



Policy 1721

Subject

PROMOTION TO CLASSIFIED RANKS

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By Order of the Police Commissioner

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish the minimum guidelines and describe the selection procedure for promotion to classified ranks.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Fair and Equitable. The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has established a promotional process that is fair and equitable to all eligible members.

Qualifications for Promotion. The minimum qualifications for each position shall be made with careful consideration, to ensure that the required training level, experience, and past performance matches, as closely as possible, the responsibilities incumbent to the rank.

Quality Testing. In the interest of supporting constitutional, bias-free policing based on contemporary best practices, the BPD selects readings, exercises, study guides, and other testing materials reflective of the most current problem and community-oriented policing practices.

Holistic Review. The promotion committees for the Sergeant and Lieutenant ranks conduct a holistic review of each Candidate's qualifications, including prior performance as observed by their commanders, recognitions, awards, and commendations, early intervention system data, and inquiries into the nature of any complaints and/or sustained disciplinary infractions, regardless of their ultimate disposition.

Upward Mobility. The BPD supports each member who seeks a higher rank within the agency and will use a transparent and objective process to make promotion decisions. This process includes:

- A written examination administered by City of Baltimore Department of Human Resources (DHR),
- An oral Interview Panel administered by DHR, and
- A selection process by a Promotional Committee made up of BPD Executive Staff that conducts a holistic review of the Candidate's test performance, qualifications, work history, early intervention system data, and disciplinary record.

DEFINITIONS

Candidate — A member of the BPD who has successfully met the requirements for promotion to a rank higher than the one they currently fill in a permanent capacity, to include having his/her name added to the DHR approved register of qualified promotional candidates, and who is under review by the Promotion Committee.

Classified Ranks — Positions holding the rank of Sergeant or Lieutenant any other future classification for which a standardized testing process is administered in partnership with DHR.

Conflict of Interest — With respect to the Selection Process, any circumstance and/or relationships associated with a Candidate that could generate partiality in the judgment of a member of the Promotion Committee. Such conflicts include, but are not limited to: relationships of kin, past or present romantic or financial relationships or interests, or any other influencing factor which could compromise, in a positive or negative direction, the ability of a committee member to evaluate the Candidate(s) in a fair and unbiased manner.

Deferral — The action of postponing the recommendation of a candidate for promotion out of sequence from the published list of qualified candidates by the Promotion Committee. A Deferral of a Candidate for promotional consideration must be based on an articulable reason.

Egregious or Serious Act of Misconduct — Any act which has an offense range where the penalty is a Category D or greater, where a potential disciplinary action includes termination, as articulated in Policy 310, *Disciplinary/Failure to Appear and Traffic Matrix*.

Employee Information Report — A report that lists an employee's history as it pertains to training, education, discipline, awards/commendations, uses of force, performance evaluations, and previous assignments.

Selection Process — The process by which the Promotion Committee prioritizes selection of Candidates during review. This process utilizes three categories to determine a Candidate's qualifications. The categories are as follows:

1. Examination score/DHR Ranking of Candidate,
2. Review of Employee Information Report, and
3. Review of command assessment of prior work performance.

Sustained — Where an investigation determines, by a preponderance of the evidence, that alleged misconduct did occur.

GENERAL

Examination Materials

In consultation with the examining authority pursuant to Public Local Law §16-10, section C., *Promotional Appointments*, the BPD shall ensure that readings, exercises, study guides, and other testing materials address the following topics in modern policing:

1. Interpersonal and leadership skills.
2. Community engagement, trust-building, and neighborhood problem-solving strategies.
3. Effective use of community policing strategies.
4. Commitment to bias-free, constitutional policing, and appropriate discretion in seeking the least-intrusive enforcement response consistent with public safety and community input.

5. Effective use of de-escalation and critical decision-making.
6. Integrity and ethical decision-making, with an emphasis on peer intervention.
7. Reasonable, necessary, and proportional uses of force.
8. Precise and accurate police reporting (search warrants, supportive affidavits, etc.)
9. The above list may be amended by the Commissioner prior to the start of any promotional process.
10. Specific reading list for exams will be provided to department members by BPD Human Resources in conjunction with the City of Baltimore Department of Human Resources.

Application Process for Candidates

11. The promotional process will begin with a call for applications for members interested in being promoted to the Classified Ranks. The announcement shall include the following information:
 - 11.1. Rank and description of the position,
 - 11.2. Salary range,
 - 11.3. Opening and closing dates for the posting,
 - 11.4. Application form and instructions for the application,
 - 11.5. Evaluation Criteria, and
 - 11.6. Expiration date(s) for all scores obtained through the Evaluation Process.
12. The department shall ensure wide distribution of the announcement. Distribution of the posting shall occur via department-approved channels or platforms at least three times prior to the closing date of the announcement.
13. Eligible members seeking promotion shall complete any required application materials and submit them to the Department of Human Resources.
14. Human Resources shall create an Employee Information Report (EIR) for each member who has applied for promotion. The EIR shall be forwarded to the Promotion Committee upon completion.
15. A member who fails to submit the necessary application materials by the closing date, or who has not been vetted through this promotion review process, shall not be promoted or considered for promotion.

