

Revised 11-5-01, 9-13-06, 2-7-07, 3-30-07, 10-10-07, 10-27-09, 2-15-10, 10-26-11, 9-25-12, 2-14-14, 8-9-17, 11-2-17, 6-20-18, 5/28/20

**DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**86 Dover Road  
Durham, New Hampshire 03824  
(603) 868-2324**

**POLICY # 32.1.1.a**

**SUBJECT: Police Officer Selection, Personnel Selection**

NOTE: This written directive is for the internal governance of the Durham Police Department, and as provided by RSA 516:36, is not intended and should not be interpreted to establish a higher standard of care in any civil or criminal action than would otherwise be applicable under existing law.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for the selection of qualified persons for the position of Police Officer for the Town of Durham.

Additionally, *where noted and/or applicable*, these selection procedures shall be used for the selection of non-sworn, part-time, and/or seasonal employees as well. These procedures shall not be required for use for the selection of student interns, student work study, or per diem volunteers.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Durham Police Department to have a selection process that results in the appointment of candidates that possess the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the duties of a police officer for the Town of Durham. With these criteria in mind, the following procedures have been adopted:

**PROCEDURE**

When vacancies for sworn officers are identified, the selection process ordinarily is completed within two months. The selection process may consist of the following elements. The Chief of Police may waive certain elements when hiring prior, full-time certified police officers. The application, medical examination, psychological examination and background investigation may not be waived.

1. The Great Bay Community College Police Testing Alliance Written Examination
2. Submission of Written Resume
3. Town of Durham Employment Application Submission
4. [Physical Fitness Testing](#)
5. Oral Board Examination and Written Exercise

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### **CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT**

6. Medical Examination
7. Psychological Examination
8. Polygraph Examination
9. [Extensive Background Investigation](#)

### **Authority and Responsibility**

- The Personnel and Administration Captain shall have the authority and responsibility necessary for the routine administration of the entry-level police officer and other employee selection processes.
  1. All entry level testing, interviews, background investigations, shall be coordinated through the Captain.
    - A. Initial recruit training shall be coordinated through the Captain.
    - B. Field training of sworn officers shall be coordinated through the Deputy Chief of Police.
    - C. Field training of civilian staff shall be coordinated through the Captain.
  2. All elements of the selection process shall use only those criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related, as prescribed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  3. All elements of the selection process used, including those contracted to outside vendors, shall be administered, scored, evaluated and interpreted in a uniform manner.
  4. The Captain shall ensure that the agency maintains contact with applicants from initial application to final employment disposition.

### **Pre-conditional Job Offer Components**

#### **Written Examination:**

- The Durham Police Department is an active member of the Great Bay Community College Testing Alliance. Through written agreement with the alliance, The Durham Police Department agrees to allow Great Bay Community College to co-ordinate a centralized written examination and eligibility list service for participating agencies. The intent of this alliance is to create an atmosphere conducive to the sharing of testing resources as well as the creation of a regional eligibility list. The alliance has contractual responsibility to provide the following services to participating agencies:
  1. Advertise the police examination in electronic, print, or other media at least one month prior to the test, and include in the advertisement any filing or testing deadline.

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2. Advertise all participating agencies as Equal Opportunity Employers.
3. Ensure the use of only those rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related, as prescribed by the ADA.
4. Ensure written contact with all applicants during the written testing process, to include acknowledgement of application and fee receipt, test reminder/confirmation notice and test results/notice of eligibility status within 30 days of the written examination.
5. Upon notification of their test score, candidates shall be advised of the policy regarding re-application, re-testing, and re-evaluation of candidates not appointed.
6. Candidates who are determined to be eligible based upon their written examination score shall remain on an eligibility list until such time that another written test is administered. No candidate will be chosen if their score on the written examination is less than 80%.
7. Ensure that, at the time of application to enter the testing process, the candidate is advised of:
  - a) All elements of the selection process
  - b) The expected duration of the selection process
  - c) Ensure that all materials used in the selection process are stored in a secure area when not being used and that any used materials are disposed of in a manner that prevents disclosure of the information within.
8. Ensure distribution of an eligibility list by the test administrator to all participating agencies, as well as the maintenance of a central data bank of applicant information that may be updated by applicants as the need arises due to change of address, etc.
9. Candidates determined to be ineligible on the basis of written test score shall not be considered. Candidates selected for additional testing, that subsequently are deemed ineligible shall be informed in writing as to the reasons for ineligibility. These letters will be sent individually and shall be prepared by the Captain.
10. Ensure that incomplete applications are not rejected due to omissions or deficiencies that can be corrected prior to the testing process.
11. Candidates that request applications from the Durham Police Department shall be provided with an application to enter the alliance testing process, as well as an information flyer from the Durham Police Department that provides a description of

