



Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

Sheriff Carl Ritchie

4-02 Employment Selection

- NEW
- REVISED
- REVIEWED

ACA Standards Reference: 5-ALDF-2A-13, 14; 7B-03, 04, 7C-01, 7E-01, 7E-02, 7E-03
CALEA Standards Reference: 22.2.1, 22.2.2, 31.1.1, 31.2.3, 31.3-1, 31.3-3, 31.4.1, 31.4.2, 31.4.3, 31.4.4, 31.4.5, 31.4.6, 31.4.8, 31.5.1, 31.5.2, 31.5.3, 31.5.4, 31.5.5, 31.5.6, 31.5.7, 33.8.4, 34.1.3
NCCHC Standards Reference:
PREA Standards: 115.17 b, c1-2, e, f
SCLEA Standards Reference:
SC Minimum Standards:

This policy dated 1/28/2025 replaces prior policies cited above and supersedes all previously issued directives.

I. Purpose:

To describe all the elements of the process for recruitment and selection of qualified applicants for all positions within the Charleston County Sheriff's Office and set forth procedures governing the administration of all phases of that process. The Sheriff, when unusual circumstances dictate, may deviate from this policy when in the best interests and good of the agency. (Ref: CALEA 31.4.1)

II. Policy:

The Sheriff's Office is an equal opportunity employer and, as such, shall ensure that all applicants are provided an equal opportunity for employment through an employment process which recruits and selects the most qualified persons without regard to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, or any other factor which cannot lawfully be used as the basis for employment. All applicants are required to meet the same minimal standards through uniform testing standards and practices for their classification. The Sheriff's Office will adhere to Charleston County's Personnel Policies and Procedures regarding any performance-based tests administered in the employment process (i.e., tests must be job-related and demonstrate that they measure an applicant's skill or ability to perform essential functions of the job). The agency will not only recruit and select applicants in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, but will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety, South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy (CJA).

(Ref: 5-ALDF-7E-01; CALEA 31.2.3, 31.3.1 item c, 31.4.1, 31.4.2 and 31.4.3)

III. Definitions:

A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, or Class III, or Reserve Deputy, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, reserve deputy.
2. civilian, non-sworn employee.

B. *Employee*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members (sworn and non-sworn).

- C. *Human Resources Manager*: Responsible for overseeing the recruitment and employment process ensuring that each phase is administered uniformly (see also [Policy 4-03 Recruitment Plan](#)).

IV. Procedure:

- A. The Human Resources Manager should anticipate vacancies for all positions within in the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. Recruitment of qualified applicants should be coordinated through a variety of avenues including, but not limited to: Charleston County Internal and External Bulletins and Job lines, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, advertisements in professional publications, the Internet, notices to area colleges and technical schools, job fairs, and through the face-to-face recruitment efforts of Sheriff's Office employees.

(Ref: 5-ALDF-2A-13, 14; CALEA 31.1.1 and 31.3.1 item b)

- B. All positions within the Sheriff's Office require a high school diploma, GED, or higher education. However, all regular full-time employees who have completed an educational degree, higher than required for the position, from an accredited institution prior to or during their employment with the Sheriff's Office may be eligible for an education salary adjustment. The highest level of educational degree compensated will be a master's degree. The Sheriff's Office utilizes the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* as entry level criteria on which all applicants must achieve a minimum score, established by the Sheriff or designee, to proceed in the employment process. The *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* (approved by CJA) is used to determine the applicant's grade level equivalent. Deputy sheriff and detention deputy applicants that are currently certified through the CJA and will not be required to attend the CJA are exempt from the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* requirement. Certain administrative positions require a minimum typing score of either 30, 35, 40, 45, or 55 cwpm in order to proceed in the employment process. Deputy sheriff applicants must pass a physical abilities test (as outlined by CJA) which must be completed within the prescribed time or less. Other specific proficiency test(s) may be required depending on the position sought. All job-related requirements are listed in the specific job descriptions and each applicant is provided a list of all phases of the employment process with its specific minimums for the position for which they have applied.

