
	<b>GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>		
	<b>Selection, Hiring, &amp; Background</b>		
	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b>	<b>304.1</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>		<b>11/05/2025</b>	
<b>Authorized by:</b>		<b>Mark P. Sroka</b> CHIEF OF POLICE	<b>SIGNATURE</b>  <b>DATE</b> <b>11/05/2025</b>

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1. The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines related to the selection, hiring, and background investigations of both sworn and non-sworn personnel.

**2. POLICY**

2.1. The Department's selection process is administered by the Chief of Police, in cooperation with the City's Office of Human Resources. As used in this directive, the term “personnel” refers to both sworn and non-sworn members of the Department, unless otherwise indicated.

**3. PROCEDURE**

**3.1. Responsibilities of the Chief of Police (or designee)**

3.1.1. To the extent required to administer the selection process, the responsibilities of the Chief of Police include, but are not limited to:

- 3.1.1.1. Ensuring compliance with all Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC) regulations and standards relating to the selection of sworn members;
- 3.1.1.2. Ensuring compliance with all applicable Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) standards relating to the Department's selection process;
- 3.1.1.3. Reviewing background investigations of police department personnel upon their completion;
- 3.1.1.4. The formulation and scheduling of oral interview boards;
- 3.1.1.5. Interviewing prospective applicants;
- 3.1.1.6. Making conditional job offers, pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- 3.1.1.7. Ensuring the training of personnel in recruitment and selection; and

- 3.1.1.8. Ensuring that all selection, hiring, and background records are maintained in accordance with the Department's Records Retention Schedule.

### **3.2. Responsibilities of the City's Office of Human Resources**

- 3.2.1. To the extent required to administer the selection process, the responsibilities of the City's Office of Human Resources include, but are not limited to:
  - 3.2.1.1. Working with the Chief of Police to implement the Department's selection process;
  - 3.2.1.2. Ensuring compliance with all applicable laws relating to personnel;
  - 3.2.1.3. The review, distribution, and placement of all job announcements;
  - 3.2.1.4. Participation with oral interview boards, when requested; and
  - 3.2.1.5. Advising Department personnel on appropriate and legal recruitment and selection activities.

## **4. THE SELECTION PROCESS**

### **4.1. Selection Process Manual**

- 4.1.1. A comprehensive manual pertaining to the selection process is maintained by the Department, which describes all the elements, activities, procedures, and methods by which the selection process will be administered.
- 4.1.2. Notwithstanding the applicability of laws and City policies with which the selection process must comply, the Selection Process Manual is an official guide intended to ensure that all parts of the selection process are administered fairly, uniformly, and consistently.
- 4.1.3. To ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Selection Process Manual contains information from both acts relating to recruitment, application procedures, background investigations, and selection.

### **4.2. Process Validity**

- 4.2.1. All elements of the selection process use rating criteria and minimum qualifications which are job-related.
- 4.2.2. Guided by the job task analysis and MPCTC standards, the Department will validate that each element of the selection process

accurately reflects and measures critical job functions.

- 4.2.3. The Department ensures that all elements of the selection process, to include those administered or provided by a private sector organization or vendor, are valid and non-discriminatory.

**4.3. Uniform Administration of Process**

- 4.3.1. Through intensive monitoring of all phases of the process, and by training all involved personnel, all elements of the selection process are administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.

**4.4. Use of Minority Personnel to Assist with the Process**

- 4.4.1. To the extent practicable, Department personnel who are representative of the racial, gender, and ethnic composition of the community served shall participate in the different phases of the selection process.

**4.5. Secure Storage of Process Materials**

- 4.5.1. When selection process materials are not in use, the individual designated by the Chief of Police to oversee that phase of the process shall ensure that all materials are properly secured and stored.
- 4.5.2. When selection materials are disposed of, they shall be destroyed in a manner that prevents the disclosure of any information they contain.

