


POLICY 128.1	HIRING POLICE OFFICERS	
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A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide management decisions relative to proper risk assessment throughout the hiring process, and to establish the various protocols, guidelines and standards used for selecting police officers for employment with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department.

B. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department to maintain an efficient, diverse and effective work force by selecting qualified and capable applicants through a fair, proactive and non-discriminatory selection process.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

To identify qualification and evaluation factors for employment of members, and to outline the procedures in the selection process.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The City of Fort Lauderdale Human Resources Division (City Hall) is responsible for:
 - a. Reviewing employment applications and ensuring that applicants meet the minimum qualifications for the position of police officer with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. Because application screening is considered to be a critical component in the recruiting program and because timeliness is critical for hiring purposes, the Background Investigations Unit Sergeant or designee will assist with application screening.
 - b. Establishing and maintaining a certified roster of eligibility for the position of police officer.
2. The Background Investigations Unit (BIU) Sergeant is responsible for:
 - a. Maintaining a system that documents each application selected for processing, throughout the selection process. This system shall identify those stages each applicant has successfully completed in the selection process. The Background Investigation Unit Sergeant shall also identify

those applicants that have been removed from the selection process and the reason(s) for removal.

- b. Ensuring that a file is created on each applicant processed by the BIU and that the completed application and supporting documents are maintained according to the Florida Records Retention Act, and § 943.133, Florida Statutes.

E. BASIC REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

1. The Police Department has adopted the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission minimum requirements.
2. The City of Fort Lauderdale minimum standards for police officer certification requires that a candidate must:
 - a. Be at least 19 years of age upon appointment.
 - b. Be a citizen of the United States upon application.
 - c. Be a high school graduate or equivalent.
 - d. Not have been convicted of any felony, or any misdemeanor involving perjury, false statement, or domestic violence. Any person who, after July 1, 1981, pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, or is found guilty of a felony, or of a misdemeanor involving perjury, false statement, or domestic violence, shall not be eligible for employment or appointment as a police officer, notwithstanding suspension of sentence or withholding of adjudication.
 - (1). If the offense(s) outlined above were committed and resolved as a juvenile under the above criteria, those circumstances are to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Chief of Police or his designee.
 - e. Never have received a dishonorable discharge from any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. The Chief of Police or designee shall, on a case-by-case basis, review uncharacterized discharges.
 - f. Have been fingerprinted by the employing agency with prints processed by the FDLE and the FBI.
 - g. Be of good moral character. Upon review by the Chief of Police or designee, cause for disqualification may include various moral character issues, depending upon the type(s) of issues, evaluation of circumstances, frequency and the age of the applicant at the time of the incident(s).
 - h. Have completed an Affidavit of Applicant form CJSTC-68.

- i. Have successfully completed the Florida Basic Recruit Training Program or FDLE equivalent.
- j. Achieve a passing score on the State Officer Certification Examination.
- k. Have successfully completed the Candidate Selection Process as stated in this policy.

F. MORAL CHARACTER

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is responsible for conducting a thorough background investigation in an attempt to determine the moral character of an applicant pursuant to § 943.13(7), Florida Statutes. The Police Department standards for evaluating a candidate's moral character shall include, but shall not be limited to, the candidate's use of controlled substances.

1. Drug Policy

The unlawful use of any controlled substances, as designated by Florida State Statutes, by an applicant shall be reviewed by police management to determine if the applicant is considered to be of good moral character. This determination shall be made based on all relevant facts, including the type of controlled substance used, the date of the last use, the frequency of use, and the age of the applicant at the time of use.