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the duties, responsibilities, requisite skills, educational level and other minimum qualifications or requirements.

12. Any/all written examinations used shall meet criteria of job relatedness, and all elements shall be administered, scored, evaluated and interpreted in a uniform manner.

### **Waivers for Certified Officers**

- It is the specific and limited intent of this waiver to expand the pool of candidates for any vacancies within the Durham Police Department. Certified applicants that have been granted a waiver shall be required to complete all elements of the hiring process unless they are granted a waiver by the Chief of Police. All mandatory elements of the selection process will be adhered to as identified in this policy.
- The written examination shall be waived for those applicants that are certified by New Hampshire Police Standards and Training (NHPSTC) or an equivalent out of state academy whose certification is recognized by NHPSTC as police officers.
- Those applicants wishing to have the written test waived must submit a resume and Town of Durham Application and a transcript that shows the candidates graduating academic score equal to or greater than 80%.
  - a) Candidates who score in the top ten percent on the written examination will generally be required to participate in the self-selection exercise.
    - 1) Candidates will be required to submit their prepared resume and a Town of Durham Employment Application prior to be invited to participate in the oral interview process. Candidates that do not respond will no longer be considered for employment.
      - ❖ This process is intended to separate serious candidates from those that are not interested in employment with the department. Written submissions are not “scored”, however, each letter; resume and town application is carefully reviewed and may be rejected for being incomplete, or prepared with poor grammar, spelling or punctuation.
  - b) Additional candidates may be invited to participate in the process dependent on the hiring needs of the department, based solely on their placement on the Great Bay Police Testing Alliance eligibility list or their certification as Police Officers in the State of New Hampshire.

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### **Resume and Town of Durham Application**

- When candidates have been identified for further testing, they shall be notified by mail that for further consideration they will be required to submit a complete letter of interest, professional resume and Town of Durham Employment Application by a date deadline set at the time of need. As part of “self-selection”, candidates must seek out and acquire the Town of Durham Employment Application; the Durham Police Department will only send applications to those candidates requesting a copy.
- Those candidates that submit a letter of interest, a resume, and Town of Durham Employment Application by the deadline date will be scheduled for a Physical Fitness Test. Any resume and application not received by the deadline shall not be considered until the list of applicants that submitted by the deadline has been exhausted.

### **Physical Fitness Assessment**

- Those candidates who have met the minimum criteria for written testing (or waiver), and have submitted the requisite letter, resume and town application shall be required to participate in the physical fitness assessment process consistent with the procedures used for the exit level fitness examination used by NHPSTC for the recruit academy. Additionally, each candidate must demonstrate that they can pull the trigger of the Department issued firearm 12 times and manipulate the slide to the lock back position.
  1. Specially trained personnel shall conduct fitness assessments, and the results of the assessment shall become a part of the applicant file. In cases when the candidate is hired as a probationary employee, the fitness assessment shall be transferred to the employee's medical file.

### **Positive Identification @ Fitness Testing Required**

- Every candidate must be positively identified BEFORE they enter the PT testing area and before they are given paperwork;
- The ID must be compared to the invited list of candidates (Letter, resume, and application verified against ID);
- The candidates' ID must be compared to the candidates' PT paperwork at every event;
- Before competing in any of the four PT events, the paperwork MUST BE CHECKED to ensure that they have successfully completed the step test, blood pressure, etc.