**4.6. Applicant Disqualification**

- 4.6.1. Applicants determined to be ineligible for an appointment to sworn probationary status, based on non-compliance with MPCTC regulations or failure to pass an aptitude test, examination, interview, or investigation, are informed of the disqualification in writing as soon as practical.
- 4.6.2. Upon discovering that an applicant meets a Department disqualification guideline, background investigators must submit a memorandum with a synopsis of their findings to the person designated by the Chief of Police to coordinate background investigations. That person then reviews the memorandum and forwards it to the Chief of Police for a disposition determination.
  - 4.6.2.1. In addition to the memorandum, the Chief may review the investigative file.
  - 4.6.2.2. Background investigators do not provide hiring recommendations.
  - 4.6.2.2. Once an applicant is assigned to the background

investigation phase, an applicant is not disqualified by the background investigator, but by the Chief of Police.

**4.7. Disposition of Records of Applicants not Appointed**

4.7.1. Unless the applicant is disqualified, all applications remain active for consideration for a period of one year from the date of receipt.

4.7.2. An employment application and any supporting documentation submitted by an applicant who was not selected for employment may be released to a prospective employer, or an authorized representative such as a background investigator, provided the following conditions are met:

4.7.2.1. The person to whom the application pertains authorizes the release of information through a signed Authorization for the Release of Information form (or similarly named document);

4.7.2.2. In order for the Department to honor this release, it must contain language and/or have a clause indicating that the person to whom the application pertains agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City of Gaithersburg, the person(s) to whom the release is presented, and his or her agents and employees, from any and all claims, damages, losses, and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising out of, or by reason(s) of, complying with the release.

4.7.3. Information from the employment application will be released upon receipt of a court order seeking such information.

**5. PHYSICAL FITNESS/WELLNESS ASSESSMENT**

**5.1. Non-Discriminatory Criteria and Procedures**

5.1.1. When administered, the physical fitness/agility/wellness assessment uses non-discriminatory and standardized criteria and procedures to evaluate an applicant's physical fitness and physical ability to perform the essential job functions (or parts thereof) of the position for which the applicant is applying.

5.1.1.1. The assessment is administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.

5.1.1.2. The components and administration of the [Physical Agility Assessment](#) shall be in compliance with any related standards set by the MPCTC.

## **6. WRITTEN TESTING**

### **6.1. Administration**

- 6.1.1. When administered, the Department utilizes a written test which is job-related, validated, and non-discriminatory.
- 6.1.2. Written tests are administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.
- 6.1.3. When a written test is administered as part of the selection process, the applicant must achieve a passing score to move to the next phase of the process.

## **7. ORAL INTERVIEWS**

### **7.1. Oral Interview Board**

- 7.1.1. When administered, an oral interview of each applicant is conducted prior to appointment, using valid and non-discriminatory procedures. The process is administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.
  - 7.1.1.1. The MPCTC requires an oral interview for sworn positions.
  - 7.1.1.2. Previously employed sworn officers of the Gaithersburg Police Department, who are seeking re-employment, may be offered a one-on-one interview with the Chief of Police or his or her designee, in lieu of an oral interview board.
- 7.1.2. Oral interviews may be conducted by a board or panel composed of law enforcement professionals, selection specialists, City personnel, and/or community representatives.
- 7.1.3. Oral interviews are conducted in a standardized manner to be effective and impartial, and results are recorded on standardized forms.
- 7.1.4. The Chief of Police or his or her designee ensures that members comprising the oral interview boards are trained.

### **7.2. One-On-One Interview with the Chief of Police**

- 7.2.1. The Chief of Police may interview applicants prior to a final offer of employment.
  - 7.2.1.1. MPCTC regulations state that by conducting an oral interview, the Chief of Police shall certify that the applicant possesses the ability to communicate and this shall be included on the Notice of Probationary Appointment card.

7.2.1.2. City Code requires that the fitness and relative ability of applicants shall be examined by an evaluation of education, training, and experience as shown on the application or by other submitted information.

7.2.2. The City Manager, or representatives from his or her office, may also interview applicants for any position.

**8. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS FOR CIVILIAN APPLICANTS OTHER THAN POLICE CADETS**

8.1. Background investigations conducted on applicants for civilian positions will be commensurate with the position's duties and responsibilities.

