

# Fredericksburg Police Department

## **SWORN POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES OPERATIONAL GUIDE**

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## 1. POLICY/PURPOSE

This manual is the written policy that describes the phases of the recruitment and selection process for all sworn Police Department applicants.

The Support Services Division Commander will maintain on file a current Police Department Applicant Process outline. No part of this manual will be revised without reviewing the impact on any Accreditation Standard, City Personnel policy, or Police Department policy without the approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.

## 2. AUTHORITY

City of Fredericksburg Employment Procedures

Accreditation Standards Chapter 31

Fredericksburg Manual of Personnel Policies and Procedures

Fredericksburg Police Department Directives

## 3. RECRUITMENT

### A. PROCEDURES

The Fredericksburg Police Department Support Services Division will conduct all recruitment and selection phases of the employment process in cooperation with the City Human Resources Department [31.1.1, 31.2.3].

Advertisement of Position Vacancies:

Based upon department needs, the Support Services Division Commander is responsible for preparation of all Position Vacancy Announcements at the direction of the Chief of Police. The announcement includes information such as:

A description of the duties, responsibilities, minimum skills and abilities required for the position, minimum education level, and other requirements [31.3.1, a].

The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer [31.3.1, c].

The official application-filing period, including starting and ending dates for accepting applications [31.3.1, d].

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The City and the Police Department advertise vacancies for most sworn and/or non-sworn positions through electronic, print, and other media sources such as [31.3.1, b]:

- Newspapers
- Radio
- Community Service Organizations (mandatory for all job postings) [31.3.2]
- Civic Association Meetings
- Other City Agency Buildings
- Job Fairs / Career Days
- Regional Colleges / Universities
- Internet [31.3.2]

The City of Fredericksburg Personal History Statement is the official application form to be completed by all applicants. Applicants will be provided with the Personal History Statement and the City employment application upon successful completion of entry-level requirements such as the written test and the LawFit assessment. City employment applications will also be accepted during any active job vacancy announcement period.

Current Part-Time and Auxiliary officers may submit a letter requesting full time employment through their chain of command to the Chief of Police in place of an application.

## **B. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Support Services Division Commander or designee will: [31.2.1, c]

1. Conduct an Annual Analysis on the recruitment plan which shall include:
  - Progress toward stated objectives [31.2.2, a]
  - Revisions to the plan, as needed [31.2.2, b]
  - Demographic data of sworn personnel [31.2.2, c]
2. Ensure that all personnel engaged in the recruitment and selection process are knowledgeable in personnel matters, including but not limited to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity issues [31.1.2].
3. Ensure that all applicable Accreditation Standards are met.
4. Ensure that all applicable City Policies are met.
5. Ensure that a statistical analysis identifying the number of applicants processed, rejected and hired is prepared for the Chief of Police at the end of a recruiting process. This analysis will contain information on sex and race demographics.

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6. Ensure appropriate steps are taken toward the goal of achieving a sworn work force that is representative of the composition of the available workforce the department serves [31.2.1].
7. The Department's recruitment objectives and plan of action for each objective are based upon strong management commitments to achieve this goal. The objectives are [31.2.1, a, b]:
  - The department will direct efforts to meet specific needs within the agency, using current information and techniques. Demographic and geographic information of the department's service area will be analyzed to better identify needs. Collaboration with similar-size agencies may be used to assist in identifying techniques that are effective.
  - The department may use appropriate personnel for recruiting in targeted areas. Minority personnel and/or personnel who are fluent in Spanish and are aware of the City's cultural environment will be utilized to conduct recruitment activities within culturally diverse communities. The department will assign appropriate personnel to represent the department when conducting career or informational meetings for targeted groups.
  - Recruiting materials will be designed to demonstrate the department's diverse work force. Women and minorities' roles within the department will be depicted in the department's recruitment literature.
8. Ensure that the Department's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan and any reporting requirements are met [31.2.3].
9. Delegate the responsibilities to properly process applicants for Police Department vacancies to appropriate staff.

## C. APPLICATION CRITERIA

The purpose of this element of the selection process is to develop a pool of candidates who meet the minimum requirements for the position of sworn police officer. The acceptance standards are identical for all applicants. DCJS Law Enforcement Officer Basic certification is an additional requirement when the department is seeking to hire certified officers. The hiring of certified officers is addressed in the "Certified Officer Hiring Process" section.

