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Sheriff

HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

HCSO Employee Selection

Distribution:	All Personnel		Policy Number:	PER 0401
Responsible Unit:	Human Resources		Rescinds:	<i>PER 0401 dated 07/15/17</i>
Original Issued Date:	02/22/22	Revision #:	1	Latest Revision Date: 08/19/26
Required 3-Year Review was Completed:			08/19/26	Next Review Due: 09/30/29

1. Purpose

To establish and maintain a process to select the most qualified applicants to become Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) employees.

2. Policy

The HCSO is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination in recruitment based on race, creed, sex, age, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, ancestry, or physical or mental disability. The HCSO will recruit and process all applicants who meet the minimum requirements for the position for which they are applying, with the goal of maintaining a highly qualified, diverse workforce.

3. Definitions

APPLICANT: a person who has expressed interest in employment as an HCSO employee and applied for employment for a posted position.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION: an exhaustive and comprehensive investigation into the education, residential history, employment, driving record, credit standing, legal history, and other character influences to determine if the candidate has the moral, ethical and legal background required to meet the qualifications necessary to become an HCSO employee.

CADET: an individual between the ages of 18 and 21 who is introduced to the various aspects of the law enforcement profession to help prepare them for a future career as a law enforcement deputy.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (PFT): a standardized test administered to all prospective law enforcement deputy, corrections deputy, and cadet applicants to measure their relative level of physical fitness compared to accepted national norms.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION: an entry-level basic skills test that helps law enforcement and correctional agencies select the most qualified applicants by ensuring that candidates possess the basic cognitive skills necessary to successfully perform the job. This test is a validated, nationally recognized examination for the selection of entry-level law enforcement and corrections deputies.

4. References

[COMAR 12.04.01](#)
[COMAR 12.10.01](#)

5. Procedures

A. General

1. The timelines in this written directive are meant as a guide; deviation from these timelines may be approved by Human Resources Director (HRD) when in the best interest of the HCSO.
2. An applicant must successfully complete all phases in the hiring process to be considered for employment.
3. The Human Resources Section (HRS) will maintain documented contact with applicants throughout all phases of the application process.

B. Validation of Application Process Elements

1. Written exam has been validated by a nationally recognized company;
2. PFT has been validated by Fitness Instructor Coordinator; and
3. Oral interview has been determined to be job related through a job description.

C. Selection Materials

1. Includes all paperwork created or gathered as part of the hiring process to include background information and information documenting performance on various aspects of the hiring process.
2. Will be stored securely, generally within HRS, when those materials are not being used.
3. Will be accessible only to those employees who are directly involved in the selection process.
4. Will be retained securely per records retention schedule.

D. Application for Employment

1. Applicants may retrieve an Application for Employment from the HCSO website link.
2. When the position announcement closes, applications are reviewed for minimum standards.
3. Applicants who are deemed to be ineligible for hiring after submitting their Application for Employment will:
 - a. Be removed from the application process;

- b. Be notified by letter or email within 30 days of the determination that they have been removed from the process.

E. Selection Process

1. PFT (Sworn Law Enforcement, Corrections, Cadet Candidates)
 - a. To participate in the PFT, an applicant must have an Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Waiver of Liability (SO-074a and SO-074b).
 - b. Meet established standards for each position.
 - c. Applicants who meet minimum standards of the PFT will be invited to participate in the written examination.
 - d. Applicants who do not meet minimum standards of the PFT are advised on site if they fail the PFT and are removed from further processing.
2. Written Examination (Sworn Law Enforcement, Sworn Corrections, Cadet Candidates)
 - a. The examination for Sworn Law Enforcement and Cadet candidates consists of three components: math skills, reading skills, and spelling/grammar. The examination for Sworn Corrections candidates is a basic skills test.
 - b. Applicants must pass the components of the test with a minimum score of 70%.
 - c. Applicants will be notified on site of the results of their written examination.
 - d. A passing score on the written examination is valid for only the current process.
 - e. Applicants who do not pass with a score of 70% are removed from the process.

F. Polygraph

1. Polygraph tests are administered to applicants at the direction of the HRD.
2. Polygraphs will only be administered by personnel who have been trained in the use of polygraph equipment and the interpretation of polygraph test results.
3. Applicants will be provided with a Pre-Screening Questionnaire prior to the polygraph examination being administered.
4. During the pre-examination interview, applicants will be informed of the subject areas that will form the basis of the questions asked during the polygraph.
5. The Polygraph Examiner will forward the results of polygraph examinations to the HRD.
6. The HRD will review the polygraph test results to determine if the applicant can continue the hiring process.