8.2. Background Investigators will refer to the Gaithersburg Police Background Investigations Guide for all civilian background investigations.

**9. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS FOR SWORN AND POLICE CADET POSITIONS**

**9.1. Purpose and Requirements**

9.1.1. For sworn positions, MPCTC regulations require an applicant to be of good moral character and reputation, and emotionally stable, as determined by a comprehensive background investigation, which includes, but is not limited to, fingerprinting of the applicant and a search of local, state and national criminal record files.

9.1.2. Background investigations will only be conducted by personnel who have been trained.

9.1.3. Before an applicant is appointed to probationary status for a sworn or police cadet position within the Department, a background investigation will be conducted and shall include the following:

9.1.3.1. A Personal History Statement appropriate to the position being sought, with a signed Authorization for the Release of Information;

9.1.3.2. Verification of the applicant's qualifying credentials (minimum requirements);

9.1.3.3. Review of any criminal, traffic, and court records.

9.1.4. In addition to the requirements for all applicants, background investigations for sworn and police cadet positions shall also include:

9.1.4.1. A check with at least three (3) character references and (3) personal references;

9.1.4.2. A check with three (3) current or past neighbors;

- 9.1.4.3. A check of current and past residences for the past ten (10) years;
  - 9.1.4.4. A check with previous employers for the past ten (10) years and co-workers for the most current employer;
  - 9.1.4.5. A check with the applicant's family members and significant other(s) (e.g., spouse, current dating partner, fiancé, parents, siblings, etc.);
  - 9.1.4.6. A review of the applicant's credit history;
  - 9.1.4.7. A review of school records (high school, college, and/or trade schools);
  - 9.1.4.8. Other public safety agencies the applicant has applied to, if applicable;
  - 9.1.4.9. A review of military records, if applicable; and
  - 9.1.4.10. Other reviews deemed necessary, or as warranted by the course of the investigation.
- 9.1.5. Based on interviews and accepted investigative techniques, background investigators seek to determine that an applicant for a sworn position is a loyal United States citizen and is mentally, physically, and emotionally fit to perform law enforcement duties.
- 9.1.5.1. Even though an applicant for a sworn position will be sent to the appropriate physician or other professional for physical and psychological examinations following the conditional offer of employment, background investigators can still learn a great deal about the applicant's physical and mental fitness by conducting a thorough background investigation.
  - 9.1.5.2. Citizenship is not required for police cadet applicants; however, a police cadet must obtain citizenship prior to appointment to a sworn position, if applicable.
  - 9.1.5.3. Police cadet applicants are not subject to medical or psychological examinations as a condition of employment, though background investigators can still learn a great deal about the applicant's physical and mental fitness by conducting a thorough background investigation.

## 9.2. **Background Interview**

- 9.2.1. When the background investigator meets with the applicant for the first time, the initial interview includes the following:
  - 9.2.1.1. A review of the Personal History Statement, which is audio and video recorded;
  - 9.2.1.2. Three (3) sets of fingerprints (FBI, State of Maryland, and RAFIS);
  - 9.2.1.3. Completion of a notice advising all applicants that, pursuant to Title 28, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 50.12, their fingerprints will be sent to the FBI for a criminal record check;
  - 9.2.1.4. Photographing the applicant.

**9.3. Credit Reports**

- 9.3.1. Requests for credit reports are coordinated with the bureau commander or his or her designee assigned to perform that function.

**9.4. Military Records**

- 9.4.1. Background investigators will initiate a request for the applicant's military records, to include both personnel and medical records, from each branch of service in which the applicant served.
- 9.4.2. Applicants who have served in any branch of the military are required to produce a copy of any documents concerning their military service (e.g., military separation papers - DD-214, etc.).