The Job Announcement for Police Officer was developed based on the Code of Virginia (§15.2-1705 & 9.1-116.01) defined minimum requirements for police officers:

1. Be a citizen of the United States;
2. Be required to undergo a background investigation including fingerprint-based criminal history records inquiries to both the CCRE and FBI;

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3. Have a high school education or have passed a high school equivalency exam approved by the Board of Education;
4. Possess a valid driver's license;
5. Undergo a physical examination, subsequent to a conditional offer of employment, under the supervision of a licensed physician;
6. Be at least 21 years of age at the time of graduation from the approved criminal justice academy (Note: This is a more stringent standard than The Code of Virginia minimum age of 18 years of age);
7. Not have been convicted of or pleaded guilty or no contest to a felony or any offense that would be a felony if committed in the Commonwealth of Virginia;
8. Not have produced a positive result on a pre-employment drug screening;
9. Not have been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a Class 1 or 2 misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or any offense that would be any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, including but not limited to petit larceny under 18.2-96, or any offense involving moral turpitude that would be a misdemeanor if committed in the Commonwealth of Virginia;
10. Not have been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to any misdemeanor sex offense in the Commonwealth of Virginia, another state, or the United States, including but not limited to sexual battery under 18.2-67.4 or consensual sexual intercourse with a minor 15 or older under clause (ii) of 18.2-371;
11. Not have been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to domestic assault under 18.2-57.2, or any offense that would be domestic assault under the laws of another state or the United States.

Once an application has been received, Support Services Division staff will maintain contact with the applicant from initial application to final employment disposition. Applicants will be informed of the status of their applications. Contact with applicants will be documented and logged [31.3.3].

Applicants will be given written notice to provide the following documents to the Support Services Division Commander or designee:

1. Birth certificate, United States Passport, or Naturalization papers;
2. Driver's license;
3. Social security card;
4. Military forms DD 214 (if applicable);
5. High school diploma or GED certificate and transcripts;
6. Certified College Transcripts and Degree (if applicable);
7. Marriage certificate(s);
8. Divorce decree(s);
9. Proof of ownership for any real estate that the applicant owns;
10. Rental agreement for any real estate that the applicant rents.

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Applicants will be notified of all elements of the selection process including the expected duration and the department's policy on re-application at the initial stages of the application process [31.4.4, a, b, c]

## 4. NON-CERTIFIED APPLICANT SELECTION PROCESS

The following are requirements for all elements of the sworn selection process for non-certified applicants:

- Use only those rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related [31.4.2] ]
- Administer, score, evaluate and interpret in a uniform manner within the classification [31.4.3].

Non-certified applicants must successfully pass the LawFit assessment prior to being permitted to submit an application for employment.

Unless an exception exists, non-certified applicants must also successfully pass the written examination prior to being permitted to submit an application for employment.

Exceptions to taking the written examination include if the applicant has a college degree, the applicant holds a current honorable status in any branch of the armed forces or if the applicant holds a current honorable discharge status from any branch of the armed forces.

### A. PROCEDURES [31.4.1]

All elements of the selection process are mandatory and use only rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related. [31.4.2]

They are scheduled in the following order to provide candidates a reasonable timetable for completion of each element of the process. The candidates must successfully complete each element before moving to the next step of the process:

<b>Step 1) Written Examination</b>	Day 1
<b>Step 2) Lawfit Assessment</b>	Day 1 after successful passing of written exam
<b>Step 3) Personal History Statement / Application</b>	Provided to applicant after successful completion step 1 & 2
<b>Step 4) Conditional offer</b>	Candidate must sign prior to polygraph
<b>Step 5) Polygraph</b>	Will only be set up and completed after step 4
<b>Step 6) Psychological test</b>	Set up after successful polygraph
<b>Step 7) Background Investigation</b>	Agency Investigator will complete this step which can take up to 60 days after step 6

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<b>Step 8) Police ride-along</b>	Must be completed prior to step 9
<b>Step 9) Final Interview</b>	Interview with senior leadership, after review of completed background
<b>Step 10) Chief's Interview</b>	Completed directly after step 9 if applicable
<b>Step 11) Medical Examination</b>	Only scheduled if successful selected by Chief of Police for position

Probationary police officers must also successfully complete the following:

- Recruit training at an approved criminal justice training academy (Code of Virginia §15.2-1706)
- The State certification examination developed and administered by DCJS [the examination may be administered by an approved criminal justice training academy (Code of Virginia §15.2-1706)]
- Fredericksburg Police Department Field Training Program

## Written Examination

This element of the process is designed to measure essential job-related skills, knowledge and abilities identified in the Job Description for Police Officer, such as the ability to understand and carry out written instructions.