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### **Oral Board Interview:**

- Candidates that successfully complete the physical fitness assessment will be invited to participate in the Oral Board Interview process.
- The Captain shall be responsible to schedule an oral board of examiners that consists of personnel knowledgeable in oral board procedure.
  1. The Board shall generally consist of a Command Level Officer, sergeant, police officer, and two citizens from the community.
  2. Prior to the interview of candidates, the Captain shall instruct oral board members in AA/EEO and ADA issues as they are applied to the oral board process.
  3. Candidates will be selected for additional testing based upon their placement within the pool of qualified candidates.
    - a) The entry-level oral board examination will be conducted using valid and job related rating criteria.
  4. Oral board examination questions and rating scales shall be developed through the use of job task analysis. Questions shall be administered in a uniform manner, and standardized evaluation guidelines shall be used at all times during the process to ensure consistency of rater evaluations. Evaluations shall be scored, evaluated and interpreted in a uniform manner.
  5. Candidates shall be advised in writing of their eligibility status following the oral board examination. It is ok to call the candidate and let them know their eligibility status as long as the notification is noted in written form.
  6. Score sheets used by Board members shall become part of the candidates applicant file.

### **Written Exercise**

NOTE: The written exercise has been added to the Police Officer Selection Process effective April 1, 2007. This addition was made based on the findings of the 2006 DPD JTA; incumbent officers reported that nearly all written tasks fell within the Low-Risk/High-Frequency or High-Risk/High-Frequency categories.

- Immediately preceding or following the administration of the oral board, all candidates will be required to complete a [three-paragraph hand written essay](#) in response to the question, “Please describe why you want to become a police officer.”

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- The written essay will be assessed by the Captain. Based on presentation (appearance of the document), spelling, punctuation, grammar and neatness, the assessors will award the work 1-100 points.
  1. Every written exercise submitted will be worth 100 points *before* it is scored.
  2. At the discretion of the Captain, the essay will be devalued by at least one point for each error made by the candidate.
  3. The Captain will submit a raw score for the essay.
  4. Scores less than 80% shall be considered a failing grade.

### **Chief's Interview**

The Chief of Police, or his or her administrative designee(s), may conduct a Chief's interview with any of the candidates determined by the oral board to be eligible for hire.

### **Conditional Offer of Probationary Employment**

- At the discretion of the Chief of Police, candidates that have successfully completed all pre-conditional offers of employment phases of the selection process may be extended a [conditional offer of probationary employment](#).
  1. The conditional offer of probationary employment shall set forth specific applicant requirements that must be met by the candidate prior to employment as a probationary police officer.
  2. Candidates that successfully complete the requirements set forth in the conditional offer shall be extended a final offer of probationary employment.
  3. The conditional offer of probationary employment shall be consistent with ADA regulations. Any candidate who is to be considered for advanced selection procedures must sign the conditional offer form and agree to comply with all of the conditions contained therein.

### **Post-Conditional Offer of Probationary Employment**

**Note:** For the purpose of expediency, once a candidate has accepted a conditional offer of employment, they are given a Background Investigation Packet and Background Waiver to be completed and submitted within days of accepting the Conditional Offer.

The remaining phases of the process are NOT necessarily completed in the order shown, the availability of qualified medical, psychological and polygraph personnel often dictates the order in which these examinations are administered; except that the polygraph examination shall always be the LAST test administered.

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### **Medical Examinations:**

- Candidates that have accepted a conditional offer of probationary employment shall be required to submit to a comprehensive medical examination in a format prescribed by NHPSTC.
  1. The medical examination is designed to reveal any medical problems that might inhibit or completely bar the candidate's ability to perform any of the essential functions of the job of police officer.
    - a) A component of the medical exam shall be the completion of a medical background investigation questionnaire.
    - b) Entry-level drug screening may be conducted as part of the medical examination. Applicants shall be notified of the drug testing at the time of the Conditional Offer of Probationary Employment.
  2. The examining physician shall be provided with a NHPSTC medical examination form as specified in council rule 301.04.
  3. The written results of this exam shall be maintained as part of the candidate's permanent application file. If the candidate is hired, then it shall become part of the employee's permanent medical records file.
  4. In cases when the medical exam reveals a condition that, in the opinion of the Durham Police Department, could inhibit or bar the applicant's ability to perform any of the essential functions of the job of police officer, then the Chief of Police or the Captain may authorize a further investigation or exam of the condition.

