



# INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Takoma Park Police Department



**Date:** January 17, 2021

**To:** Deputy Chief Andrew Powell #8484

**From:** Lt. Richard Poole #8302

**Re:** Hiring Process

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This memorandum describes the current hiring process for the position of police officer with the Takoma Park Police Department.

**Application-**The first step in the hiring process is the completion of an application for employment, which is submitted to Human Resources through City's Success Factors software. The link of available job opportunities is found on the City's website under Human Resources and Careers with Takoma Park. After the application has been submitted it is reviewed to ensure that the minimum qualifications are met based upon the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) that is applicable to new police officer hires. There are several automatic disqualifiers listed below:

## **Maryland Police Training & Standards Commission (MPTSC) Automatic Background Disqualifiers for Police Officer Applicants**

- No Felony Convictions
- No serious misdemeanor convictions; defined as any crime that would carry more than a 1-year incarceration
- Cannot have ever illegally sold, produced, cultivated, distributed or transported a controlled dangerous substance, narcotic drug or marijuana.
- Cannot have ever illegally used a controlled dangerous substance, narcotic drug, or marijuana while employed to enforce federal, state, or local law enforcement by any entity
- No use of heroin, phencyclidine (PCP), or lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)
- No controlled dangerous substance use within three years of application (including marijuana)
- No more than five (5) uses of controlled dangerous substances lifetime or more than once since turning age twenty-one (21) (not including marijuana)

The minimal qualifications include but are not limited to:

- A minimum age of 21 years old or older (may attend and academy while younger than 21 but may not perform law enforcement duties unless they are 21 **COMAR 12.04.01.04A**)
- U.S. Citizen (unless it meets the exception from the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission regarding military service) **COMAR 12.04.01.04 B**

- High School Diploma or GED **COMAR 12.04.01.04C**
- Must be eligible under Federal and Maryland law to possess and use a handgun **COMAR 12.04.01.04D**
- Background and Criminal History Investigation to include a fingerprint check **COMAR 12.04.01.04E**. The investigation includes prior use of controlled dangerous substances, narcotics, and marijuana
- Physical and Mental Health examinations **COMAR 12.04.01.04F**.
- Drug screening to ensure that the applicant is not excluded per COMAR regulations **COMAR 12.04.01.04H**.
- Possess a valid driver's license **COMAR 12.04.01.04I**.

**Written Examination-**The second step in the hiring process after determining applicant qualifications listed above is a written examination. The written examination is obtained from IPMA-HR which provides assessment examinations in a variety of fields to include police, fire and corrections among others. The written test is administered in house and takes approximately two hours to administer. The written exam requires a minimal passing score of 60%.

**Physical Agility Exam-** Applicants who pass the written examination are then required to pass a physical agility examination. The physical examination is utilized in part to assess the applicant's ability to perform requirements of the job and assess their physical conditioning prior to attending a police academy. The current exam administered is a modified COOPERS exam which assesses the following:

- Abdominal Muscular Endurance
- Muscular Endurance of the Upper Body
- Cardiovascular Endurance

**Qualification Appraisal Board (Oral Board)- **COMAR 12.04.01.04G****

Applicants who pass the written and physical examinations will be required to submit to an oral board interview. The oral interview will assess the applicant's ability to communicate, and consists of a structured interview with a series of questions related to the position. The board/panel consists of three sworn senior members of the Department or a combination of sworn and members of Human Resources. The panel is diversely comprised to align with the applicant's race/ethnicity/gender. If an applicant passes the oral interview they proceed to the background investigation.

**Background Investigation- **COMAR 12.10.01.05****

Applicants who pass the aforementioned process are given a Personal History Statement Book to complete that will be utilized during the investigation of their background. A conditional offer of employment is given to applicants prior the medical testing. The purpose of the background investigation is to determine if the applicant is of good moral character and reputation, is emotionally stable, and displays suitable behavior necessary to perform the duties of the position among other things. The background check will include but is not limited to:

- Personal information verification
- Educational verification (Diploma, GED, College Degree)

- Military background
- Criminal History
- Driving Record
- Civil Actions
- Credit History
- Employment History
- Neighborhood Canvass & Home Visit
- Social Media Search
- References Checks
- Truth Verification Device (Polygraph or CVSA) **COMAR 12.04.01.16(F)(2)**
- Psychological Exam **COMAR 12.04.01.04F**
- Medical/Physical Exam **COMAR 12.04.01.04F**
- Drug Screening **COMAR 12.04.01.04H**

**Conditional Offer of Employment-** Prior to the final three areas of the background investigation, Psychological Exam, Medical/Physical Exam and Drug Screening, the applicant will be given a conditional offer of employment. The conditional offer allows the employer to require that the applicant submit to advanced assessments which are based on steps relating to their physical abilities and medical clearances. The letter informs the applicant that, as long as they can perform tasks or are deemed mentally or physically capable of performing, they can be hired, but is not guaranteed employment.

**Offer of Employment-** Upon completion of the Report of Investigation, which details each of the above listed sections of the background investigation and the results and findings of each section, the report is submitted to the Commander of Support Services for review. Once reviewed and approved, the report is reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Police for concurrence before being sent to the Chief of Police for final approval. Upon final approval from the Chief of Police, an Offer of Employment to the applicant is made by Human Resources.

**Additional Actions-** After an offer of employment, but prior to the field training, an Application for Police Certification (AFC) is sent to MPTSC. This document provides information pertaining to the applicants hiring process and provides specific information regarding the listed background investigation requirements to the Commission. Upon review by the Commission, the officer will be issued a temporary (pink) certification card. Once the officer has completed field training, a request for Certification of Field Training for Law Enforcement Personnel is sent to the Commission and upon approval the officer will receive their permanent (blue) Maryland police certification card.

**Entrance Level Training-** Applicants will participate in entrance-level training required by the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission which consists of a minimum of 750 hours.

**Field Level Training-** All entry level officers are assigned to a Field Training Officer (FTO) for a minimum of 240 hours of training. All FTO's receive 21 hours of training by MPTSC to be certified, have at least two years' experience as a police officer and must complete a refresher

course every 4 years in order to maintain certification as an FTO. All field training is documented in a Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP) manual which contains the Daily Observation Reports (DOR's) for each day of the officer's training. A new software training program is being implemented in the near future, which will digitally record the FTEP. Each DOR must be reviewed and signed by the officer, FTO, Patrol Sergeant and the Commander of Field Training Program. Upon completion of the FTEP, the FTO and Patrol Sergeant must submit a memorandum to the Commander of Field Training Program, recommending the officer's release from FTEP along with the completed manual. The manual is reviewed by the Commander of the Field Training Program, Commander of Operations, Deputy Chief of Police and then the Chief of Police for final approval and the officer's release from FTEP. All field training manuals and background investigations must be retained and are subject to audit by MPTSC. Once released from FTEP, the officer will be on probation for a period of twelve months.