This element of the process is administered by the Police Department–Recruitment Sergeant.

The test relates basic skill directly to police tasks, thereby identifying those candidates who can perform the essential functions of entry-level police work. The test is based on data gathered from a comprehensive job analysis of law enforcement agencies throughout the United States.

Applicants successfully completing this phase by achieving a minimum score of 70% in all three sections will continue in the process.

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in person prior to further testing and may re-apply during the next application process (no sooner than 1 month).

## LawFit Assessment

This element of the process is designed to measure essential job-related skills and abilities identified for Police Officers, and will measure stamina and cardiovascular fitness in the completion of various job-related physical skills.

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LawFit Assessment will consist of an obstacle course, 1 repetition of maximum weight bench press, 1-minute sit-ups, sit and reach, maximum pull-ups, maximum push-ups and 1.5-mile run.

**Obstacle Course:** The applicant must successfully complete 8 obstacles in succession with a pass/fail time limit of 1 minute and 36 seconds. Applicants must complete all events in the specified sequence or they fail the course. Applicants who fail the course may retake it one time on the same day. In case of a short-term injury, a re-test will be administered within 7 days.

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in person prior to further testing and may re-apply during the next application process (no sooner than 1 month).

## **Conditional Offer of Employment**

Applicants who have successfully completed the selection process to this point, who are not currently DCJS certified, will be given a conditional offer of employment. Certified applicants will receive a conditional offer at a later date following the guidelines of § 9.1-116.01. The applicant is required to sign the conditional offer of employment prior to being administered the polygraph examination by the Support Services Division Commander or his/her designee.

## **Polygraph**

This element of the process will assist in determining if any criminal activity exists that could preclude the candidate's selection, and to measure the candidate's honesty and integrity associated with essential job-related skills.

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be given an opportunity to explain their recorded physiological reactions to the relevant questions on the polygraph examination. The applicant's answers will be documented in the polygraph report and forwarded to the Chief of Police.

Applicants will be required to take the polygraph examination administered by Police Department or contract examiner personnel. Only personnel certified by the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation will be used to conduct the examination [31.5.4].

Candidates who have not been truthful and/or have engaged in previously undetected criminal activity that would be a felony or serious misdemeanor are unlikely to receive further consideration .

During the polygraph examination, applicants will be questioned in the following relevant areas:

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- Accuracy of information that applicants provide on written applications and related documents.
- Honesty, integrity and reliability of the applicant
- Criminal history, either previously detected or undetected
- Traffic violation history, either previously detected or undetected
- Involvement with illegal drugs
- Medical/Psychological History

Polygraph questions will be drawn from the applicant's personal history statement, which will be detailed to the applicant prior to the polygraph examination. [31.5.3] Applicants will be given the opportunity to clarify any potential problem areas.

The polygraph examination is used only as an investigative aid and is not the single determinant of employment status. Therefore, polygraph examiners may not recommend rejection of any applicant based on their interpretation of an applicant's adverse reactions. An admission during pre-test, test, or post-test interviews, together with other information, may be sufficient to support decisions relevant to employment status [31.5.5].

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in writing prior to further testing and may re-apply during a future application process (no sooner than one year).

## **Psychological Evaluation**

Prior to appointment to probationary status, applicants will undergo a psychological evaluation by a certified professional licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide such service [31.5.7].

This element of the process is designed to screen those applicants who do not meet the job-related psychological requirements for the position of Police Officer.

This element of the process is designed to measure essential job-related skills, knowledge and abilities identified in the Class Specification for Police Officer, such as the ability to make mature decisions, maintain emotional control under stress and to establish and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers and the general public.

This element of the process is developed and administered by a licensed psychologist retained by the police department. The evaluation will be conducted, scored and evaluated by the contracted psychologist. Based on the applicant's performance in this evaluation, the applicant is rated on a standardized scale consisting of "recommended", "recommended with reservations", or "not recommended". Applicants who receive the rating of "not recommended" will not be considered for employment.

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Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in writing prior to further testing and may re-apply during a future application process (no sooner than 1 year).

## **Background Investigation**

This element of the process is designed to verify the applicant's background information.

Only personnel who are trained to collect required information and perform background investigations will be utilized for this task [31.5.2].

