



# Ocean City Police Department

## General Order

<b>Subject:</b> Applicant Hiring and Selection Process		<b>No.</b> G.O. 500 A-1	
<b>Rescinds:</b>	<b>Amends:</b> G.O. 500 A-1 (03/16/05)	<b>Related Directive:</b> G.O. 500 A-4, G.O. 500 A-5	
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<b>References:</b> Town of Ocean City Policy & Procedure Manual PPM 300-13 Town of Ocean City Policy & Procedure Manual PPM 300-17 Town of Ocean City Employee Handbook 3.1 through 3.4 C.A.L.E.A. Standard 32.1 through 32.2.10			

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**I. Purpose:**

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines and standards for the selection of qualified candidates to fill vacancies in both sworn and non-sworn employment roles. Basic principles exist for the development of a selection process that should result in the appointment of individuals who best serve the needs of the Department and the community. A job-related, useful and nondiscriminatory selection process is dependent upon a number of professionally and legally accepted administrative practices and procedures, which include formal communication with applicants regarding all aspects of the selection process and formal written procedures governing the Department's selection practices.

**II. Definitions:**

- A. **Applicant:** An individual who has submitted an official employment application with the Town of Ocean City for an advertised employment opportunity with the Ocean City Police Department.
- B. **Candidate:** An applicant who has successfully completed the initial employment process to include all or a portion of written examinations, physical abilities testing and/or oral interviews/exercises.
- C. **Probationary Period:** A predetermined time set by policy to allow the employer and employee to determine if established benchmarks have been reached to continue the employment relationship.
- D. **Truth Verification Examination:** A method utilizing either polygraph or voice stress analysis to determine deceptive responses by candidates to key questions specific to employment with a law enforcement agency.

**III. Policy:**

It is the policy of the Department to maintain an efficient, effective and fair selection process for sworn and non-sworn applicants that will result in the appointment of those individuals who best possess the skills, knowledge and abilities that reflect personal integrity, high ethical standards, and necessarily provide the professional conduct and quality services expected of Department employees.

The Department will collaborate with the Town of Ocean City's Department of Human Resources to assure all legal requirements regarding hiring practices are followed during these selection processes as outlined in the Town of Ocean City Policy and procedure Manual PPM 300-13 and 300-17.

**IV. Equal Employment Policy**

- A. The Town of Ocean City expresses its support and commitment to the principle of equal employment opportunity.
- B. It is the Town's policy to recruit, hire, train, and promote individuals, as well as administer any and all personnel actions, without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, status as a disabled or

Vietnam-era veteran, status as a qualified individual with a mental or physical disability, familial status, sexual orientation or genetic information in accordance with applicable laws.

- C. The Department does not show partiality or grant any special status to any applicant, employee or group of employees unless otherwise required by law. The Town will not tolerate any unlawful discriminatory hiring practices and will address such prohibited conduct through its disciplinary process.

**V. Administrative Responsibilities**

- A. Town of Ocean City Department of Human Resources

The overall responsibility for the selection process shall reside with the Town's Department of Human Resources. This responsibility and commensurate authority is granted and mandated by Town of Ocean City policy as approved by the Mayor and City Council. The Department of Human Resources coordinates all appointments to current job classifications.

The Department of Human Resources shall coordinate all application inquires for full-time non-sworn positions with the Department's Support Services Division – Human Resources Section.

- B. Department's Support Services Division – Human Resources Section

The Support Services Division shares authority with the Town's Department of Human Resources on hiring/selection matters and maintains the responsibility for administering the Department's role in the selection of sworn and non-sworn personnel. The manager of the Human Resources Section, in conjunction with personnel assigned to the Training and Recruiting Unit shall be responsible for:

1. Receiving and processing applications for all full-time and part-time sworn positions as a result of marketing and recruiting efforts;
2. Receiving and processing applications for part-time non-sworn positions as a result of marketing and recruiting effort;
3. Entering applicant data into a centralized system for retention purposes;
4. Posting test dates and other critical information related to the application process on the Town's and Department's media outlets (*i.e.*, website, social media, etc.), as well as career websites dedicated to military veterans;
5. Purchasing, developing, maintaining and administering job related written examinations, panel interview processes, and other selection procedures;
6. Compiling scores associated with written and/or oral processes and notifying applicants/candidates of their status as a result of their performance(s);

