



ACTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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| DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Administration | | |
| POLICY & PROCEDURE # 4.08 | DATE OF ISSUE: 1/30/2024 | EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/9/2024 |
| SUBJECT: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES | ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief James Cogan | |
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I. PURPOSE

- A. All individuals will be given equal opportunity for employment, regardless of race, sex, creed, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, genetic information, disability, physical impairment, or military service in an effort to ensure that the gender, ethnic and racial composition of the Acton Police Department is reflective of the composition of the community. The Town of Acton is an Equal Opportunity Employer. **[31.2.1]**
- B. The selection criteria and qualifying credentials for a position as a full-time police officer, part-time police officer, or non-sworn personnel are at a minimum: a high school diploma or equivalency, an active driver's license in the state of residency, and a legal resident of the United States. **[16.3.2] [32.2.1(10A)]**

II. RECRUITMENT OF PERSONNEL

- A. The Department is committed to making area residents aware of the desirability of a law enforcement career in the Department.
- B. Recruitment activities should be conducted on an on-going basis but are required when an opening occurs.
 - 1. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall have authority and responsibility for conducting and managing the day-to-day recruitment operations and activities of the Department. He/she shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. Keep and maintain a file on all relevant recruiting and selection materials provided by the Department. He/she shall also ensure these materials are disseminated throughout the community;

- b. Contact community organizations through written or verbal communication to encourage them to actively seek qualified applicants to apply for the position.
- c. Ensure that individuals assigned to recruitment activities are knowledgeable in personnel matters, Department operations, career opportunities, and Equal Employment Opportunity issues as they affect the management and operations of the Department.
- d. Advertisement in the Criminal Justice Information System and other local media sources seeking qualified applicants for open or future positions.

III. SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

- A. The Department shall conduct a series of screening activities to determine the qualifications and eligibility of those candidates who are willing to accept an appointment. The selection criteria are the same for all candidates, (both full-time and part-time police officers and non-sworn personnel). **[32.1.1]**
 - 1. The Special Services Division shall be responsible for coordinating all entry-level background investigations.
 - 2. All elements of the selection process shall use only those rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job-related.
 - 3. All candidates shall be notified in writing of the total content and procedures involved at each stage of the screening process. This notification shall include the expected duration, not to exceed sixty (60) calendar days, of the selection process. This notification shall also include the process for reapplication, retesting, and reevaluation, if any, of candidates rejected. **[32.1.2(B)(C)]**

IV. INITIAL SELECTION CRITERIA

- A. The Department shall conduct the screening process under the direction of the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.

The Sequence of Events in the Selection Process: **[32.1.1]**

- 1. **Resume and Cover Letter Screening:** An initial review of the Resume and Cover Letter shall be utilized as the first (1) step before a candidate moves on to step two (2).
- 2. **Acton Police Department Entrance Exam (Sworn Personnel Only):**
 - a. Written Exam

- b. Department Physical Ability Test (separate from the Massachusetts State PAT)
- 3. **Oral Board Interview:** Those candidates successfully completing and passing the resume and cover letter screening shall be invited to participate in the next phase of the selection process:
 - a. The Oral Board Interview. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for scheduling an oral board of examiners that consists of personnel knowledgeable in oral board procedure.
 - b. The oral board shall generally consist of, but is not limited to, the following individuals:
 - 1) Chief of Police
 - 2) Deputy Chief
 - 3) Human Resources Department Personnel
 - 4) Department Personnel (Sworn and non-sworn)
 - 5) Other law enforcement professionals
 - c. Each candidate shall be asked the same set of predetermined questions, and responses shall be scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.
- 4. **Conditional Offer of Employment:** Candidates who are considered for advanced selection procedures must sign a conditional offer of employment agreeing to undergo a background check, medical, physical, and psychological evaluation. Psychological evaluations pertain only to Sworn Personnel and Dispatch positions within the Department. **[32.2.3] [32.2.4]**
- 5. **Background Check (Sworn Personnel):** Specified members of the Special Services Division shall perform a background check of each candidate per MPTC/POST requirements, and upon completion of the background investigation a Background Summary Report and packet shall be provided to the Special Services Division Commander. This background investigation and packet shall consist of: **[32.2.1(7A)]**
 - a. Verification of the candidate's qualifying credentials and the minimum entrance requirements listed on the Town of Acton's job posting for each position.
 - b. Documentation to show that the candidate's qualifying credentials have been verified.
 - c. Criminal history or records.