Police Department or contract investigator personnel assigned to perform background investigations will verify qualifying credentials [31.5.1, a]. The investigator will:

- Obtain a criminal history report [31.5.1, b]
- Verify personal and professional references [31.5.1, c]
- Verify education [31.5.1, d]
- Verify employment history [31.5.1; e]
- Review relevant national or state decertification resources as available [31.5.1, f]
- Review applicants driving record
- Review of National Decertification Index (Certified applicants only)

Information gathered from the polygraph and the psychological evaluation may be used to assist in the investigation.

Designated Police Department personnel will take photographs and fingerprints. Fingerprints will be transmitted to the Central Criminal Records Exchange and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to verify the existence or lack of existence of a criminal record. Information that precludes a candidate from selection will be forwarded to the Support Services Division Commander.

Photographs will be placed in the applicant's file.

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in writing prior to further testing and may re-apply during a future application process (no sooner than 1 year).

## **Police Ride-Along**

Applicants may be required to ride with an FPD officer for a minimum of 12 hours, 6 hours of which will be at night (after 6pm) to gain a better understanding of job responsibilities and duties. EX: Applicant may ride 12p-12a (6 hours after 6pm).

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## **Final Interview**

This element of the process is designed to measure the candidate's job-related qualifications, such as work experience, background information, and understanding of the job as a police officer. Only rating criteria that are job related will be used in the review.

The Final Interview panel will be comprised of the Division Commanders or their designee and other staff appointed by the Chief of Police. The panel will review the applicant's file and a recommendation to hire or reject will be presented to the Chief of Police.

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in writing prior to further testing and may re-apply during a future application process (no sooner than 1 year).

## **Chief's Interview**

This element of the process is to allow the candidate to discuss their work experience, background information, and understanding of the job as a police officer with the Chief of Police, who will conduct the interview.

The Chief will rate the applicant as "Hire", "Eligibility List" or "Not Selected". Applicants who are rated in the "Not Selected" category will no longer be considered.

Applicants who are not successful during this phase will be notified in writing prior to further testing and may re-apply during a future application process [no sooner than 1 year].

## **Medical Examination**

This element of the process is designed to screen applicants to determine if they are able to meet the medical standards established for the position of Police Officer. Prior to a final offer of employment, sworn applicants must undergo a medical examination to certify the general health of each candidate, which is administered by the designated medical services provider [31.5.6].

The cost of this medical examination will be the responsibility of the Police Department. The cost of any additional medical testing, statements or medical records by private physicians will be the responsibility of the applicant.

Additional medical tests, previous medical records, and/or reports from private physicians may be requested prior to a rating determination. Applicants must be able to perform job related duties that are necessary for the conduct of police business and will

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not be excluded based solely on a disability. Applicants will either “Pass” or “Fail” in accordance with current medical standards [32.1.3].

Applicants must undergo a mandatory drug-screening test during the medical examination. Pursuant to Virginia code 15.2-1705 (viii), “All police officers of any locality...shall not have produced a positive result on a pre-employment drug screening, if such screening is required by the hiring law-enforcement agency or jail, where the positive result cannot be explained to the law-enforcement agency or jail administrator’s satisfaction.”

## **Eligibility List**

Successful completion of all steps in the recruitment process will place the candidate on an eligibility list. Any eligibility list resulting from this recruitment will be in effect for a minimum of three months from its release date. At the sole discretion of the Chief of Police, the eligibility list expiration date may be extended in increments of three months, for a period not to exceed one year.

## **Probationary Appointment**

This element of the process is designed to assess the probationary appointee’s ability to satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities of the position of Police Officer during and after successfully completing State required DCJS training. Probationary periods are required for all full-time positions in City Government by the City Manual of Personnel Policies and Procedures. It is designed to measure all essential job-related skills, knowledge and abilities identified in the job description for Police Officer and is administered by the probationary officer’s supervisor.

This element of the process is administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner within the classification. This is accomplished utilizing DCJS standards while in the academy and the Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP) upon assignment within the department.

Certified candidates that do not have to complete DCJS academy training will begin their probationary period of one year from the date of hire. Non-certified candidates who must attend a DCJS certified academy will start their probationary period of one year upon completion of the academy.

## **Candidates Not Selected for Employment**

All candidates not selected for positions will be informed in writing within 30 days of the decision [31.4.5].