(Ref: CALEA 31.4.2)

C. Initial Application Phase:

- 1. Each position advertised will provide a description of the minimal job duties, responsibilities, requisite skills, educational level, and other qualifications or requirements (i.e., typing test, computer software

test), pay range, and elements of the employment process.

(Ref: CALEA 31.3.1 item d)

2. Applications for specific advertised job openings are accepted only during the time frame specified in the advertisement (to be determined by the Human Resources Manager). Applications obtained by Sheriff's Office employees through individual one-on-one recruitment will be accepted by the agency's Human Resources Office only during the specified advertised time frame. The recruiting employee recommending the applicant will print and sign their name with the date on the lower left corner of the application as the recruiting employee. The recruited applicant must meet the requirements of the advertised position. One-on-one recruitment by Sheriff's Office employees is limited to four positions, i.e., civilians, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, and school crossing officer.
3. Facility tours for individuals who may be interested in applying for a Detention Deputy position can schedule a tour through the Bureau of Community Engagement. The Detention Center Recruiter will schedule the tour for either the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center(SACDC) or the Charleston County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC). Once the tour is scheduled a records inquiry (RI) will be run through RMS to ensure the individual does not have any pending local warrants. The Detention Center Recruiter will forward the schedule to the Security Captain for the SACDC and the Juvenile Captain for the CCJDC.
4. The agency's Human Resources staff conducts a preliminary screening to verify eligibility and sends each qualified applicant an invitational letter. This letter includes information regarding the date, time, and place where initial testing will be conducted and the minimum passing score for the test. In addition, there are instructions concerning required documents applicants must furnish at the time of testing.
5. Failure to complete the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, without notice to the agency's Human Resources Office, will result in the applicant being excluded from the employment process. This testing date with the applicant will be considered by the Sheriff's Office as the formal application phase. (Ref: CALEA 31.3.3)

E. Formal Application Phase:

1. All applicants are advised that they must successfully complete, or

comply with, all phases of the employment process to be offered employment.

2. Documents requested of the applicant in the invitational letter will be provided to the Human Resources Office and placed in the applicant's file. In the event the applicant does not produce the requested documents, they will be given a reasonable time limit, depending on the reason the document could not be obtained, in which to provide them. Failure to meet the deadline may result in the applicant being removed from the process. Required forms, waivers, and the Applicant Information Sheets are completed prior to testing.
3. Those applicants that are required will be administered the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* as directed, either online or by the designated testing administrator who is trained to administer the test in accordance with the directives of this standardized examination.
4. Immediately following the administration of the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, applicants are given an opportunity to review their score. Those who do not receive the minimum passing score, depending on the position applied for, are excused from the testing site, and are removed from the employment process at that time.
5. Qualified applicants will then be given a packet which contains the agency's *Applicant Questionnaire* and *Applicant Information Sheet* with instructions that it must be completed and returned within one calendar week to the agency's Human Resources Office. Applicants are advised that the background investigation and pre-employment polygraph will cover the areas addressed in the questionnaire. Applicants have an affirmative duty to answer all questions honestly and to disclose any misconducts to include any previous misconducts involving inmates of any detention facility.
(Ref: CALEA 31.5.3; PREA 115.17 f)
6. Selection materials will not be left unattended at any time. This includes the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* materials, typing test(s), and the agency's *Applicant Questionnaire*. They will be maintained by the agency's Human Resource Manager in a secured/locked area when not in use. Access to selection materials will be permitted to those directly involved in the formal application phase only.
(Ref: 5-ALDF-7E-02; CALEA 31.4.6)
7. During the formal application phase of the employment process, applicants are informed in writing regarding the subsequent phases of

the process, (e.g., duration, time limitations, additional tests, etc.). Applicants who do not successfully complete the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* are advised by a member of the agency's Human Resources Office at that time and no further correspondence is required. Successful applicants are advised that the background investigation will commence. Physical fitness test instructions (deputy sheriff applicants) are provided in writing to the deputy sheriff applicant upon passing the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*. All applicants are advised that at any time during the process, should they be deemed ineligible to continue (in the process) or otherwise not selected, they will be notified in writing by the Human Resources Manager. Applicants are advised in writing of agency policy on re-application and retesting if not selected.

