at the beginning of the process. Each part of the process will be scored and the total of the component scores will be the candidate's final score.

**E.** Candidates will receive a written record of their scores on all examination components and offered the opportunity to receive oral feedback on their performance in the promotional process and suggestions for career development. Such feedback will be conducted by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, and, as appropriate, by outside assessors.

**05 Making the Final Selection:**

**A.** To fill a vacancy, the Chief of Police may select an individual for promotion from among the names in the Well Qualified category. Any person in this category may be selected at the Chief's discretion, subject to qualifications in Section B below.

**B.** In making a selection, the Chief of Police will use the following criteria:

**1.** Education -

- \* formal education (additional consideration will be given candidates with post-secondary education)
- \* specialized schools

**2.** Commendations

**3.** Orientation towards community policing

- \* COP projects, involvement with citizen associations, etc.

**4.** Proficiency -

- \* quality and promptness of reports
- \* quality, quantity and outcome of investigations
- \* quality and quantity of traffic enforcement

**5.** Other -

- \* record of attendance and tardiness
- \* public relations, media awareness and an effort to make positive citizen contacts

**6.** Adverse and Disciplinary Actions - Their Effect. An adverse action need not have resulted in formal disciplinary action to be considered by the Chief of Police in deciding whether or not to promote a candidate. It is within the Chief's discretion to consider all such actions for the time period beginning one year prior to announcement of a new formal promotion process, through the life of the existing Eligibility List. Examples of adverse actions would include but are not limited to Category B offenses or higher, including:

- \* failure to adhere to Department Rules or General Orders or Policy Memoranda
- \* failure to adhere to the Oath of Office or Department Code of Ethics
- \* oral and/or written reprimands
- \* inappropriate use of leave
- \* becoming the subject of legitimate complaints from City officials, citizens, co-workers and/or other City employees

**C.** To be promoted, an officer must meet the appropriate service requirement and be on full duty status, with no limitations whatever; at the time the promotion is announced by the Chief of Police.

**D.** The Chief will contact the selectee to tender the offer of promotion, inform the officer of any official ceremony which may be planned, and indicate procedures, for declining the promotion. At this time the Chief will discuss the 12-month probationary period for the promotion and the expectations that must be met to successfully complete the probationary period.

**E.** The Chief will publish and post a personnel order to announce the name of the officer, rank to which promoted, job assignment, and effective date of the promotion.

**F.** The promotion will entitle the officer to a change in rank, insignia and salary.

**G.** If both the “Well Qualified” and “Qualified” categories are exhausted, the Chief of Police may announce a new promotional process for the affected rank(s) only.

**06 Eligibility for Promotion:** To become a competitor and participate in examinations, an applicant for promotion must:

**A.** Possess a rating of “Meets/Sometimes Exceeds” or higher on the annual Performance Evaluation immediately preceding the start of the promotional process. An officer on medical leave or light duty at the time the process is announced must possess a rating of “Meets/Sometimes Exceeds” or higher on the Performance Evaluation preceding his/her becoming sick or injured.

**B.** Have satisfactorily completed required Maryland State Police Training Commission and departmental training programs and have met the service requirements shown below, prior to the expiration date of the eligibility list:

**1.** Corporal - At least eighteen months experience as a sworn Private First Class with Takoma Park Police.

**2.** Sergeant - At least twenty-four months experience as a sworn Corporal with Takoma Park Police.

**3.** Lieutenant - At least twenty-four months experience as a sworn police Sergeant with Takoma Park Police.

**C.** Length of service required in preceding paragraphs must be continuous and the candidate must currently be serving in the rank immediately below the level for which testing is sought.

**07 Promotional Examination Components:** Normally, competitors for promotion to the ranks of Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant will compete in an oral and written examination.

In extraordinary circumstances involving an immediate need to fill a vacancy, as determined by the Chief of Police, the written examination may be omitted.

The Chief of Police will determine the process to be used for promoting candidates to Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant based on the needs of the Department. The process may consist of a competitive exam, an oral interview, written answers to questions, a written presentation, an oral presentation, and/or evaluation by an assessment center board following procedures directed by the Chief of Police.

All candidates qualified for the promotional process will participate in both the written and oral assessment phases. All candidates who complete both phases will be ranked on the eligibility list, as long as their composite score is at the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile or above.

**A. The Written Examination components:** Competitors will be given a written examination, which is valid, useful and fair as certified by the Chief of Police. It will examine knowledge identified by the job analysis as important to successful performance in the rank.

The written exam may consist of multiple-choice and/or true or false questions, or may require written responses to a series of questions or a written presentation on a specific topic given to the candidate in advance with a suspense date. In any case, the format of the written examination process as well as the format of the required responses will be announced in advance.

The resume and cover letter will also be scored in the written assessment phase.

**B. The Oral Examination components:** Oral questions may be posed to competitors by the Chief of Police or an Interview Panel selected by the Chief of Police. Competitors may be required to give an oral presentation to the Chief of Police and/or the Interview Panel. Questions or topics for presentation will be based on job-relevant situations.