- d. Verification of at least three (3) personal and professional references.
These may include:
 - 1) Inquiries made to past and present neighbors, spouses, and landlords.
 - 2) Acquaintances, character references, and members of fraternal and social organizations to which the applicant belongs or has belonged.
 - 3) Any other sources of information, which the above contacts show to be important.
- e. Documentation to show the review of educational requirements for the position.
- f. Verification and documentation of the candidate's employment history.
[32.2.1(8A)]
- g. Documentation to show that there has been a check of national or state decertification databases.
- h. Computer inquiries of motor vehicle records and licensing records in all states of residence or employment.
- i. Home visit by the investigator.

6. **POST Commission Law Enforcement Certification Standards:**

Applicants must meet the following standards prior to considering a sworn position **[32.2.5]:**

- a. Applicant is at least 21 years of age
- b. Successfully completed high school or equivalent
- c. Successfully completed an MPTC-approved basic training program
- d. Successfully completed both a physical and psychological fitness evaluation approved by POST
- e. Completed a national and state background check
- f. Passed a POST-approved Law Enforcement Officer examination
- g. Currently possesses a first aid and CPR certificate or equivalent
- h. Completion of POST oral interview
- i. Must be of good moral character and fit for employment within Law Enforcement

- 1) POST will not certify or recertify an individual who:

- a) Has been convicted of a felony
- b) Is listed in any national or state decertification databases

7. **Background Check (Non-Sworn Personnel):** Specified members of the Special Services Division shall perform a background check of each candidate, and upon completion of the background investigation a Background Summary Report and packet shall be provided to the Special Services Division Commander. This background investigation and packet shall consist of the following:
- a. Verification of the candidate's qualifying credentials and the minimum entrance requirements listed on the Town of Acton's job posting for each position. **[32.2.1(10A)]**
 - b. Documentation to show that the candidate's qualifying credentials have been verified. **[32.2.1(10B)]**
 - c. Criminal history or records. **[32.2.1(10C)]**
 - d. Verification of at least three (3) personal and professional references. These may include: **[32.2.1(10D)]**
 - Inquiries made to past and present neighbors, spouses, and landlords.
 - Acquaintances, character references, and members of fraternal and social organizations to which the applicant belongs or has belonged.
 - Any other sources of information, which the above contacts show to be important.
 - e. Documentation to show the review of educational requirements for the position. **[32.2.1(10E)]**
 - f. Verification and documentation of the candidate's employment history. **[32.2.1(10F)]**
 - g. Computer inquiries of motor vehicle records and licensing records in all states of residence or employment.
 - h. A home visit may be conducted by the investigator if applicable.

V. FINAL SELECTION CRITERIA

- A. At the discretion of the Chief of Police, candidates who have successfully completed all pre-conditional phases of the selection process may be considered for final selection procedures.

1. Candidates determined to be ineligible for appointment shall be notified in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of the decision.
- B. **Medical Examination:** 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 position, sworn or non-sworn.
1. The examination shall be consistent with those standards established by the Massachusetts Division of Human Resources and the Municipal Police Training Committee.
 2. Entry-level drug screening shall be conducted as part of the medical examination. Applicants shall be notified of the drug testing prior to being selected for advanced selection.
- C. **Physical Ability Test:** Those candidates, who have signed the conditional offer of probationary employment and have passed the medical examination, shall be required to participate in a Physical Ability Test (PAT) as determined by the Massachusetts Human Resources Division. This test does not apply to those candidates who have graduated from a police academy approved by the MPTC.
- D. **Psychological Evaluation:** Prior to employment, 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. Only qualified professionals (psychologists or psychiatrists), shall be used to conduct psychological evaluations and make judgments regarding the emotional and psychological suitability of the candidate. Psychological evaluations pertain only to Sworn Personnel and Dispatch positions within the Department.
- E. **Hiring:** Upon successful completion of the final selection criteria, the candidate will be notified of their official hiring.