Examination Eligibility Criteria

Pursuant to Public Local Law §16-10, section C., *Promotional Appointments*, the Police Commissioner has the authority to establish other criteria for promotion eligibility. In addition to receiving a passing score

through the examination process administered by DHR, Candidates for promotion to the Classified Ranks must meet the following additional suitability standards:

16. Within the past three (3) years, Candidates must not have any sustained findings of Egregious or Serious Acts of Misconduct.
17. Candidates must not have been arrested or indicted for violating federal, state, or local laws within the last three years.

NOTE: This ineligibility criteria may be waived if the case has been adjudicated **and** the member did not: plead guilty, enter into a Probation before Judgement (PBJ) agreement, or was found guilty.

18. Candidates that fail to meet the above criteria for suitability will be deemed ineligible to apply for promotion and will not be approved by the DHR process for placement on the promotional list.

Frequency of Examination Process

BPD will coordinate with DHR to administer the examination process for Classified Ranks pursuant to Public Local Law §16-10.

Promotion Committee¹

19. The Promotion Committee will be composed of:
 - 19.1. Deputy Commissioners,
 - 19.2. Police Commissioner's Chief of Staff (Chairperson),
 - 19.3. Chief of Patrol (Colonel) and Chief of Detectives (Colonel), and/or Lieutenant Colonels serving as their direct subordinates, as approved by the Police Commissioner,
 - 19.4. Equity Officer (non-voting member), and
 - 19.5. Additional members as appropriate, at the discretion of the Police Commissioner.
20. The Police Commissioner has complete discretion over the composition of the Promotion Committee, with the exception of the Equity Officer, who must observe and participate all promotion proceedings for Classified Ranks.
21. The Promotion Committee shall meet as directed by the Police Commissioner or Chief of Staff to review the Employee Information Reports of eligible members as vacancies in the Classified Ranks become available.

Recusals, Absences, and Notifications

22. Prior to beginning the Selection Process, the Chairperson will forward the list of Candidates under consideration to the Promotion Committee, in order to identify any potential Conflicts of Interest.

¹ "Promotion Committee" section amended by PCM 25-04 Changes to Promotion Committee and Deferral Conditions for Classified Ranks dated 11 March 2025. Please refer to PCM 25-04 for additional guidance.

23. All members of the committee must then submit to the Chairperson a recusal certification form prior to the commencement of the selection process.
24. In the case of a recusal by a member of the Committee, the member shall be identified by the Chair as having been recused prior to discussion of the Candidate's qualification. The recused member of the committee shall not participate in the discussion of whether the Candidate should be recommended for promotion.

Chief of Staff - Responsibilities

25. Schedule and lead Promotion Committee meetings, collecting candidate recommendation forms, and forwarding recommendations made by the Committee to the Police Commissioner.
26. Collect and forward all recusal forms and Equity Officer statements (see 30 and 31 below) to the Police Commissioner.
27. Facilitate discussions of Candidates amongst members of the Promotion Committee.
28. Participate in the assessment and selection of Candidates.

Equity Officer – Responsibilities

29. Review and respond to any inquiries from Candidates about deferrals.
30. Review documents pertaining to promotion proceedings, observe proceedings, and record and preserve contemporaneous notes of the promotion process at the direction of the Chairperson.
31. Act as an advisor to the Chairperson regarding any known or foreseeable violations of law, policy, procedure, or other rules governing the promotion process.
32. Ensure consistent and timely communication between the Human Resources Section, the Legal Affairs Section, and the Promotion Committee to ensure that the committee has all necessary and useful information to meet its goals and comply with all laws, policies, procedures, and other rules.
33. Research and recommend revisions to policies or procedures to promote equity, committee effectiveness, and compliance.
34. Upon conclusion of the Selection Process for candidates, issue a written statement (Form 95) certifying whether the promotion proceedings have been conducted in a fair and impartial manner, and in compliance with all relevant equity laws, rules, and BPD policies. If any part(s) of the Selection Process are found to be out of compliance with the above, the Equity Officer shall provide an outline of each observed violation, along with recommendations for corrective measure(s), to the Chief of Staff and/or the Police Commissioner.
35. Submit an annual equity analysis to the Police Commissioner summarizing promotional list outcomes according to best practices for organizational diversity.