(Ref: CALEA 22.2.2, 31.3.3, 31.4.2, 31.4.4 and 31.4.5)

F. Background Investigation Phase (Part One):

1. An agency Human Resources staff member will review the *Applicant Questionnaire* and ensure that the applicant's file has all of the required documents before proceeding with the background investigation. Based on the content of the questionnaire the applicant has given, disqualifying admissions could result in the applicant's immediate removal from the employment process. All applicants removed from the process will be with the knowledge and approval of the agency's Human Resources Manager.
2. Subsequent to the review of the applicant's questionnaire provided and the approval of the agency's Human Resources Manager and background investigator(s), the first phase of the background investigation will commence. All background investigations will be conducted by employees formally trained in the background investigation process and in accordance with guidelines set forth by the CJA. This phase consists of a check and verification to include but not limited to the applicant's driver's license (status and history); credit; education; criminal history; Selective Service; Clerk of Courts; Brady doctrine background (if applicable), and recent previous employers. After a review of the initial background investigation results by the agency's Human Resources Manager, qualified applicants are then scheduled for a pre-employment polygraph examination.
(Ref: 5-ALDF-7B-03; CALEA 31.5.1 items a-f, 31.5.2; PREA 115.17 c1-2, e)
3. Detention deputy applicants will be scheduled for a tour of the SACDC or the CCJDC if a tour has not been conducted prior.

G. Formal Interview Phase:

1. The formal interview board will be comprised of representatives from the Human Resources Office and the prospective applicant's chain of command for which the opening(s) exists, with the exception of the position of deputy sheriff or detention deputy. The formal interview board for deputy sheriff applicants will be comprised of the Undersheriff or designee, a member of Human Resources and other deputy sheriffs from within the Sheriff's Office as determined by the Undersheriff or designee. The formal interview board for detention deputy applicants will be comprised of a SACDC Major, a member of Human Resources and others from within the SACDC as determined by the Detention Director.
2. Applicants will be informed of the formal interview by an agency Human Resources employee either in person or by telephone or email. The applicant will be informed regarding the time, date, and location of the interview and that (except in cases of a bona fide emergency) attendance at such time is non-negotiable. Failure to appear at the formal interview will result in the applicant being removed from the employment process.
3. Formal interviews will be conducted in accordance with procedures outlined in Charleston County's Personnel Policies and Procedures. It is the role of the formal interview board to select the best-qualified applicant(s) as defined in Charleston County personnel directives.

H. Polygraph Phase:

1. Qualified applicants are given a pre-employment polygraph examination in accordance with federal and state laws and using methods approved by the American Polygraph Association (APA) or the American Association of Police Polygraphists (AAPP).
2. Polygraph examinations will be scheduled and conducted by certified and professionally trained polygraph examiners who are licensed by the State Law Enforcement Division. (Ref: CALEA 31.5.4)
3. Applicants may be removed from the employment process at this level by disqualifying admissions, unresolved responses indicating deception, or through a verification of information gained through the polygraph process; however, the result of the polygraph examination will not, in itself, be used as the sole basis for disqualification from the employment process.

4. A polygraph report is prepared by the examiner who forwards it directly to the agency's Undersheriff, or designee. The agency's Human Resources Manager will include the report in a confidential file maintained for each employee or applicant who reaches this level of the employment process. (Ref: CALEA 31.5.5)

I. Psychological Testing Phase:

1. Upon successful completion of the polygraph examination, the applicant will be given written notice of the time and date for psychological testing and assessment, including written directions to the place where the testing will be conducted. The Sheriff's Office contracts the services of a certified psychologist/psychiatrist qualified in the administration of standardized and nationally accepted instruments (e.g., MMPI, IPI, etc.). An agency Human Resources staff member will offer the applicant alternative dates and times, as necessary, to accommodate the applicant's schedule.

(Ref: CALEA 31.5.7)

2. The Human Resources Manager will obtain a written report from the designated provider of the psychological assessment and will ensure placement of written reports into the confidential files.

