



GENERAL ORDER Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Personnel Management

Section: 306

Subject: Selection

Topic:

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I. PURPOSE

Identifying, selecting, and assigning the best qualified candidates to serve in positions of public trust is of prime importance to the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office ("LCSO" or "Sheriff's Office"). Choosing such candidates requires a thorough selection process that meets the agency's needs and complies with all applicable employment laws, regulations, and guidelines.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to select the best applicants for employment through a competitive process. Vacancies will be filled in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner. As an equal opportunity employer, the Sheriff will consider all applicants based on their knowledge, skills, and ability without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions including lactation, age, military status, disability, or national origin (provided the candidate is able to perform the essential job functions), or other non-merit factors. Applicants for sworn positions must meet minimum standards established by section 15.2-1705 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, as well as those established by the Loudoun County Department of Human Resources ("DHR") and the LCSO.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Stages of the application process

The following process applies to sworn and dispatcher positions. The procedure for other non-sworn positions may vary according to the sensitivity of a specific position. All applicants must undergo a thorough background investigation.

1. DHR initially receives applications after positions are advertised. DHR will refer eligible applicants who meet county minimum qualifications and forward those applications to the Employment Services Section of the LCSO.
2. Applicants must submit a Supplemental Questionnaire from the job posting within five business days of the online application submission. The questionnaire is used to determine if each applicant meets the employment standards and to ensure the applicant's competitiveness in the process. Failure to submit the questionnaire within five business days with accurate information may result in the applicant's removal from the process.

3. Applicants for sworn positions who are found to meet state minimum standards will be scheduled for the next available Physical Ability Assessment ("PAA"). The assessment will be scheduled by the Employment Services Section and the applicant will be notified in writing of his/her assigned date and time. The PAA requirement does not apply to non-sworn applicants and may be waived for applicants who are currently certified as a law enforcement officer in any state or federal service.
4. Applicants who meet these standards shall be scheduled for a polygraph examination, which is administered and evaluated by trained and licensed personnel. Polygraph examinations are conducted in strict compliance with sections 54.1-1800 through 54.1-1806 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The questionnaire to be used by the polygraph examiner is reviewed by the Employment Services Section Supervisor, or his/her designee, prior to the polygraph examination.
5. Prior to completion of the polygraph examination, the Sheriff's Office will provide the applicant with a conditional offer of employment. In addition, the hiring process is also further explained at this time by the assigned LCSO background investigator.
6. Those applicants who successfully complete the polygraph examination then advance to the background interview phase of the selection process. An investigator who is trained in collecting law enforcement background information conducts this investigation. This interview process consists of the following steps:
 - a. Reviewing the personal history statement and accompanying documents
 - b. Requiring the applicant to answer a series of job-related questions
 - c. Executing the authorization to release information form
 - d. Executing the authorization to obtain credit history form
 - e. Executing other documents as required
7. Qualified applicants will be scheduled for a psychological examination and medical examination. A qualified and licensed professional, contracted by the County of Loudoun, administers the psychological exam. A licensed physician, employed by a healthcare facility contracted by the County of Loudoun, will administer the medical examination. The applicant's medical history will be obtained during this time. The results of these examinations are maintained in the background file.

8. Once the background interview has been completed, a background investigation is conducted. This includes, but is not limited to, criminal record and credit history checks, verification of past and present employers, character reference checks, neighborhood canvasses, etc. An applicant may be considered or recommended for removal from the process if there are any ethical issues discovered or conflicts with aspects of the applicant's history that has not been disclosed or addressed as required.
9. Background investigations for any current or former police officers, deputy sheriffs, or jail officers who have been employed at any time by another law enforcement agency or jail shall require the background investigator to contact all prior employing law enforcement agencies or jails as required by §15.2-1705 (B) of the Code of Virginia. The background investigator shall request information on the following:
 - a. Arrests or prosecutions of the former police officer, deputy sheriff, or jail officer, including any expunged arrest or criminal charge known to the agency or disclosed during the hiring process.
 - b. Civil suits regarding the former police officer, deputy sheriff, or jail officer's employment or performance of his/her duties.
 - c. Internal investigations related to the former police officer, deputy sheriff, or jail officer's alleged criminal conduct, use of excessive force, or other official misconduct in violation of the state professional standards of conduct adopted by the Criminal Justice Services Board.
 - d. Performance records or evaluations related to the former police officer, deputy sheriff, or jail officer's job performance that led to such officer's or deputy sheriff's resignation, dismissal, demotion, suspension, or transfer.

In compliance with §15.2-1705 (B) of the Code of Virginia, the LCSO shall disclose information in its possession as outlined above, if any, to a law enforcement agency or jail requesting it, within 14 days of receiving such request.
10. The Sheriff or his/her designee may elect to meet with the applicant for an interview before approving the applicant for hire.
11. Applicants who are approved for hire are sent two copies of a letter that outlines the details of his or her employment.

Note: All elements of the selection process are administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a fair and uniform manner. Due to the demands on the hiring process, the Employment Services Section supervisor may change the order of the investigative process, as necessary.