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## B. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Support Services Division Commander will:

1. Maintain a close relationship with the City Human Resources Department on recruitment and selection of all vacancies.
2. Provide input to City Human Resources Department on specific criteria for each position to ensure that the rating criteria and minimum qualifications are job-related and non-discriminatory.
3. Ensure that all applicants for the Police Department vacancies are selected or rejected based on evenly applied, non-discriminatory and valid reasons.
4. Ensure that applicants who are rejected for appointment are notified in writing.
5. Ensure that all applicant files are securely stored and are accessed only by personnel authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee. If selection materials are disposed of, it will be in a manner that prevents disclosure of the information within [31.4.6, b].
6. All Department records shall be maintained as prescribed by the Library of Virginia; Virginia Public Records Act (Code of VA §§ 42.1-76 et. Seq.); Records Retention and Disposition Schedule and the City of Fredericksburg Public Records Management Manual (11/08). [82.1.3] [32.1.6] [31.4.6, a, c, d]
7. Ensure that all personnel responsible for processing applicants comply with all applicable Accreditation, City Personnel and Police Department policies.
8. Ensure confidentiality of the results of all medical examinations, emotional stability and psychological fitness examinations by maintaining them in a secure file. Access will be restricted to personnel authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee .
9. Ensure that all applicants successfully complete each phase of the process before proceeding to the next one.
10. Ensure that applicants are notified either orally, by mail, or e-mail of their status after each phase of the selection process.
11. Ensure that each Police Department staff member who processes applicants will receive periodic retraining to maintain professional competence.
12. Ensure compliance of all the City's selection procedures.

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## 5. CERTIFIED OFFICER HIRING PROCESS

The following are requirements for all elements of the sworn selection process for certified officer applicants:

- Use only those rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related [31.4.2]
- Administer, score, evaluate and interpret in a uniform manner, unless otherwise indicated [31.4.3].

This process will include three categories:

1. Current Fredericksburg Police Department sworn auxiliary officers
2. Former Fredericksburg Police Department sworn officers maintaining DCJS certification who left the department **less than 6 months** prior to the application
3. Other sworn officers maintaining DCJS certification, to include former Fredericksburg Police Department sworn officers who left the department **more than 6 months** prior to the application.

A Certified Officer must adhere to the following considerations, which are required by DCJS:

- A fully certified law enforcement officer may reinstate his/her LE certification by returning to law enforcement employment within 24 months and completing 40 hours of law enforcement in-service training within 120 days of hire.
- 1. Former Virginia certified law enforcement officers who have been out of such employment for more than 24 months may be eligible for a partial training waiver upon return to employment as a law enforcement officer. To be considered for this waiver, the applicant officer must have at least 5 years' continuous previous experience as a certified law enforcement officer; and/or the applicant must be out of such employment for less than 5 years. The final decision on the waiver and details of the training requirements is based upon the reason and number of years since separation from law enforcement service. This reinstatement procedure is only for former officers certified in Virginia.

Current VRS regulations allow a retired law-enforcement officer to return to work part time as a law-enforcement officer and continue to receive his pension under the Virginia Retirement System. Such person shall be required to have a break in service of at least 30 calendar days before reemployment.

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The Chief of Police reserves the right to waive any portion of the process and bring personnel in at any element of the certified applicant selection process. Any waivers or deviations from the approved hiring process must be approved by the Chief of Police.

## A. PROCEDURES

The elements of this section for hiring sworn personnel will be administered, scored, evaluated and interpreted in a uniform manner [31.4.3]. Elements of the selection process for certified officers are:

### 1. **Current Fredericksburg Police Department sworn auxiliary officers:**

- Conditional Offer (following §9.1-116.01)
- Chief's Interview

### 2. **Former Fredericksburg Police Department sworn officers** [gone less than 6 months]:

- Notice of Process
- Conditional Offer (following §9.1-116.01)
- Polygraph
- Psychological Evaluation
- Background Investigation (to include National Decertification Index review)
- Final Interview
- Chief's Interview

### 3. **Other certified officers** (including former Fredericksburg Police Department sworn officers gone more than 6 months)

- Notice of Process
- Obstacle course portion of the LawFit assessment only
- Conditional Offer (following §9.1-116.01)
- Polygraph
- Psychological Evaluation
- Background Investigation (to include National Decertification Index review)
- Final Interview
- Chief's Interview
- Medical Examination

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All elements in the certified officer hiring process are described in Section 4 - A, "Non-Certified Applicant Process" Procedures. Certified officers must successfully complete the department's Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP), if required by the Chief of Police.

## **B. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities for this section are identical to Section 4, Item B (Non-Certified Applicant Selection Process, Responsibilities) and will be administered by the Support Services Division Commander.