VI. BASIC TRAINING FOR POLICE OFFICERS (POLICE ACADEMY)

- A. In order to receive an appointment as a probationary, full-time police officer, a candidate must successfully complete the Municipal Police Training Committee, Basic Training for Police Officers Program. Until graduating from the police academy the candidate shall be considered a Student Officer (M.G.L. Ch. 41 s. 96B).
1. The requirement of police academy attendance can be waived for candidates who have previously completed the Municipal Training Committee or an equivalent training program approved for acceptance by the M.P.T.C.

- B. In order to receive an appointment as a probationary, part-time police officer, a candidate must successfully complete the Municipal Police Training Committee, Basic Training for Reserve-Intermittent Police Officers Program. Until graduating from the Reserve-Intermittent Police Academy the candidate shall be considered a Student Officer (M.G.L. Ch. 41 s. 96B). **[16.3.3]**
- 1. Part-time Police Officers shall attend and successfully complete in-service training equivalent to that statutorily required for full-time officers performing like duties. **[16.3.5]**

VII. PROBATION AS PART OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

- A. One of the most important components of the selection process is the probationary period of employment, during which the candidate's training and work performance will be evaluated, and a decision regarding permanent status reached.
- 1. Academy-trained sworn candidates' probationary period shall consist of a period of one (1) year following the applicant's appointment by the Town Manager. **[32.2.6]**
- 2. Non-academy-trained candidates' probationary period shall consist of a period of one (1) year upon successful completion of a Municipal Police Training Committee Academy.
- 3. Non-sworn personnel probationary periods shall be for a period of six (6) months upon appointment by the Town Manager.

VIII. RECORDS MAINTENANCE

- A. The Chief of Police shall be responsible for ensuring that all selection materials are stored in a secured area when not being used **[32.1.4]**
- 1. Records of individuals hired will be retained permanently in their Personnel Files.
- 2. Records on candidates, sworn and non-sworn, not selected for appointment shall be retained and secured for a period of at least three (3) years, in accordance with the state's record retention schedule or until all rights of appeal have been exhausted. The selection materials are to be disposed of in a manner that prevents disclosure by shredding. **[32.1.4]**
- 3. Access to records on individuals hired and candidates not selected for appointment shall be limited to the Town Administrator, the Chief of Police and the Deputy Chief. Other individuals involved in the selection process shall have limited access on an as-needed basis. All results of medical examinations

and emotional stability/psychological fitness examinations are strictly confidential and will be maintained according to the Massachusetts State Record Retention Manual.

IX. PROMOTIONAL PROCESS FOR THE RANKS OF SERGEANT AND LIEUTENANT [34.1.3(1)]

The promotional process is initiated when the Chief of Police informs the Town Manager, that either a vacancy or a potential vacancy for a command position exists. **[34.1.2]**

Promotional exams will be given at a minimum, every two years from the certification date of the prior exam. In the event the Promotional list becomes exhausted the Chief of Police may call for an exam before the expiration of the two (2) years in order to maintain the efficient operation of the department. **[34.1.5 (1)(D)]**

A. Schedule a Promotional Process: A promotional process will adhere to: **[34.1.1]**

- 1. Notice of Process:** According to the respective Collective Bargaining Agreements, the Chief of Police will deliver public notices to the Acton Police Department regarding any upcoming promotional opportunities. The notice shall include:
 - a. The title of the vacant position;
 - b. The date, time, and location of the examination;
 - c. A description of the duties of the position;
 - d. Where to go to inquire about the salary of the position;
 - e. The eligibility requirements; and
 - f. A reading list of resource material upon which the test will be based.
- 2. Notices Will be Posted:** Notices of upcoming promotional processes will be posted in locations throughout the PSF. The Department shall be responsible for attempting to notify all eligible officers who may be on extended absence due to sick or injured leave, vacation, or other reasons. Officers are advised to fully acquaint themselves with the requirements of an examination as stated on the public notice as it includes information training and experience materials which must accompany the exam for grading purposes. **[34.1.4]**
- 3. Eligibility:** In order to be eligible to participate in the process for the position of Sergeant, a Police Officer must have at least thirty-six (36) months experience as a patrol officer with the Acton Police Department after graduating from the Police Academy. In order to be eligible to participate in the process for a position of Lieutenant or above, an officer must have at least