B. Notification

1. Applicants shall be notified in writing of each respective appointment for interviews and testing. Applicants may be notified by US mail, e-mail, or automated background investigations system. Appropriate instructions and required forms will be provided.
2. Those individuals who are unsuccessful at any stage of the process will be notified in writing. If a retest is appropriate, the applicant will be so advised.
3. Offers of employment will be made in writing and will sufficiently explain pertinent details.

C. In-house applications

No current deputy shall attempt to move to another section of the Sheriff's Office (e.g., Corrections/Court deputy to Patrol deputy) by applying for an open, advertised position through the DHR application process. Instead, the deputy shall submit a memorandum stating the specific request through his/her designated chain of command, to the Sheriff. Staffing issues, number of vacancies and/or enhancements, quality and prior experience of current applicants, work history of the employee, etc. will all be taken into consideration by the Sheriff or his/her designee when determining the transfer of a deputy.

Civilian employees requesting a sworn position are required to apply through the County application process. Civilian employees will not be given preferential treatment through this process. Rather, a determination to process the application will be based on a comparison against all other applicants competing for sworn positions. Examples of categories used for comparisons include, but are not limited to, prior military service or law enforcement experience, security or loss prevention experience and Criminal Justice college degrees.

- D. Applicants who have prior service as a deputy with the LCSO may be hired through a modified process. A waiver for this timetable may be granted by the Sheriff or his/her designee.

Length of Separation	Hiring Process
6 months or less	Criminal History, DMV Check
6 months to 1 Year	Background check covering time since separation; medical examination.

III. ENTRY LEVEL SALARY

- A. Entry level salaries are set in a manner to provide fair and competitive compensation in accordance with Chapter 5 of the Loudoun County Human Resources Handbook and any applicable administrative policies.
- B. Salary worksheets shall be completed by the supervisor of the Employment Services Section or a Sheriff's Office HR liaison in consultation with DHR. Salary worksheets for deputy positions shall be based on the approved hiring matrix that is maintained by the Division Commander of the Administrative & Technical Services Division.
- C. Entry level salaries for deputy positions shall be commensurate with education and experience. Salary offers at the mid-point and higher of the salary range shall be submitted to the DHR for approval. Entry level salaries for non-sworn positions shall be commensurate with education and experience. Salary offers at the mid-point and higher of the assigned grade shall be submitted to DHR for approval.

IV. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

A. Appointments

A background file shall be maintained on each employee during his or her tenure with the LCSO. Records of the background process, to include testing results, will be maintained and stored in a secure area or electronic document management system, separate from personnel files, and restricted to persons legally entitled to access them.

B. Other Records

Records for individuals who are not appointed as deputy sheriffs by the Sheriff of Loudoun County will be maintained for at least five years.

V. ORIENTATION

- A. At the time of hire, each new employee will be scheduled to attend new employee orientation program that is conducted by representatives of DHR and the Sheriff's Office. The orientation will detail the following information:
 - 1. The agency's salary program (described in Chapter 5, Classification and Compensation, of the Loudoun County Human Resources Handbook), to include:
 - a. Entry level salary for the agency
 - b. Salary differential within the ranks
 - c. Salary differential between the ranks

- d. Salary levels for those with special skills, if any
 - e. Compensatory time policy
 - f. Overtime policy
2. The agency's leave program (described in Chapter 6, Benefits and Leave, of the Loudoun County Human Resources Handbook), to include:
- a. Administrative Leave
 - b. Holiday Leave
 - c. Sick Leave
 - d. Annual (vacation) Leave
 - e. Military Leave
 - f. Paid Family Leave
3. The agency's benefit program (described in Chapter 6, Benefits and Leave, Chapter 7, Employee Development and Awards, Chapter 9, Non-Disciplinary Separations, of the Loudoun County Human Resources Handbook), to include:
- a. Retirement program
 - b. Health insurance program
 - c. Disability and death benefits program
 - d. Liability protection program
 - e. Employee educational assistance program

B. Probation

The probationary period is the final stage of the selection process during which job performance and suitability for employment is evaluated. The Sheriff is responsible for evaluating performance during probation and for exercising discipline or discharge, if necessary.

1. All full-time sworn deputies serve a probationary period. The probationary period begins on the date of hire and expires one year after successful completion of that deputy's FTO or CTO training.
- a. The Sheriff may extend any employee's probationary period by ninety days if the overall performance is not satisfactory and if there is an expectation

that additional training and/or experience will resolve the performance issue(s).

- b. The probationary period is automatically extended (for the length of time absent) if the employee is absent from work for thirty calendar days or longer. For absences less than thirty days, the probationary period may be extended at the Sheriff's discretion, only for the length of time an employee has been absent from work during the probationary period and his/her performance could not be evaluated.
2. Any person who has served in a capacity as a Loudoun County professional staff employee and is hired as a Sheriff's Office sworn deputy shall serve a probationary period that begins on the date they are transferred into the sworn position and expire one year after successful completion of the deputy's FTO or CTO training.
3. The probationary period for full time civilian employees is defined in Chapter 2 of the Loudoun County Human Resources Handbook.