7. Providing training and instruction to employees who participate as proctors/panelist to applicant testing/interview processes;
8. Developing, evaluating and implementing standards associated with selections processes to include mandates regulated by State authority;
9. Participating in the review and selection of sworn and non-sworn applicants;
10. Maintaining files on all applicants in the selection process in accordance with Town retention policies;
11. Performing statistical analysis of selection processes for comparison and adherence to established hiring practices and protocols;
12. Establishing eligibility and referral lists for consideration of viable candidates; and
13. Coordinating, conducting, and facilitating all aspects of the background investigation process for sworn and non-sworn candidates.

C. Chief of Police

The Chief of Police is designated as the appointing authority of the Department and shall have the ability to, consistent with standard federal and State law:

1. Select/reject candidates who have been referred for hire by the Support Services Division – Human Resources Section; and
2. Determine if an employee will be retained or dismissed during a probationary period.

D. Joint Responsibilities

Other activities, including but not limited to medical examinations, drug testing and employee orientations shall be shared responsibilities in coordination between the Town of Ocean City's Department of Human Resources and the Department's Support Services Division – Human Resources Section.

**VI. Recruitment**

- A. The Department will employ a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy to recruit and select employees from a qualified and diverse pool of candidates. The strategy should include:
1. Identification of racially and culturally diverse target markets;
  2. Use of marketing strategies to target diverse applicant pools;
  3. Collaboration with all U.S. military services seeking veterans re-entering the civilian workforce;

4. Expanded use of technology and maintenance of a strong Internet presence. This may include an interactive Department website and the use of Department-managed social networking sites, if resources permit;
  5. Expanded outreach through partnerships with media, community groups, citizen academies, local colleges, and universities;
  6. Employee referral and recruitment incentive programs; and
  7. Consideration of shared or collaborative regional testing processes.
- B. The Department shall avoid advertising, recruiting and screening practices that tend to stereotype, focus on homogeneous applicant pools or screen applicants in a discriminatory manner.
- C. The Department should strive to facilitate and expedite the screening and testing process, and should periodically inform each candidate of his/her status in the recruiting process.

## **VII. Legal Requirements**

- A. All components of the selection process will be developed, implemented, and monitored in accordance with established standards to insure validity, utility and minimal adverse impact.
- B. All elements of the selection process will be administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.
- C. All selection process materials will be stored in a secure area when not in use.
- D. When selection materials are disposed of, the manner of disposal will be performed in a manner that prevents disclosure of the information therein.
- E. All candidate records related to sworn positions and part-time positions will be maintained by the Department after the selection process has concluded.
- F. All candidate records related to non-sworn full-time positions will be transferred to the Town's Department of Human Resources.
- G. Individual scores will not be disclosed to candidates.

## **VIII. Selection Procedure**

- A. Selection Criteria

The Department shall actively strive to identify a diverse group of candidates that have in some manner distinguished themselves as being outstanding prospects. All applicants applying under a general announcement will be required to complete the entire process, including any mandatory written examination, to be considered a candidate for consideration.

B. Re-application

All candidates who have previously applied and were eliminated for employment consideration for good cause will be allowed to re-apply and be reconsidered. The Human Resources Section Manager or Chief of Police may rely upon previously gathered background, polygraph, or medical/psychological information to eliminate a candidate from further consideration at any time.

C. Selection Elements

Minimally, the Department will employ a comprehensive screening, background investigation and selection process that assesses cognitive and physical abilities and includes review and verification of the following elements, unless otherwise stated:

1. Application;
2. Preliminary background questionnaire (sworn and Public Safety Aide candidates ONLY);
3. Written examination (if applicable to the position);
4. Physical abilities test (sworn candidates only);
5. Oral interview; and
6. Background investigation:
  - a. Comprehensive background questionnaire;
  - b. Background interview;
  - c. Disclosure issues:
    - i. Financial and credit history, consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) (15 USC § 1681 et seq.);
    - ii. Driving record;
    - iii. School records;
    - iv. Citizenship verification, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and acceptable identity and employment authorization documents;
    - v. Military Records; and
    - vi. Criminal history;

- d. Truth verification examination (after conditional offer of employment to sworn and full-time non-sworn candidates);
- e. Final interview with Chief of Police or designee (sworn candidates only);
- f. Psychological examination (after conditional offer of employment to sworn candidates);
- g. Medical examination (after conditional offer of employment); and
- h. Drug urological screening (after conditional offer of employment).