thirty-six (36) months of experience as a Sergeant with the Acton Police Department. [34.1.3 (4); 34.1.5(C)]

4. **Written Examination:** Each person who takes the test must score a minimum of 70% on the written portion to become eligible for advancement in the promotional process. Officers who fail to attain the 70% will be notified of their failure by the Chief of Police. For those who attain the minimum 70% on the written examination, their final grade will be determined as follows: The written grade is weighted as seventy percent (70%) of the final grade. [34.1.3(5A); 34.1.5(A)]
5. **Oral Interviews:** The oral interview is weighted as thirty (30%) percent of the final grade. The Chief of Police will establish a standard list of questions to be asked during the oral interview. The rating scale for the questions is to be uniform. There will be a standardized form to record the interview results. [34.1.3 (7A); 34.1.5(A)]
6. **Assessment Center:** The Chief of Police may at his discretion utilize an assessment center. [34.1.3(6A)]
7. **Review and Appeal:** Candidates will be allowed to review and appeal all scores and evaluations related to their performance. The administrative review and appeal process may be conducted from within and outside the department. [34.1.3 (8)]
8. **Re-application procedures:** Candidates not selected for promotion may be permitted to re-apply for the position within a time period established by the Chief of Police. [34.1.3 (9)]
9. **Lateral Entry:** The department does not permit lateral entry for promotional vacancies. [34.1.3(10)]
10. **Security of Materials:** All promotional materials will be maintained and secured with the Human Resource Department at Town Hall. [34.1.3 (11)]
11. **Selection:** The Chief of Police shall make a recommendation to the Appointing Authority for promotion from the list of eligible candidates based on the following criteria [34.1.5 (1A)(B)]
 - a. Job-related performance;
 - b. Performance Evaluation in present position (including contributions to the department);
 - c. Score on promotional exam;
 - d. Sick leave record;
 - e. Formal education;
 - f. Training and education through career development;

- g. Disciplinary record;
- h. Philosophical agreement with Town and Department vision and goals and police work;
- i. Work ethic and initiative;
- j. Recommendation of the oral board;
- k. Assessment center score (if utilized in the selection process)

The Appointing Authority shall determine the final selection of a candidate for promotion. **[34.1.5 (E)]**

- B. Promotional Probationary Period:** All newly promoted sworn personnel probationary periods shall consist of at least six (6) months following the officer's promotion by the appointing authority. Officers on probation shall be evaluated periodically. Unsatisfactory performance should be identified and corrected through counseling, retraining, or other suitable actions. The Chief of Police has the authority to demote officers before the end of their probationary period who fail to meet the standards of the department. **[32.2.6] [34.1.6]**
- C. Temporary Positions:** The Chief of Police may, as the need arises, offer vacant temporary assignments/shifts to qualified personnel. This includes acting and provisional positions (and includes filling vacancies for individuals out on leave). The duration of the assignment is determined on a case-by-case basis. The criteria for the selection of personnel, including experience, longevity, performance history attendance record, and the description of the selection procedures will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police. **[16.2.3]**
- D. Specialized Assignments:** The Chief of Police may, as the need arises, create and/or fill a specialized assignment within the Department. The Chief or his/her designee will notify all officers in writing (e-mail/posting) in regard to the open position and requirements. Officers will submit their interest in the position by email and will be subject to an interview. The Chief will then review each officer's qualifications and eligibility, to include experience, longevity, performance history and attendance record, to determine the appropriate selection. **[16.2.2] [44.2.4(5D)]**

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES INFORMATION

Manual I, Section III.