- a. After a management review of all relevant facts, an applicant shall either continue in the hiring process or if they fail to meet the police department's standards for past drug use, they will be classified as either Permanently Disqualified (DQ), which does not allow applicant to reapply for the position of police officer or Failed Background (FB) which allows an applicant to reapply as a police officer in one (1) year.
- b. If any of the following are indicated it shall result in an automatic, permanent disqualification or failed background:
 - (1). Other than marijuana, any past illegal use of a Schedule I drug as defined by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, or any use of a Schedule II drug used in an illicit or recreational manner will result in an automatic, permanent disqualification.
 - (2). Use of marijuana twenty (20) times or more over the applicant's lifetime will result in an automatic, permanent disqualification.
 - (3). Use of any illegal drugs within three (3) years of the submission of an application for employment as a Police Officer will result in a failed background.
 - (4). Any use of illegal drugs after having been employed by a police or corrections agency, in a police or corrections capacity will result in an automatic, permanent disqualification.

- (5). Past sale of any illegal drug as defined by Florida State Statutes will result in an automatic, permanent disqualification.
 - (6). The Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau may grant an exemption to illegal drug use by an applicant prior to turning 21 years of age, based on a totality of the circumstances.
- c. If any of the following are indicated, it will result in an automatic Failed Background;
- (1). Abuse of any prescription drug within five (5) years of application.
 - (2). Any more than experimental use of steroids, not prescribed by a doctor for a medical condition and not within five years of application.
2. Arrest History

Any arrest, or commission of an act that constitutes a misdemeanor or felony under Florida State Statutes, may be cause for a “failed background” or “disqualification” final disposition, depending upon the circumstances and seriousness of the offense(s), and the age of the applicant at the time of the incident(s) and based upon a management review of all relevant facts.

G. DRIVING HISTORY

The present driving history standards of the Police Department prevent an applicant from being considered for employment if any of the following are indicated:

1. Accumulation of four or more moving violations, eight (8) or more points or suspension of driver’s license within three (3) years of application. Non-traffic related suspensions, such as an insurance related suspension, shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
2. Accumulation of more than one (1) moving violation in the 6 months prior to application.
3. Conviction for DUI, DWI or Hit and Run within the last five (5) years.
4. Case pending for DUI, DWI or Hit and Run.
5. Any significant negative driving history, which shall be determined by management review of all relevant facts.

H. TATTOO POLICY

The tattoo standards of the Police Department prevent an applicant from being considered for employment if any of the following are indicated:

1. Any tattoo on an applicant, including those not readily visible, indicating membership in a hate, racist, subversive organization, criminal gang, or any symbol, including those not readily visible, that can be commonly associated with a hate, racist, subversive organization or criminal gang.
2. Any visible tattoo that can be deemed reasonably offensive or morally objectionable, including but not limited to, racially oriented, drug related, or sexually explicit words, pictures or symbols.

I. VISION REQUIREMENTS

1. Applicants must be free from color blindness and have no permanent abnormality of either eye.
2. Applicants must have at least 20/100 vision in each eye without correction (glasses or contacts) and must have 20/30 vision in each eye with correction.
3. Successful long-term soft contact lens wearers shall not be subject to the uncorrected criteria. Lens wearers require a letter from an optometrist or ophthalmologist stating that they have been wearing long-term soft contact lenses successfully for more than two months.
4. A candidate who has undergone radial keratotomy or laser surgery, may not be examined until six weeks have elapsed from their last surgical procedure and must at that time meet the above stated vision requirements.

J. CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Application Process
 - a. Candidates interested in employment with the City of Fort Lauderdale must complete an online application through the City Hall Human Resources Department online hiring software that works in conjunction with GovernmentJobs.com.
 - b. Applications and questionnaires will be pre-screened by Human Resources Department employees the Background Investigations Unit and/or their designee to determine if the applications are complete and correct, and to determine if there is disqualifying information contained in the application.
 - c. With the exception of disqualified candidates, a candidate who is unsuccessful in the process for any reason is not eligible to reapply for one (1) year after the date of removal from the eligibility list.
 - d. Incomplete applications and the applications of candidates who fail to meet the minimum state and/or Fort Lauderdale Police Department hiring standards will be removed from the process and sent notice by the Human Resources Department listing the reasons for rejection. Once notice has been sent, applications rejected as incomplete may be resubmitted as long

as the position announcement remains open, under the following conditions:

- (1). After the first rejection, complete applications may be resubmitted at any time.
 - (2). If the application is rejected a second time as incomplete, candidates must wait 120 days from the date notice is sent to reapply.
 - (3). For subsequent incomplete submissions, candidates must wait one (1) year from the date notice is sent to reapply.
- e. Once the application is pre-screened and deemed acceptable, the applicant will be sent information about the oral board testing process, including the time, date and location of the available appointments.