Applicants will be informed in writing of all elements of the selection process, the expected duration of the selection process and the policy on reapplication.

**D. Unsuccessful / Ineligible Candidates**

- 1. Candidates not eligible for appointment will be informed in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of such a decision. Although a hiring decision is most often based upon a number of factors, the nature of the selection process enables a single procedure (e.g., background investigation, test scores, medical examination (sworn), etc.) to result in the elimination of a candidate from further consideration. Ineligibility may be the result of, but is not necessarily limited to:
  - a. Expiration of an eligibility list;
  - b. Failure to meet minimum hiring standards; or
  - c. Acceptable, but not the most desirable candidate being considered.
- 2. The Department will maintain records associated with unsuccessful/disqualified candidates for a period of three (3) years. All materials associated with the application process of unsuccessful/disqualified candidates will be destroyed after the aforementioned retention period.

**IX. Background Investigations**

A background investigation of each candidate is conducted prior to appointment. The background investigation will include the verification of a candidate's qualifying credentials, as well as a review of a candidate's criminal record, if any, and verification of at least three (3) personal references of the candidate, neighbors of the candidate within the last five (5) years, current and past employers/coworkers of the candidate within the last five (5) years to verify his/her personal integrity and high ethical standards, and to identify any past behavior that may be indicative of the candidate's unsuitability to perform duties relevant to the operation of the Department.

A. Truth Verification Examinations (all sworn and full-time non-sworn candidates)

The administration of truth verification examinations and the evaluation of results are conducted by personnel trained in these procedures. The results of these examinations or other instruments for the detection of deception will not be used as the single determinant of employment status; however, pre-test and post-test interviews that reveal adverse information will be documented and used in the selection process. (Reference General Order 500 A-5)

B. Psychological Evaluation (sworn candidates)

An emotional stability and psychological fitness examination of each candidate will be conducted after a conditional offer of employment and prior to the final job offer and appointment to probationary status. The psychological evaluation is based on valid, useful and nondiscriminatory procedures. Only qualified professionals are used to assess the emotional stability and psychological fitness of candidates. A record of the results of emotional stability and psychological fitness examinations will be maintained in the medical file of the candidates selected for employment. Results of the candidates who are unsuccessful/ineligible will be retained for three (3) years; after which the record will be shredded.

C. Medical Examination (all candidates)

A medical examination of each candidate is conducted as part of the selection process. This examination is conducted after a conditional offer of employment as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and prior to the final job offer and appointment to probationary status. The medical examination is based on valid, useful and nondiscriminatory procedures and only licensed physicians will be used to certify the ability of the candidate to perform the essential functions of the position. A record of the results of the medical examination is maintained on file.

Specific information regarding employment background investigations is outlined in Standard Operating Procedures.

**X. Disqualification Guidelines**

As a general rule, performance indicators and candidate information and records shall be evaluated by considering the candidate as a whole, and taking into consideration the following:

- A. Age at the time the behavior occurred;
- B. Passage of time;
- C. Patterns of past behavior;
- D. Severity of behavior;
- E. Probable consequences if past behavior is repeated or made public;



- F. Likelihood of recurrence;
- G. Relevance of past behavior to public safety employment;
- H. Aggravating and mitigating factors; and
- I. Other relevant considerations.

A candidate's qualifications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, using a totality-of-the-circumstances framework.

**XI. Employment Standards**

Validated, job-related and nondiscriminatory employment standards shall be established for each job classification and shall minimally identify the training, abilities, knowledge and skills required to perform the position's essential duties in a satisfactory manner. Each standard should include performance indicators for candidate evaluation. The Department should maintain validated standards for all positions. All candidates shall meet the minimum standards required by state law. Candidates will be evaluated based on merit, ability, competence and experience, in accordance with the high standards of integrity and ethics valued by the Department and the community.

**XII. Probationary Employment Period**

All candidates who meet the minimum hiring requirements and are ultimately employed by the Department must serve a probationary period as outlined in General Order 500 A-4.