### **Psychological Evaluation**

- Prior to appointment as a probationary officer, those candidates who have signed and agreed to comply with the terms of the conditional offer of probationary employment shall have their psychological and emotional fitness evaluated by qualified professionals, using valid and job-related criteria.
  1. Psychological examinations used to measure the candidates' mental or emotional fitness for duty shall be administered at the discretion of the qualified examiner.
- Only qualified professionals (psychologists or psychiatrists) shall be used to conduct psychological evaluations and make judgements regarding the emotional and psychological suitability of the candidate.



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- A report containing the analysis of all phases of the psychological assessment shall be maintained as part of the candidate's applicant file. In cases when the candidate is hired, the report shall be maintained as part of the employee's medical file.

### **Employment Background Investigation:**

- A [background investigation](#) of each candidate shall be conducted after a conditional offer of probationary employment has been made.
  1. Complete and thorough background investigations shall be conducted as directed by the Chief of Police or the Captain. A Durham Police Department Background Packet will be completed by the Captain and Detective Sergeant when available on all candidates that are being considered for employment and have signed a Conditional Offer of Employment.
  2. In 2017, the Durham Police Department contracted the services of “The Larmonie Group, LLC” to conduct all background investigations on prospective employee’s. The Captain will act as the point of contact with the representative from The Larmonie Group during the entire background process.
  3. The background investigation shall be conducted according to the guidelines contained in NHPSTC Rule Pol. 301.20 and the NHPSTC Background Investigation Manual, and shall include at a minimum:
    - a) Verification of the candidates qualifying credentials, to include educational achievements, transcripts from schools attended within the past ten years, military achievements, prior employment and residency records, as well as documentation of birth records, citizenship, credit records, etc.
    - b) Criminal Records checks in all cities of residence, employment and education.
    - c) Computer inquiries of motor vehicle records and licensing records in all states of residency.
    - d) NCIC checks under all known identities.
    - e) FBI fingerprint card check.
    - f) Triple I check through the SPOTS network.
  4. Verification of at least three personal references of the candidate, as well as two investigator-developed reference checks. These may include:
    - a) Inquiries made to past and present neighbors, spouses and landlords.

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- b) Acquaintances, character references, and members of fraternal and social organization to which the candidate belongs or has belonged.
  - c) Any other sources of information which the above contacts show to be important.
5. An in depth interview is conducted prior to the polygraph.
- a) This interview serves to clarify information uncovered in the background investigation, and may be one of several conducted during the investigation process.
  - b) The American with Disabilities Act prohibits pre-conditional offer inquiries into the following areas:
    - 1) The amount of sick time used at a previous place of employment.
    - 2) Any workman's compensation claims placed at a previous place of employment.
    - 3) Any addictions that the candidate may have had in the past.
    - 4) Any past or present disabilities.
    - 5) Any other inquiry that is likely to illicit information concerning any of the above.
    - 6) Information that is provided *without inquiry* may become part of the final report.
6. In those cases when the candidate is hired by the department, the background investigation shall become a permanent record and shall be maintained as part of the employee file for at least five years after the employee leaves the department.
- a) In all other cases, the background investigation shall be maintained as part of the candidate's identification/testing record. Background investigations of candidates not selected for employment shall be maintained for a period of at least one year.

### **Polygraph Examination**

- Once a candidate has been given a conditional offer of employment, and they have been forwarded to the polygraph examination phase of the hiring process, they shall be informed of a list of areas from which polygraph questions will be drawn before the polygraph examination begins. Questions will be asked about the following areas, at a minimum:

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- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Candidates initial application | 8. Military                     |
| 2. Physical and Mental health     | 9. Driving Record               |
| 3. Previous Employment            | 10. Marital status              |
| 4. Security clearance             | 11. Sexual activity             |
| 5. Alcohol                        | 12. Credit and Financial status |
| 6. Drugs                          | 13. Criminal record             |
| 7. Gambling                       | 14. The job of a police officer |

- Based upon the hiring needs of the department, those candidates who have satisfactorily completed the written and oral components of the process, and who have been subjected to a background investigation with acceptable results will, at the direction of the Chief of Police or the Captain, be scheduled for a polygraph examination.
- Only a professionally trained polygraph examiner holding credentials from a recognized polygraph training program shall conduct the administration and evaluation of polygraph examinations.
- The results of the polygraph examination shall be used as an investigative tool only, and may not be used as the single determinant of whether or not to hire a candidate.
  1. In many respects, the polygraph is an extension of the background investigation, and the examiner and background investigator must work closely together during this process. The sharing of information is critical, as this process serves to confirm the applicant information received through the background investigation as well as the oral interview process.
- The polygraph examiner shall prepare an evaluative report, and submit the report and polygraph charts to the Chief of Police.