2. Written Test

- a. Only non-certified candidates are required to take the Criminal Justice Basic Abilities Test for Law Enforcement Officers (CJBAT). Non-certified candidates must submit a passing test score along with their application. Certified candidates eligibility scores are based solely on their oral interview score.
- b. Candidates may take the test at any Florida state regional testing center. These testing centers are listed on www.flpd.org, in the recruiting office and BCC/IPS. However, the regional testing center must have administered the same examination as the Criminal Justice Testing Center at Broward Community College, Institute of Public Safety.
- c. The written test covers topics such as reading comprehension and written expression, inductive and deductive reasoning, information ordering, and visualization. The Criminal Justice Basic Abilities Test (CJBAT) study guide is on file in the reference section in all branches of the Broward County Library System and other locations.
- d. For non-certified candidates, the CJBAT score represents 40% of the applicants overall, final ranking.
- e. The City of Fort Lauderdale will accept a passing CJBAT score four (4) years from the date an applicant has taken the examination.
- f. Certified and non-certified candidates must take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 9/10 "A" and submit proof with their application of a 12.9 passing test score for each individual category.
- g. Candidates may take the TABE at any regional testing center or at BCC/IPS. However, the regional testing center must have administered the same examination as the Criminal Justice Testing Center at Broward

Community College, Institute of Public Safety, which is TABE 9/10 "A" (Survey or Full Battery version will be accepted). The TABE study guide is available at the reference section in branches of the Broward County Library System and other locations.

- h. TABE 9/10 "A" test covers the following topics: Reading – Mathematic Computation – Applied Mathematics – Language – Spelling. For the purposes of applicant screening, the two (2) math sections are considered one (1) category and must have a combined passing total of 12.9.
 - i. The City of Fort Lauderdale will accept a passing TABE score two (2) years from the date an applicant has taken the examination.
 - j. TABE scores are not used to calculate placement on the certified or non-certified police officer eligibility list.
- 3. Basic Motor Skills Test (Agility)
 - a. BCC IPS will administer the Basic Motor Skills Test.
 - b. Candidates are responsible for all associated fees.
 - c. Agility test scores are good for six (6) months and must be submitted with the CJBAT scores and their application.
 - d. Qualified candidates, who successfully complete the CJBAT and agility test, shall be processed for oral interview scheduling.
- 4. Swim Test

Swimming qualifications – swim 50 yards (any recognized stroke) in long pants and shirt. This test is administered by the Criminal Justice Testing Center. Results from any other agency will NOT be accepted.
- 5. Oral Interview
 - a. The oral interview is a formally structured process. The candidate appears before an interview panel consisting of a Lieutenant or higher rank, and a Sergeant or higher rank of the Police Department, and a City Human Resources Division representative. Candidates will be evaluated in six categories or dimensions.
 - (1). Command presence
 - (2). Integrity
 - (3). Initiative/interest
 - (4). Communicative ability

(5). Tolerance for stress

(6). Judgment/decisiveness

- b. The candidates are rated on a scale of 1 to 10 in each of the dimensions and must obtain a score of 30 or higher to pass. Candidates who fail the oral interview are classified as a failed background and are not eligible to reapply for the position of police officer for one (1) year.
- c. The oral board may pass, fail or disqualify applicants, based on the targeted selection interview process as outlined in this policy. Candidates who are disqualified in the oral board are ineligible to reapply for the position of police officer.
- d. The final oral interview grade accounts for 60% of the candidates overall score for non-certified candidates and 100% of certified candidates overall score.
- e. For candidates who fail three (3) or more oral board examinations, upon the submission of a new application for employment, the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau shall review all relevant facts to determine whether the candidate will continue in the hiring process or be classified as either a Failed Background or Permanently Disqualified.
- f. Candidates who notify the department in advance or after missing their appointment for an oral board and present a valid explanation may have their oral board rescheduled.
 - (1). Candidates who do not show-up for an oral board that has been rescheduled and do not notify the department in advance, will be classified as a failed background and not eligible to reapply for one (1) year. Any future failures to appear as scheduled will be reviewed by the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau to determine whether the candidate will be classified as either a Failed Background or Permanently Disqualified.

