



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
POLICIES & PROCEDURES**



Subject: State Police Recruiting and Selection		Policy Number: TRG: 05
Revision Number: 9	Effective Date: 03/06/2025	Original Issue Date: 05/21/2007

1) PURPOSE

- a) The purpose of this policy is to establish a written process to efficiently and effectively recruit and select capable, qualified applicants through a non-discriminatory process for the New Mexico State Police.

2) POLICY

- a) It is the policy of the New Mexico State Police to actively recruit, screen, and select qualified candidates for commissioned positions within the department. This process will have measures in place to safeguard the integrity of the process, as well as the privacy of the candidates.

3) APPLICABILITY

- a) All commissioned employees and applicants of the New Mexico State Police.

4) REFERENCES

- a) New Mexico Statutes 29-2-6 through 29-2-8, NMSA 1978
- b) New Mexico Statute 29-7-6, NMSA 1978
- c) 10.29.9 NMAC – Qualifications for Admission to the Academy
- d) The Cooper Institute Age and Gender Fitness Norms
- e) Police Officer Selection Test – POST Exam
- f) 1.21.2 NMAC – Retention and Disposition of Public Records
- g) CALEA Chapter 31 – Recruitment
- h) CALEA Chapter 32 – Selection.

5) DEFINITIONS

- a) **Applicant** – Any person interested in becoming an employee of the Department of Public Safety, State Police Division.
- b) **Background Investigator** – A commissioned State Police officer or designee approved by the Chief of State Police assigned to investigate an applicant’s background for entrance into the State Police Academy.



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- c) **Lead Recruiter** – A commissioned State Police officer assigned to the Training and Recruiting Bureau in charge of all field recruiters, advertising, the review of applications, and the recruiting process.
- d) **PT** – Physical training, the systematic use of exercises to promote bodily fitness and strength.
- e) **Active or Reserve Duty Time**- Regarding National Guard (State time), Active time will only be considered if it is deployed or training time.

6) OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

a) Recruitment

- i) The State Police Training and Recruiting Bureau shall maintain a recruitment plan that includes, minimally, the following:
 - (1) A statement of objectives that is updated as needed.
 - (2) A plan of action designed to meet the requirements of the recruitment plan.
 - (3) A procedure to evaluate progress in achieving the objectives defined in the recruitment plan.
 - (4) The recruitment plan shall be revised and re-issued as new objectives are identified.
- ii) The Training and Recruiting Bureau shall develop a training curriculum for department recruiters concerning department personnel matters, with an emphasis on equal employment opportunity. All employees who are assigned recruiting duties, either full or part-time, shall receive this training prior to assuming their roles as recruiters.
- iii) Recruitment efforts should be made to maintain a gender and ethnic composition for the sworn ranks in approximate proportion to the makeup of the available workforce in the agency's service community.
- iv) The Training and Recruiting Bureau shall maintain contact with applicants for all positions by providing updates after each phase of the application process; this will be done in writing. These efforts will be documented and maintained in the applicants' files.
- v) The Training and Recruiting Bureau shall advertise all entry-level job vacancies through the use of media, local governmental employment agencies, and community service organizations, as appropriate. The advertisement shall include:
 - (1) Information concerning the Agency as an equal employment opportunity organization.



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- (2) Any official application deadlines.
- (3) A description of the duties to be performed, responsibilities, skills, and education required, and other minimum requirements.

b) Lateral Recruiting Incentive Programs

- i) **Officer Pay Lateral Program:** Designed to offer a higher STEP/Pay incentive to officers who have two (2) or more years of previous New Mexico law enforcement service.
 - (1) Refer to DPS Policy *PRS: 16 NEW MEXICO STATE POLICE OFFICER PAY PLAN* for specific information on salary and benefits.
 - (2) Lateral applicants will begin receiving pay at this rate immediately upon entering the academy.
- ii) **Guaranteed Duty Location Program:** Designed to attract and keep officers in the community where they are from.
 - (1) The program starts at the beginning of the recruiting process for a specific Lateral School.
 - (2) NMSP Lateral Applicants will be informed of available duty assignments during the selection process.
 - (3) Available duty assignments will be based on several factors which may include position numbers, vacancies, and incumbent officer transfer requests. The Chief has the ultimate discretion to offer duty assignments to any given location in the state.
 - (4) The Lateral applicant will be able to choose a duty assignment/location from those offered and the applicant will know where he/she will be stationed prior to starting the academy.
 - (5) This location will be guaranteed upon successful completion of the Lateral Academy.
- iii) The Officer Pay and Guaranteed Duty Location programs are only for officers who meet the minimum requirements to apply for the NMSP Lateral School noted below.

c) Minimum Qualifications for both Recruit and Lateral Schools

- i) Applicants for appointment as a commissioned officer must meet the following minimum qualifications and evaluation factors:
 - (1) Be at least twenty-one (21) years of age at the time of graduation from the State Police Academy with no maximum age limit.
 - (2) Be a citizen of the United States of America.