### **Final Candidate Selection Procedures**

- If, in the opinion of the Chief of Police, the candidate is unable to successfully meet the requirements of the conditional offer of employment, then the offer shall be immediately withdrawn.
- If, in the opinion of the Chief of Police, the candidate has successfully completed all of the requirements of the conditional offer of employment then an offer of probationary employment shall be made.
  1. Additionally, acceptance of this offer shall subject the employee to the terms and conditions of employment set forth at that time.

## Probation as Part of the Selection Process

- One of the most important components of the selection process is the probationary period of employment, during which the candidates training and work performance may be evaluated and a decision regarding permanent status reached. The Durham Police Department requires a one-year probationary period for all officers following the completion of entry-level classroom training. (32.2.10)
  1. Any person with less than one year of continuous employment or who has not achieved certification by NHPSTC, which qualifies him/her to be a full-time police officer, shall be considered probationary employees.
  2. Full-time certified officers hired from another agency shall be on probationary status for a period of one year from the date of hire. Officers that have attended the police academy shall be on probationary status for one year after the date of graduation. Officer hired without academy experience shall be considered probationary status employees and that status shall be extended until an opportunity has been afforded the probationer to acquire said certification from NHPSTC as a result of the successful completion of the NHPSTC Academy.
  3. If determined to be necessary by the Chief of Police, the probationary period may be extended by one additional four-month period.

## Maintenance of Selection Records

### Candidates not selected for employment:

- All records and information regarding candidates who have not been selected for employment shall be maintained as follows:

Effective January 1, 2010, all records of candidates for employment, including the written test eligibility list provided by the Great Bay Community College Police Testing Alliance, shall be maintained by the Personnel and Administration Captain for a period of the calendar year during which the documents were received by the Durham Police Department ***plus three years***, at which time they may be destroyed.

- Candidates that have not been selected for employment shall be notified in writing or in person within one business week of final selection. The Administrative Captain may choose to call the candidate immediately after the process and notify them. The candidate shall be informed that they may re-apply, may be re-tested, and/or re-evaluated for future openings if the reason for non-selection did not include an unacceptable background, false or misleading statements, or failure to meet NHPSTC mandates other than fitness testing.

### **Candidates selected for employment**

- Records of those applicants selected for employment shall be maintained for the length of their employment or termination plus 50 years.

### **Additional Conditions**

- All selection procedures and records maintenance shall be consistent with NHPSTC rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The Great Bay Community College Testing Alliance Eligibility List is valid until the next Great Bay Test is administered. If the Durham Police Department has unplanned vacancies between testing periods, the eligibility list will be considered. The top ten scoring applicants may be notified of the Durham Police Department vacancy and the Selection process will continue as described above. If the names chosen are exhausted, the next ten names will be reviewed. At no time will any name be selected if the written test score is less than 80%.
- Though the Durham Police Department will select persons with a minimum score of 80% that hold a high school diploma or GED, preference will be given to high scores, college/university degrees, and persons with exemplary military service.

### **Security of Selection Materials**

- Oral board and written exercise questions shall be maintained as a password protected file in the Captains office. Polygraph exam questions will be maintained by the vendor. Psychological examination questionnaires will be maintained by the vendor. Medical examination questionnaires will be retrieved from NHPSTC.

### **Medical Examination Records**

All medical records will be kept in a secured area. Access will be restricted to those persons legally entitled to review these records. Medical Records are currently secured in the Captains office in a locked file cabinet. Personnel may only access these records with the permission of the Chief or his/her designee.

### **Psychological Fitness Records**

All psychological fitness records will be kept in a secured area. Access will be restricted to those persons legally entitled to review these records. Psychological fitness records are currently secured in the Captains office in a locked file cabinet. Personnel may only access these records with the permission of the Chief or his/her designee.