7. Applicants who are deemed deceptive on the polygraph, or who have made significant pre or post polygraph admissions, may undergo command review of the application.
8. Applicants who demonstrate deception will be removed from the hiring process.
9. Applicants who demonstrate unresolved deception may be removed from the process permanently if other information is developed that corroborates the applicant's deception.
10. An indication of deception during the polygraph examination will:
 - a. Be used as a determinant of employment status. Pre-test and post-test discussions that reveal adverse information will be documented and used in the subsequent selection process; and
 - b. In accordance with [COMAR 12.04.01](#), disqualify a candidate if that deception is related to the use of a controlled dangerous substance.
11. Applicants who are removed from the process will be notified by letter or email within 30 days of the decision advising them of their status.
12. Polygraph examinations are valid for only the current process.

G. Background Investigation

1. The assignment of background investigations is the responsibility of the HRD.
2. Background investigations will be:
 - a. Assigned to personnel who have been appropriately trained; and
 - b. Documented on an applicant summary.
3. Background investigations will include, at a minimum, criminal history checks, interviews with personal references, interviews with current and former employers, co-workers and neighbors, verification of credentials, a review of financial data and any other **Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (MPCTC) requirements**.
4. Completed background investigations are returned to the HRD and will be evaluated for competitiveness, completeness and compliance with **MPCTC** guidelines.
5. Applicants who are disqualified will be removed from the process and notified by letter or email within 30 days of the decision advising them of their status.
6. Background investigations are valid for the current application process only.

H. Oral Interviews

1. The Oral Interview Board will be comprised of Agency members.

2. Board members will conduct the interview using the oral board booklet provided by HRS and document the applicant's responses.

I. Conditional Offer of Employment

1. A conditional offer of employment is issued by the Polygraph Examiner prior to the administration of the polygraph examination.
2. Conditional offers are valid for 90 days if all listed conditions are met.

J. Psychological Examination (Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Institutional Support Staff)

1. A psychological examination will be administered to all applicants prior to appointment.
2. All aspects of the selection process that are related to psychological matters are administered and conducted by qualified medical professionals.
3. Completed psychological examinations will be valid for one year.
4. Applicants who fail a psychological examination will be removed from the process for the time specified and will be notified by letter or email.

K. Medical Examination and Pre-Employment Drug Screen

1. A medical examination to include pre-employment drug screening will be administered to all applicants prior to appointment.
2. All aspects of the selection process that are related to medical matters are administered and conducted by qualified medical professionals.
3. Completed medical examinations will be valid for the current application process.
4. Applicants who fail a medical examination will be removed from the process for the time specified and will be notified by letter or email.

L. Final Offer of Employment and Appointment

1. Completed background packet will be reviewed by the Services and Support Bureau Chief (for law enforcement positions) or the Correctional Services Bureau Chief (for corrections positions) who will render a decision regarding suitability for employment.
2. Applicants who successfully pass all phases of the hiring process will be given a final offer of employment.
3. The number of final offers issued will be based upon available positions and the availability of adequate funding.

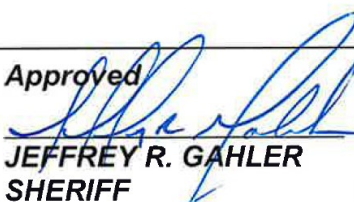
M. Cadet Employees

1. Cadets must begin the application process for the position of deputy prior to the beginning of the first candidate class for which they become eligible based on age.

2. At age 21 a cadet must apply for, and be accepted for, an HCSO academy or employment will be terminated.
3. During the period of employment, cadets are periodically evaluated for efficiency and general performance of duties.
4. Cadets must meet and maintain all of the qualifications required for employment as a deputy in order to be considered for employment as a deputy.

6. References

- A. On 08/19/26 the Agency 3-year policy review was conducted, and the following edits were made:
1. Under Section 5.C.3 Selection Materials, removed the reference that selection materials will be incorporated into an employee's personnel file if the applicant is hired and retained per policy.
 2. Under Section 5.G.3 Background Investigation, changed the reference from the Maryland Police Standards Training Commission (MPSTC)/Maryland Corrections Training Commission (MCTC) to the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (MPCTC).
 3. Under Section 5.G.4 Background Investigation, changed the reference from the MPSTC/MCTC to MCTC.
 4. Under Section 5.L.1 Final Offer of Employment and Appointment, clarified that completed background packets will be reviewed by the Services and Support Bureau Chief (for law enforcement positions) or the Correctional Services Bureau Chief (for corrections positions).

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 8/25/20