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- (3) Possess a high school diploma or GED.
 - (4) Have no felony convictions, including but not limited to plea agreements, differed sentences, or prosecution dismissals. This will be a lifetime disqualifier unless the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.
 - (5) Be of good moral character.
 - (6) Have been honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces.
 - (7) If an applicant was discharged with one of the following discharge ratings – other than honorable, medical, or general, the decision to allow the applicant to apply will be at the discretion of the NMSP Chief or his designee.
- ii) Vision must be 20/30 corrected or 20/100 uncorrected, with normal depth perception and satisfactory color vision.
- (1) If an applicant does not pass the color vision test during his or her medical examination, then the applicant must pass the LEA Color Vision Accommodation Field Exam (LEA-CV).
- iii) Comply with the New Mexico State Police Anti-Drug Use Policy:
- (1) Any use of steroids within eighteen (18) months of the application deadline is disqualifying unless prescribed for use due to a documented medical condition.
 - (2) Any use of marijuana within twelve (12) months of the application deadline is disqualifying. This includes any form of marijuana or mixture of dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds, and/or flowers; resin (hashish) or sticky, wax, black liquid (hash oil) either smoked, vaped, eaten, or mixed in food or brewed as a tea. (Any form of marijuana containing THC)
 - (3) Any use of barbiturates or stimulants within twenty-four (24) months of the application deadline is disqualifying..
 - (4) Any use of cocaine, LSD, methamphetamine, mushrooms, ketamine, ecstasy, fentanyl, or heroin within five (5) years of the application deadline is disqualifying.
 - (5) Any use of PCP within five (5) Years of the application deadline is disqualifying.
 - (6) Any abuse of opiates within (24) months of application deadline, such as Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, Percocet, Roxicet, Percodan, or any pain killer containing opiates, where there is an identifiable pattern of abuse (prescribed or not) is disqualifying.



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- (7) Peyote used for religious purposes is not disqualifying.
- (8) Any use of any controlled substance while employed as a law enforcement officer or correction officer is a lifetime disqualifier.
- (9) Any use of synthetic cannabinoids such as bath salts and K2 spice within twelve (12) months of the application deadline is disqualifying.
- iv) Any sale, manufacture, or distribution of any controlled substance as an adult (18 or older) will be a lifetime disqualifier. If the crime was committed as a juvenile the following factors should be considered: The frequency of the behavior; the quantity of the drugs involved; and the type of drug.
- v) No DWI convictions within thirty-six (36) months of the application deadline.
- vi) Shall not falsify or omit any information from the application. Applications for all positions will not be rejected due to minor omissions or deficiencies that can be corrected during the application process leading up to Chief Selection. However, corrections to these omissions or deficiencies indicating the concealment of, or reluctance to disclose critical information, which would reflect poorly on the candidate, shall not be allowed.
- vii) Applicants must not possess any domestic violence convictions, including but not limited to plea agreements, differed sentences, or prosecution dismissals. This will be a lifetime disqualifier unless the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. Self-admitted domestic violence incidents not reported to, investigated by Law Enforcement, or prosecuted will be left to the discretion of the Chief or his designee.

d) Selection Process for both Recruit and Lateral Schools

- i) General
 - (1) All elements of the selection process only use job-related rating criteria or minimum qualifications.
 - (2) All elements of the selection process will be scored, evaluated, and processed in a uniform manner.
 - (3) Applicants are responsible for travel arrangements and expenses. Applicants should plan for up to 3 days per trip to Santa Fe or Albuquerque, depending on the phase of the application process.