**9.5. School Records**

- 9.5.1. Background investigators should obtain copies of the applicant's official school transcripts or other records that verify attendance, qualifications, education level, public safety records, etc.
  - 9.5.1.1. Despite an applicant properly executing an Authorization for the Release of Information, some schools may refuse to allow the investigator access to records held by the school, in which case the applicant should be asked to obtain the records.

**9.6. Interviewing References**

- 9.6.1. Background investigators should, whenever feasible, conduct in-person interviews with references likely to provide more comprehensive information, such as the applicant's most recent employer or current neighbors. In-person checks allow for more thorough and accurate information gathering.
- 9.6.2. A reference questionnaire should be in the writing of the reference when practicable.

9.6.3. Investigators shall follow up on any information provided by a reference that requires clarification or additional verification.

**9.7. Criminal Records Check**

9.7.1. Criminal history and wanted checks on applicants are conducted through NCIC to determine the presence of applicable criminal history record information (CHRI).

9.7.1.1. Applicants are checked through various additional law enforcement databases.

9.7.1.2. Due to the possibility that some local records may not make it into searchable databases, questionnaires should be sent to any place an applicant resided, worked, or attended school.

9.7.2. The applicant's fingerprint cards are submitted as follows:

9.7.2.1. The investigator completes and submits the FBI and State fingerprint records.

9.7.2.2. The investigator also submits a fingerprint record to MCP-RAFIS.

**9.8. Verification of Credentials**

9.8.1. An applicant's qualifying credentials are verified by investigators through both public and private records, which may include, but are not limited to:

9.8.1.1. Biographical information (e.g., driver's license, social security card etc.);

9.8.1.2. Court records;

9.8.1.3. Medical reports;

9.8.1.4. Security clearance information;

9.8.1.5. Financial statements and reports; and

9.8.1.6. Employment records and performance evaluations.

**9.9. Prior Law Enforcement Employment**

9.9.1. If an applicant has been employed by other law enforcement agencies, investigators must determine if the applicant separated (or will separate) from each of those law enforcement agencies in good standing;

9.9.2. Background investigators must consider the various types of records requiring review, such as internal affairs and disciplinary records, supervisory files, performance evaluations, training records,

commendations/awards, etc.;

- 9.9.3. Applicants must disclose, under penalty of perjury, all prior instances of employment as a law enforcement officer with other law enforcement agencies;
- 9.9.4. Applicants must provide written authorization for the Department to obtain full personnel and disciplinary records from any law enforcement agencies where the applicant was previously employed as a law enforcement officer;
- 9.9.5. The Department shall certify to the MPCTC that the applicant's disciplinary record from any prior law enforcement employment has been reviewed as part of the investigation.

**9.10. Driving Record**

- 9.10.1. An applicant's driving record, to include from all states in which the applicant is currently or was previously licensed, is closely examined and a copy or copies are included in the investigator's file.

**9.11. Financial Records**

- 9.11.1. Whenever possible, an applicant's financial status, such as credit accounts, banking information, debt to income ratio etc. is examined and documented in the investigator's file.

**10. INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS FORMAT**

- 10.1. Upon completing the background investigation, investigators should author an investigative synopsis, which will be forwarded to the Chief of Police, using the following format:

**10.1.1. Synopsis**

- 10.1.1.1. A brief summary of the overall investigation.

**10.2.1. Personal History**

- 10.2.1.1. Lists the applicant's date of birth, place of birth, names of parent(s), applicant's current address, marital status, all in narrative form.

**10.3.1. Education**

- 10.3.1.1. Lists all schools attended by the applicant, with dates attended, degree(s) obtained (if applicable), grade point average at each school, and other records, such as those that verify attendance, qualifications, education level, public safety records, etc.

**10.4.1. Military Experience (if applicable)**

- 10.4.1.1. Indicates the extent of the applicant's military

service, including any reserve obligations. This includes the type of discharge, reenlistment eligibility, job title and rank at separation, the primary military occupational specialty, awards and disciplinary action, and supervisor or other relevant reference feedback.

10.5.1. **Traffic Record**

10.5.1.1. Describes the class of license(s) held by the applicant in each state, whether valid or not, traffic citations received (if any), dispositions, at-fault collisions, etc.