Factors to Consider in Holistic Review by Promotion Committee

The Promotion Committee will consider the following factors when conducting a Candidate's Holistic Review for promotion:

36. DHR Examination Score/Ranking.
37. Tenure in both the department and the police profession.
38. Sustained disciplinary actions, criminal and complaint history, including that of other agencies at which the candidate may have served.
39. Education.
40. Agency and civilian commendations.
41. The Commander's Evaluation (see Appendix A) of the Candidate:
 - 41.1. Interpersonal and leadership skills.
 - 41.2. Community policing and neighborhood problem-solving skills.
 - 41.2.1. Demonstrated commitment to community engagement and building trust with communities, and effective use of community policing and neighborhood problem-solving strategies.
 - 41.2.2. Commitment to bias-free policing.
 - 41.3. Communication and decision-making skills.
 - 41.3.1. Effective use of de-escalation and critical decision-making.
 - 41.3.2. Number and circumstances of the use of force, including any found to be in violation of policy, as well as use of force complaints.
 - 41.4. Prior work performance and demonstrated fulfillment of their supervisory duties, including:
 - 41.4.1. Demonstrated integrity and ethical decision-making.
 - 41.4.2. Quality and accuracy of officer reports (search warrants, supportive affidavits, etc.).
 - 41.4.3. Specialized leadership or management training (if applicable).
 - 41.5. Overall impressions.
 - 41.5.1. Support for departmental integrity measures.
 - 41.5.2. Annual performance evaluations.

42. In addition to the above, and for purposes of differentiating recommended Candidates from those who are highly recommended, the Promotion Committee may give special consideration to Candidates who exceed expectations in the following roles:
- 42.1. Field Training Officer (FTO).
 - 42.2. Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO).
 - 42.3. BPD Academy Instructor.
 - 42.4. Service in the Public Integrity Bureau (Internal Affairs).
 - 42.5. Officer-in-Charge.

Promotion Deferral²

Any inquiries from Candidates about the status of a deferral may be directed to the Equity Officer. Candidates may not be selected in the sequence of the promotional list if any of the following are found:

- 43. Within the past five years, five (5) or more Sustained complaints of misconduct which resulted in an assessed penalty greater than a simple letter of reprimand.
- 44. Within the past five years, three (3) or more Sustained complaints of misconduct which resulted in an assessed penalty of ten (10) or more days each, or the combined total of thirty (30) days penalty as a result of three (3) or fewer complaints.
- 45. Within the past five years, one (1) or more Sustained complaints of an Egregious or Serious Act of Misconduct.
- 46. Ongoing investigation of a complaint for an Egregious or Serious Act of Misconduct, to be considered by the Promotion Committee on a case-by-case basis.
- 47. Significant deficiencies in work performance that have been documented as “Not Recommended” using the Commander Assessment Form.
- 48. Significant alerts or patterns of behavior or complaints identified by an Early Intervention System.
- 49. De-prioritization of a Candidate following a Holistic Review by the Promotion Committee.
- 50. Inability to serve in a full duty status at the time of the promotional vacancy, based on a review of the facts and circumstances.

NOTE: Protected leave such as Military leave or FMLA leave will not be considered a lapse in eligibility for promotions.

² “Promotion Deferral” section amended by PCM 25-04 Changes to Promotion Committee and Deferral Conditions for Classified Ranks dated 11 March 2025. Please refer to PCM 25-04 for additional guidance.

APPENDIX

- A. Commander Assessment Form

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Public Local Law §16-10

Article 25 of FOP Labor Contract

Policy 306, *Complaint Intake and Classification Process*

Policy 310, *Disciplinary/Failure to Appear and Traffic Matrix*

Policy 1701, *Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity*

[City of Baltimore Administrative Manual AM 235-1](#)

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.

APPENDIX A**Commander Assessment Form (p. 1)**

**BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT
COMMANDER ASSESSMENT FORM****Promotional Candidate Information:**

Name: _____ Rank: _____ SEQ#: _____

Current Assignment: _____

Command Staff Reviewer Information:

Name: _____ Rank: _____ SEQ#: _____

Current Assignment: _____

Length of Time the Promotional Candidate has served under your command: _____

Assessment of Performance by Commander**Interpersonal and leadership skills**

Please provide two specific examples of actions taken by the candidate that illustrate their ability or inability to build, maintain, or repair interpersonal relationships in order to meet an organizational goal or to improve unit performance.

Community policing and neighborhood problem-solving skills

Please describe the candidate's most significant contribution or failure to build trust with communities and effectively apply neighborhood problem-solving strategies while under your command.

Communication and decision-making skills

Please describe at least one interaction that illustrates the candidate's effective or ineffective application of de-escalation and crisis management techniques while under your command.

Prior work performance and demonstrated fulfillment of their supervisory duties:

Please describe how the candidate has modeled or failed to model integrity and ethical decision-making for other members while under your command:

APPENDIX A**Commander Assessment Form (p. 2)**

By circling the most appropriate number on the scale below, rate the general quality and accuracy of officer reports (search warrants, supportive affidavits, etc.) written, reviewed, and or approved by the candidate while under your command.

Poor Quality	Below Average Quality	Average Quality	Above Average Quality	Exemplary
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Please identify any specialized leadership or management training, if any, that the candidate has successfully completed while under your command.

Promotional Candidate Strengths and Weaknesses:

Please identify any areas where the promotional candidate has demonstrated excellence:

Please identify any areas of improvement the promotional candidate should make:

Overall Assessment of Promotional Candidate:

Please identify your overall assessment and any additional comments or observation about the promotional candidate's performance (or lack thereof) not mentioned above:

Check One:

Highly Recommended	Recommended	Not Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

Signature of Reviewer: _____

Date: _____