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- (4) If an applicant is disqualified during any phase of the selection process, a letter will be sent to the applicant stating that he/she has been disqualified.
 - (5) If an applicant is disqualified or not selected during Chief Selection, the applicant's records, including background, polygraph, and medical, if applicable, will be maintained by the Training and Recruiting Bureau, pursuant to state records retention requirements.
 - (6) Any disqualified or unselected applicant may re-apply provided they have not had a lifetime disqualifier. Any person who fails the psychological exam must wait one year before re-applying.
 - (7) All selection-related materials including medical examinations and psychological examinations will be kept in a secure area, when not in use, with access restricted to authorized personnel. These materials will be maintained and discarded, pursuant to state records retention requirements (NMAC). This will ensure that all materials will be disposed of in a manner that prevents disclosure of the information within.
- ii) Interest Card
- (1) The application process begins with creating an online account (Interest Card). Applicants can begin the process by going to <https://www.joinnmsp.com> and following the link.
 - (2) A recruiter will contact each person who creates an interest card by phone, text, or e-mail.
 - (a) Interested applicants may also call the NMSP Training & Recruiting Bureau at 505-841-9226 or 1-833-667-7669.
- iii) Application
- (1) The New Mexico State Police application may be found and must be completed online at: <https://www.joinnmsp.com>
 - (2) Once the applicant completes the online application, a recruiter will contact the applicant by phone, text, or email to schedule the next phase of the application process.
 - (3) Applicants who do not meet the minimum entry qualification requirements will be notified in writing of their disqualification.
 - (4) At the time of application, candidates are informed in writing of the following:
 - (a) The elements of the selection process.
 - (b) The expected duration of the selection process.



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- (c) The agency's procedure for reapplication.
- iv) Physical assessment
 - (1) The physical fitness assessment occurs before the written test.
 - (2) Applicants must pass each portion of the physical assessment before the Chief's final selection.
 - (3) The physical assessment consists of the academy entry standards set by the NMLEA.
 - (4) See below for the 4 components of the PT assessment.

Activity	Distance /Amount	Minimum time/Reps
Upper Body Strength	1 min max # of push-ups	15 repetitions
Muscular Endurance	1 min max # of sit-ups	27 repetitions
Aerobic Power	1.5-mile run	Above 6000' – 15:54
		Below 6000' – 15:14
Anaerobic Power	300-meter run	71 seconds

- v) Written test
 - (1) The written test is an assessment of reading comprehension, grammar, and mathematics.
 - (2) Applicants shall pass a written examination (Police Officer Selection Test) at 70% or greater.
- vi) Polygraph examination
 - (1) Upon successful completion of the PT assessment and written exam, the applicant will then be notified and scheduled for a polygraph examination.
 - (2) All polygraph examinations will be conducted by personnel trained in these areas.
 - (3) Applicants will be provided with a list of areas, from which polygraph questions will be taken, before the actual examination.
 - (4) All pre-employment questionnaires are kept confidential.
 - (5) Applicants must answer the questionnaire to its fullest extent without any assistance.



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- (6) Polygraph results will be used as an investigative aid. The polygraph will not be the sole determination for disqualifying someone from the application/recruitment process.
- vii) Background investigation
- (1) Upon completion of the polygraph examination, the application will be sent for a background investigation to be conducted by a background investigator trained in gathering the required information.
 - (2) The background investigation shall include, at a minimum:
 - (a) Criminal history.
 - (b) Verification of at least six personal references.
 - (c) Verification of qualifying credentials.
- viii) Oral Interviews
- (1) Upon successful completion of the background phase, the applicant will be notified and scheduled for the oral interview phase.
 - (2) Upon successful completion of the oral interview phase, the applicant will continue to the psychological, medical, and Chief selection phases.
- ix) Psychological examination
- (1) Any person who fails the psychological exam must wait one year before re-applying.
- x) Medical examination
- (1) Applicants shall be sent to a physician of the agency's choice for the medical examination.
- xi) Chief Selection
- (1) This is the final phase of the selection process when the top applicants are selected to continue to either the NMSP Recruit School or the NMSP Lateral School.
- xii) Orientation
- (1) Once selected and before the start of the Academy, the applicant will participate in an orientation and will be provided with an orientation handbook.
- e) College Requirements**
- i) New officers must have attained sixty (60) college credit hours from an accredited institution at the time of their appointment.
 - ii) The Chief may appoint an officer upon graduation from the Academy who lacks 30 college credits, provided they must be enrolled in an accredited



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college before graduation from the Academy and shall complete the required college credits.

- (1) That officer will be required to register for classes at an accredited institution in the next available academic term or semester after the Academy graduation date.
 - (2) If the officer has not obtained 30 college credits from any other college before graduation, that officer must register at an accredited institution.
- iii) The Chief may appoint an officer upon graduation who has at least 30 college credit hours before the start of the Academy but lacks 60 college credits.
- (1) That officer will be required to register for classes at an accredited institution in the next available academic term or semester after the academy graduation date.
 - (2) The Chief may require recruits who have 30 college credits, but lack 60 college credits, to register for classes in the next academic term/semester before graduation from the academy.
 - (3) These officers must attain at least sixty (60) hours within two (2) years from the date of commission (date of appointment), or they may be terminated from the department.
 - (4) At the discretion of the Chief, an officer may be granted up to 12 additional months to achieve 60 college credits if the officer fails to achieve 60 college credits within two (2) years.
 - (a) The Chief may authorize corrective action to accompany the 12-month extension.
 - (b) The Chief may consider the following circumstances when assessing whether to grant an extension beyond the 2-year limit:
 - (i) The number of college credits achieved thus far.
 - (ii) The number of college credits remaining.
 - (iii) The officer's demonstrated effort to achieve college credits.
 - (c) If an officer is granted additional time to achieve the required hours, that officer's probationary period will be extended until the requirement is met.
 - (d) In no event will an officer be given an amount of time to exceed 3 years, from the date of commission, to achieve all required college credit hours.