(Ref: CALEA 31.4.6 item d)

3. In the event an applicant's psychological assessment reflects that they have received marginal ratings, the Human Resources Manager will alert the Administrative Services Department Major, or designee. The Administrative Services Department Major will conduct an independent review of the applicant's file at that time and will monitor the progress of that applicant throughout the remainder of the employment process.

4. While the result of the psychological assessment (as with the polygraph examination) will not be the single determinant of the applicant's removal from the employment process, if the information gained from the psychological assessment is corroborated, it may result in the applicant's removal from the employment process.

J. Background Investigation Phase (Part Two):

1. Qualified applicants who have successfully completed all previous phases of the employment process will then be the subject of the second (and final) phase of the background investigation. At this stage, the human resources staff member ensures that all stages of the

applicant's background check are completed, and all required documentation was obtained.

2. At this time, the applicant's current employer is contacted by the Human Resources staff member and the applicant's employment history check is completed; verification of qualifying credentials is confirmed; at least three personal references are contacted.
3. Any areas of concern uncovered by the polygraph examination, psychological assessment, or records checks are fully investigated at this time. A Brady doctrine background check, if applicable, will be conducted if not already completed in the initial background investigation. If this phase will cause an unusual delay in the employment process, the applicant will be notified in writing by the Human Resources Manager. In some instances, the delay is a direct result of being unable to obtain certain records (e.g., certified driving history from another state required by the CJA). In that event, the applicant will be advised of the specific reason for the delay.

(Ref: CALEA 31.4.2, 31.5.1 items *a-f*; PREA 115.17 b, e)

K. Pre-Employment Physical Examination Phase:

1. After the Human Resources Manager has reviewed the applicant's file for completeness, the applicant will be scheduled for a pre-employment medical examination. This examination will be conducted at the medical facility contracted by Charleston County and in accordance with federal and state laws. The examination will be conducted by a licensed physician who will certify, in writing, that the applicant meets the minimum required standards for the position for which the applicant has applied.

(Ref: 5-ALDF-7B-04; CALEA 31.5.6)

2. Based on a desired start date discussion with the applicant, the pre-employment physical exam will be scheduled. The applicant is instructed as to the date, time, and location of the appointment and is given written instructions regarding the necessary prerequisite for compliance regarding the examination. Applicants are also advised that the medical examination includes a screening for the presence of illegal drugs.

(Ref: 5-ALDF- 7C-01; CALEA 22.2.1, 31.5.6)

L. Hiring Phase:

1. Subsequent to the successful completion of the medical examination, the applicant will return to the agency Human Resources Office with

the Charleston County Medical Opinion form which includes the physician's statement for employment, along with all medical screening documents. The medical records of the applicant will be maintained by the medical facility; however, the physician's statement for employment will be maintained in the applicant's medical file. At that time, the applicant signs a benefits letter outlining, to include, the hire date, starting salary, leave accrual, probationary period, and notice regarding employment by an elected official.

(Ref: 5-ALDF-7E-02; CALEA 31.4.6 item d)

2. All new employees are placed on probation. Probationary employees must successfully complete the probationary period for the position (either six months or one year depending on the position). Prior to hire, the applicant is advised by the Sheriff's Office Human Resources staff of the probationary period and its restrictions.
- M. The Sheriff may make any appointment for lateral entry into a supervisory or supervisory equivalent position consistent with the best interest of the Sheriff's Office and the needs of the agency. (Ref: CALEA 34.1.3)
- N. The SACDC is responsible for ensuring the Charleston County Sheriff's Office Human Resources Office conducts background checks on all current employees once every five (5) years. (Ref: PREA 115-17 e)
- O. All applicants' files for all selection phases, those selected for employment and those not selected, will be kept in the records files in the agency's Human Resources Office in accordance with Charleston County's procedures regarding the maintenance, retention, and destruction of records (i.e., Charleston County Personnel Procedure 1.20, Recordkeeping [sic] and Retention). (Ref: CALEA 31.4.6 items a & c, and 31.5.3)