1. Competitors will be rated on a standard set of dimensions identified by the job analysis as important to successful performance in the rank.
2. Standardized forms, documents and rating guides will be used by panelists or the Chief of Police in making their ratings.
3. The conditions of Interview Panel administration, and the dimensions to be evaluated, will be provided in writing to each competitor at least two weeks prior to the panel interview.

**C. Assessment Center:** If evaluation by an Assessment Center is determined to be a necessary component of the process, competitors will participate in a number of simulation exercises reflecting the demands and skills of the given rank and will be evaluated by trained assessors. The Assessment Center will:

1. Measure job dimensions identified by the job analysis as important to successful performance in the rank.

2. Use multiple simulation exercises.
3. Use exercises capable of providing information relevant to the dimensions to be assessed.
4. Use exercises pre-tested for reliability, objectivity and job relevancy.
5. Use multiple outside assessors who are thoroughly trained.
6. Require that judgments of competitors be made at a point in time separate from observation of the competitors.
7. Require that judgments of competitors be based on pooling information from all assessors and all exercises.

**a. The** Assessment Center panels will be composed of three members experienced in police or personnel management and assessment. The assessors will record, classify and rate the behavior relevant to the dimensions, using standard forms and documents. Competitors will be informed in writing at least two weeks prior to the Assessment Center, of the dimensions, exercises and identity of the assessors. Following the Assessment Center, each competitor will be given an opportunity to participate in a feedback session to discuss the rationale and structure of the process, his or her performance and recommendations for career development.

**08 The Probationary Period After Promotion:** The purpose of the one year probation after promotion is to give the officer an opportunity to demonstrate his/her ability to perform in the new rank.

**A.** All officers promoted to full-time positions in the ranks of Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant will serve a probationary period of one year.

**B.** Officers on probation will be closely and carefully observed and monitored in order to facilitate adjustment to the new position. Consistent with the City's Administrative Regulation #01-2, *Performance Appraisal*, a work plan for the promotee will be finalized within 60 days. The supervisor and promotee will conduct periodic reviews no less frequently than every 45 days. The promotee will be counseled about possible performance deficiencies and the need for improvement in order to achieve permanent status.

**C.** During the initial meeting with a selectee offering the promotion (**05.D** above), the Chief will discuss the probationary period for the promotion, the expectations that must be met to successfully complete the probationary period, and any required training to be completed.

**D.** Before the end of the probationary period, the officer's supervisor will prepare a memorandum, through the chain of command, to make recommendations to the Chief of Police on the advisability of conferring permanent status in the new rank.

**09 Competitor's Right to Review and Appeal:** The right of competitors to challenge the promotional process is critical to maintaining the integrity of the process.

**A.** Competitors will be given an opportunity to review the written examination answer key and the written documentation for the Oral Interview Panel and Assessment Center evaluations, on request.

**B.** All appeals to any examining component will be made in writing to the Chief of Police.

**1.** An appeal to the decision regarding eligibility for the promotional process, and to its written examination, must be received by the Chief within five calendar days of the date of notification of the decision and the test date, respectively.

**2.** Appeals to the Interview Panel and the Assessment Center evaluations must be submitted to the Chief within forty-eight hours of the competitor's date of last appearance before the panelists or assessors.

**3.** The candidates will be advised of their composite score prior to the posting of the eligibility lists. Grievances regarding the process and tests must be made within 48 hours of such notification, and prior to the posting of the eligibility list.

**4.** Remedies to appeals may include changes in scoring, re-application, re-testing, and/or re-evaluation.

**5.** The Chief will take action upon the appeal within fifteen calendar days of receipt; the decision will be in writing and will be considered final.

**10 Miscellaneous:**

**A.** Competitors' final rankings will be based on a composite of scores achieved on the written and oral examinations and the resume and cover letter.

**B.** Lateral entry from outside this Department generally will not be allowed above the rank of Private First Class. In the event that no candidate, with appropriate qualifications, exists for a position, within the Department's officers, a lateral hire at the level of sergeant or above may be authorized by the City Manager, upon a recommendation of the Chief detailing the job requirements, unavailability of internal candidates and skills of the outside candidates.

**C.** Only the names of competitors who successfully complete all stages of the selection process will be placed on the eligibility list.

**D.** The Chief may take into consideration in selecting an officer for promotion, and in conferring permanent status on an officer, any pending criminal charge or any finding of guilt rendered by a criminal court having jurisdiction on or after the officer's date of application to participate in the current promotional process.

**E.** Unless otherwise specified, the eligibility list for promotion shall remain in existence for two years from the date it is established.

**F.** Promotional files shall be retained for the past three promotional processes, or a minimum of five years, in conjunction with EEOC requirements.

**G.** Promotion to Private First Class: This is a proficiency promotion, which is noncompetitive in nature and requires at least 18 months experience as a police officer and successful completion of the probation period. This promotion is not automatic but, rather, is based on performance.

**H.** Promotion to Captain: This is a position appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Chief of Police. The appointment is noncompetitive, and may be terminated by the Chief at any time, whereupon the appointee reverts to the permanent rank of Lieutenant. Any officer who holds the rank of Police Lieutenant, and who has satisfactorily completed required Maryland Police Training Commission, probation as outlined in **08 (The Probationary Period After Promotion)** of this general order, and departmental training programs, is eligible for appointment to Captain.