10.6.1. **Criminal/Civil Record**

10.6.1.1. Criminal history, warrant, and civil history checks.

10.7.1. **Undetected Crimes/Events of Note**

10.7.1.1. Includes any information about events that may be criminal in nature or of other concern disclosed by the applicant and/or discovered during the background investigation.

10.8.1. **Credit Rating**

10.8.1.1. Describes the applicant's overall credit rating and financial responsibility based on the credit report obtained by this Department as well as from information learned during the background investigation.

10.9.1. **Employment/Co-Workers**

10.9.1.1. Describes all employment history of the applicant, including statements made by co-workers and employers, as well as dates of employment and duties assigned.

10.10.1. **Neighborhood Checks**

10.10.1.1. Indicates what neighbors were contacted and their characterization of the applicant.

10.11.1. **Personal and Character References**

10.11.1.1. Indicates what character and personal references were contacted and their characterization of the applicant.

10.12.1. **Internet and Social Media Searches**

10.12.1.1. Open source review of the internet and social media

accounts for the purpose of uncovering inappropriate content.

10.13.1. **Applications to Other Public Safety Agencies**

10.13.1.1. Indicates what other police agencies the applicant has applied to, as well as the applicant's status with each of those agencies, if applicable.

10.14.1. **Testing Results**

10.14.1.1. Indicates the results of all testing, to include the physical fitness test/assessment, the written test, the oral interview, and the truth verification exam.

10.15.1. **Investigator Notes**

10.15.1.1. Anything pertaining to the applicant as it relates to the investigation. Do not include a hiring recommendation or opinion.

11. **PRE-PLACEMENT MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS**

11.1. **Administration of Examinations**

11.1.1. The Department's physical requirements comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

11.1.2. The pre-placement medical examination, along with the emotional stability and psychological fitness assessment, is administered after the Chief of Police extends a conditional offer of employment for sworn positions.

11.1.2.1. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employers may not require a medical examination or ask about the nature or extent of an applicant's disability or medical condition until after a conditional offer of employment has been made. Any such examination must be required of all entering employees in the same job category.

11.1.2.2. The results of both examinations are to be maintained confidentially and securely.

11.1.3. The pre-placement medical examination certifies the general health of each sworn applicant and establishes that the applicant is physically fit to perform the duties of a police officer.

11.1.3.1. This examination is conducted by a licensed physician of the City's choosing and uses non-discriminatory procedures.

11.1.3.2. All costs associated with the pre-placement medical examination are at the City's expense.

11.1.4. In compliance with MPCTC regulations, the pre-placement medical examination for police officer applicants includes a drug screening test for controlled dangerous substances.

11.1.5. The emotional stability and psychological fitness examination is conducted and assessed by a qualified professional of the City's choosing and is conducted at the City's expense.

11.1.5.1. MPCTC regulations require this examination to aid the physician in determining that the applicant is emotionally and mentally fit for the duties of a police officer.

11.1.5.2. The applicant shall also submit to any implicit bias testing deemed necessary by MPCTC regulations.

## **11.2. Secure Storage of Records**

11.2.1. Records containing pre-placement medical examination and emotional stability and psychological fitness examination results are securely maintained.

## **12. COMPUTER VOICE STRESS ANALYZER (CVSA)**

12.1. The selection process for sworn and police cadet applicants includes a Computer Voice Stress Analyzer (CVSA) examination.

12.1.1. All sworn and police cadet applicants complete a pre-test CVSA questionnaire that includes areas from which questions will be drawn.

12.2. When CVSA examinations are administered as part of the selection process, the Department utilizes only personnel who have been trained to conduct such examinations, and who have been trained to evaluate the examination's results.

12.2.1. Examiners follow all guidelines for use of the CVSA, to include conducting a cold call to have an independent examiner review the recorded charts and data associated with the CVSA exam.

12.2.2. The Department does not use the results of the CVSA, or other instruments for the detection of deception, as the single determinant of employment status.