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- iv) Newly certified/commissioned officers with 2 or more years of military or law enforcement service are exempt from the college credit requirement.
 - (1) Officers are exempt if they served in the U.S. Armed Forces, including Active Duty, Reserves, or National Guard for a minimum of two (2) years before the start of the Recruit or Lateral School.
 - (2) Veterans or current members of the U.S. Armed Forces must provide proof of military service.

f) NMSP Recruit School

- (1) Applicants may be required to participate in a mentorship program before the Recruit School start date once selected to prepare them for the rigors of the academy.

g) NMSP Lateral School

- i) At the time of application, the applicant must be employed, retired or currently hold a valid law enforcement certification provided by a law enforcement agency within the State of New Mexico. The applicant may be allowed to go through our lateral academy process with accreditation from another agency outside of the State of New Mexico, at the Chief's discretion.
- ii) Applicants must have a minimum of 2 years of patrol experience as a commissioned and certified officer **before the application deadline date.** Applicants must provide proof of certified Law Enforcement Service.
- iii) Applicant cannot resign pending an internal investigation to be considered for a lateral officer position. This will make the applicant ineligible to continue in the hiring process.
- iv) Any applicant pending an active internal investigation with their current department will be considered ineligible until the process of that investigation is complete by the investigating agency.
- v) Lateral applicants must disclose all prior internal affairs complaints and internal investigations during the application process. Failure to do so will not be considered a minor omission and the applicant will not be allowed to continue with the process for that application cycle.
- vi) Any lateral applicant with a pending LEA-90 form filed will be considered ineligible to apply until the outcome of that LEA-90 inquiry has been completed and findings have been submitted by the NMLEA board. Applicant must show proof that the LEA-90 inquiry is complete in writing.



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vii) FTO Program (after graduation): Lateral officers shall spend a minimum of three (3) weeks of on-the-job training with a field training officer after graduation from the Lateral School.

viii) Any previous years of patrol experience, including experience gained from a prior agency for lateral officers, will be utilized in determining the eligibility to test for specialty assignments, including but not limited to specialty teams, the Investigations Bureau, and the Governor's Security Detail.

Any lateral applicant shall complete their annual and/or biennium requirements prior to applying for the NMSP academy.

h) Probationary Period

i) All newly commissioned officers, regardless of whether they graduate from the Recruit or Lateral schools, are required to complete a two-year probationary period.

ii) A newly commissioned officer's probation may be extended by the Chief or designee.

i) Leave Accrual

i) While in either Academy, recruits or laterals will accrue compensatory time up to an amount specified by the Chief.

ii) Limitations to the amount of accrued Comp time that recruits and laterals can earn are waived.

iii) This time will be used in the event the new employee requires the use of leave due to illness or personal reasons.

j) Reinstatements of retired officers (Return to Work)

i) A retired police officer may reinstate with the New Mexico State Police if they meet the following criteria.

(1) In order to be eligible to "double dip" the applicant must have retired from PERA prior to December 31st, 2023.

(2) The applicant must be able to complete the minimum entry PT qualifications for a new recruit in the traditional academy, (Cooper Standards).

(3) If the applicant retired from a department other than the New Mexico State Police, that applicant will be required to go through a lateral



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academy and in some cases, might be required to go through the traditional academy at the Chief's discretion.

ii) Double Dipping/Benefits

(1) The reinstated retiree may choose to collect their pension and their earned paycheck for up to 36 months.

OR

(2) The reinstated retiree may choose to suspend their pension through PERA and work toward their highest paid three years to increase their retirement benefits.

(3) All PERA-related benefit adjustments or questions will be forwarded and directed to PERA for review to ensure they are applicable.

(4) All retired reinstatements must provide retirement paperwork to PERA to ensure they are eligible for the rehire program.

7) ATTACHMENTS

NONE

8) APPROVAL

APPROVED BY: _____

New Mexico State Police Chief

DATE: _____

03/06/25