6. Eligibility List

- a. The Human Resources Division is tasked with compiling an eligibility roster separately for certified and non-certified police officer applicants. The roster remains valid for six (6) months for each test administered.
- b. As candidates from new tests are processed, their names are merged into the existing eligibility list according to their final score.
- c. The eligibility list is forwarded to the Police Department's Background Investigations Unit to begin background investigations on the candidates in accordance with City Personnel Rules.

- d. As determined by the Chief of Police or his designee, a candidate who is on the eligibility roster for police officer may be offered a public safety aide position, according to availability and provided there is not a current eligibility roster for the position offered.

7. Polygraph Examination

CJSTC recommends the use of a polygraph examination as part of the background investigation of a candidate. The polygraph examination shall be viewed as a tool to assist management in proper risk assessment during the selection process. Should deception be indicated as a result of an initial polygraph, the number of specific polygraphs and the use of the results will be determined by the Support Services Bureau Assistant Chief or his/her designee.

8. Psychological Examination

- a. Department standards require all candidates score an Acceptable Risk “1” or a “2” to be considered for further processing.

- (1). Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory–2 (MMPI-2)
- (2). Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI)
- (3). California Psychological Inventory (CPI)
- (4). Inwald Survey 5R(IS-5R)
- (5). Wonderlic Personnel Test

- b. At the conclusion of testing, the applicants are rated after review of the comprehensive test results, interview observations and background material. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine suitability and identify risk factors for a critical occupation and not simply to diagnose psychological deficiencies. Applicants are compared not only to general population norms but also to law enforcement specific norms. The applicants are rated on a five-point (5) scale.

- (1). **1** - Acceptable Risk – This rating is reserved for outstanding applicants about whom there are very limited, if any, concerns regarding their ability and suitability to handle a position as a law enforcement officer. These applicants possess particular areas of strength and their backgrounds are exemplary.
- (2). **2** - Acceptable Risk – This rating is given to applicants about whom there are limited, if any, concerns regarding their ability and suitability to handle a position as a law enforcement officer. However, their test results did not demonstrate significant enough areas of strength to warrant the highest rating. In this rating category, there still may be “Areas for Investigation” and

background material, which may need to be scrutinized by the agency before hiring.

- (3). **3 - Marginal Risk** – This rating is given to applicants whose objective test results, background material, behavior patterns and/or observations in the interview raise moderate to serious concerns about the applicant’s ability and suitability to handle a critical job such as law enforcement officer. However, identified problem areas did not reach a level to justify an “Exclusionary Trait” and placing the applicant in the unacceptable category. These are the “borderline” applicants who meet minimum standards and would be lowest in priority for hiring if the agency could be more selective. Very careful scrutiny of all records is strongly suggested before hiring.
- (4). **4 - Unacceptable Risk** – This rating is given to applicants when there is clear evidence that a significant deficit exists in one or more critical areas of the evaluation. This rating should not imply that an applicant is “psychologically disturbed” but rather that their personality functioning and/or background history makes them a “high risk” for a law enforcement officer position. The reason(s) for this rating will be summarized in the “Exclusionary Traits” section of the “Law Enforcement Psychological Screening Report.”
- (5). **5 - Unacceptable Risk** – This rating is given to applicants when there is clear evidence that a significant deficit exists in one or more critical areas of the evaluation. These applicants have demonstrated “severe” deficits and they may be prone to serious psychological problems.

- c. Candidates who score a Marginal 3 or Unacceptable 4 may reapply one (1) year after the date of removal from the eligibility list. Candidates who score an Unacceptable 5 are permanently disqualified from reapplying for the position of police officer with the City of Fort Lauderdale.

9. Background Investigation

- a. Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission Rule 11B-27.0022 (Background Investigations) requires police agencies to conduct background investigations on candidates applying for employment as a sworn police officer to determine if they meet minimum State qualifications for employment or appointment as specified in § 943.13, Florida Statute.
- b. The Background Investigations Unit will conduct investigations to ensure candidates meet City of Fort Lauderdale and Police Department requirements for employment.

- c. The focus of the investigation will include, but not be limited to verification of the following:
 - (1). Education and training information submitted on attendant applications, questionnaires and forms associated with the hiring process.
 - (2). Previous employment, work history and military record
 - (3). Driving history
 - (4). Arrest and conviction record
 - (5). Past or present use of drugs
 - (6). Credit
 - (7). Personal, neighbor and business references
- d. Discrepancies found during the background investigation process may be grounds for “failed background” or disqualification from the police officer selection process.

10. Medical Examination

- a. § 943.13 (6), Florida Statute, mandates that all police applicants, before being approved for hire, “have passed a physical examination by a licensed physician.” The City of Fort Lauderdale employs an approved medical contract vendor to conduct pre-employment medical examinations. Based on the results of the medical examination, the candidate will be rated in one of five categories.
 - (1). Qualified
 - (2). Temporary or Correctable defect(s) not hindering immediate employment (Defect(s) must be corrected within specified time determined by Occupational Health Nurse).
 - (3). Temporary or Correctable Defect(s) which must be corrected prior to employment.
 - (4). Not qualified, but may be considered for medical waiver under the handicapped worker provisions of the medical standards.
 - (5). Not qualified.
- b. Upon completion of the medical examination, the examining physician completes FDLE/CJSTC form 75 for submission as proof of the candidate’s passing/failing the required medical examination.

K. HIRING COMMITTEE

1. The makeup of the Hiring Committee will be structured to give command level personnel the responsibility for making hiring recommendations to the Chief of Police. The committee will consist of a minimum of four (4) members. Presentation for hire shall include at a minimum, signatures for disposition by an assistant chief and three (3) other members of the Hiring Committee.
2. A Background Investigation Unit representative will present candidate files to the hiring committee indicating that the candidate meets minimum standards and what, if any, issues need to be brought to the hiring committee's attention. The hiring committee will decide and indicate by signature what action shall be taken and which candidates will be recommended to the Chief of Police for hire.
3. In the case of candidates not recommended for hire or other case disposition, the assistant chief and BIU sergeant shall:
 - a. Document hiring decisions for each applicant review, for the purpose of promoting fair and consistent hiring practices.
 - b. Decide and document the cause for each applicant's rejection.
4. No candidate shall be removed from the hiring process by issues raised in the background investigation without review by the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau or his/her designee.

INDEX

A

APPLICATION PROCESS	5
ARREST HISTORY	4

B

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION	10
BASIC MOTOR SKILLS TEST (AGILITY).....	7
BASIC REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT	2

C

CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS	5
----------------------------------	---

D

DRIVING HISTORY	4
DRUG POLICY	3

E

ELIGIBILITY LIST.....	8
-----------------------	---

H

HIRING COMMITTEE.....	12
-----------------------	----

M

MEDICAL EXAMINATION.....	11
--------------------------	----

MORAL CHARACTER.....	3
----------------------	---

O

OBJECTIVES	1
ORAL INTERVIEW	7

P

POLICY	1
POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION	9
PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION.....	9
PURPOSE.....	1

R

RESPONSIBILITIES	1
------------------------	---

S

SWIM TEST	7
-----------------	---

T

TATTOO POLICY.....	4
--------------------	---

V

VISION REQUIREMENTS.....	5
--------------------------	---

W

WRITTEN TEST	6
--------------------	---