

# **WHITEHALL DIVISION OF POLICE HIRING STANDARDS For Police Officers**

CURRENT REVISION DATE: **March 2, 2022**

## **Policy**

The general public has a higher level of expectation from persons who are employed as Police Officers than it has for persons who are employed in most other public or private sector occupations. For this reason, a Police Officer candidate must demonstrate a verifiable, higher standard in such areas as personal character, work ethics and ability than would be required for most other employment positions.

The Police Officer appointment standards are generally established as qualifying/disqualifying criteria, and are applied to all Police Officer applicants in a fair and equitable manner.

Simply stated, successful candidates for the position of Police Officer must meet the standards set forth by the Civil Service Commission as well as the strict standards designated herein by the Whitehall Division of Police.

## **I. Job Description**

Under the general supervision of a Supervisor or Officer-in-charge, a Police Officer usually patrols a designated area to enforce State Laws and City Ordinances, answers calls for service, takes action as necessary to prevent crime and/or to apprehend criminals, maintains public safety, assists citizens in a wide range of emergency and non-emergency situations, and performs other related duties, tasks and assignments as required and directed by a Superior Officer.

The separate document entitled “Job Description” specifically lists some of the Illustrations of Duties, some of the Required Skills, Abilities and Knowledge, and some of the Additional Requisites for Police Officers. Those elements in the Job Description document are also a part of these Hiring Standards and are required of a Police Officer. Many of the Job Description elements aren’t considered in the selection process, but come into play during provisional-appointment training and coaching, and during the probationary term. The required Job Description elements are part of the Hiring Standards in that these elements must be met or satisfied before a permanent appointment is granted. Please refer to the Police Officer Job Description document.

## **II. Selection Process**

It may take several months to complete the selection process from the time an applicant applies for the position to the offer of employment. The lengthy period of time is needed to thoroughly assess candidate suitability for the position of Police Officer. The following steps are used to help the Whitehall Division of Police make its final decision:

A. *FORMAL APPLICATION* – A formal application must be submitted through the National Testing Network (NTN) for full-time police officer. The application link can be found on the City of Whitehall website, under the Division of Police tab, by clicking “Careers in Law Enforcement.” The Position of Auxiliary Officer may apply at the City of Whitehall “Job Openings” section of the website.

B. *WRITTEN EXAMINATION* - Qualifying applicants will be required to take the National Testing Network exam and select Whitehall, Ohio as one of their choice agencies. The Civil Service Commission will provide the Whitehall Division of Police with a certified list, ranked by score, from this test. There is currently no written exam for the position of Auxiliary Police Officer, and a competitive interview process is used for this position.

C. *ORAL BOARD* – Candidates appear before a 3-person oral board consisting of three (3) Whitehall police officers selected by the Chief of Police or his designee. Candidates will be selected to move on in the process based upon this interview and availability of open positions.

*At this point, providing the applicant passes the Oral Board, a conditional job offer is made contingent upon the candidate’s successful completion of the remaining steps.*

D. *TRUTH VERIFICATION EXAM* – A detection-of-deception test is administered to each candidate by trained examiners. The subject areas explored include, but aren’t limited to, employment history, general background, personal conduct, childhood, educational history, illegal drug use, criminal history and activity, theft and criminal sexual activity. Due to the high volume of candidates, coupled with the duty to hire the best police officer possible, an inconclusive test, or one where the applicant exhibits “significant reactions” to the testing process, will automatically disqualify them for appointment to the position of Police Officer.

E. *RECORDS CHECKS* – Candidates fingerprints are recorded and thorough and complete records checks and warrants checks are conducted. The records and warrants checks may include local, state, national and international criminal history, traffic and civil records.

F. *BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION* – A thorough and complete investigation into each candidate’s background is conducted. The function of the background investigation is to determine each candidate’s suitability for employment as a Whitehall Police Officer. The background investigation will include, but is not be limited to, verification of credentials and identification, past and present employment, age, residence, citizenship; interviews with past and present school officials, neighbors, spouse, employers and personal references; reviews of tax records, credit history, current and past finances, and school transcripts; and anything deemed appropriate to determine a candidate’s ethics, lifestyle, character, abilities and inclinations.

G. *CHIEF’S INTERVIEW* - Candidates who successfully complete the previous stages are then scheduled for an oral interview with the Chief of Police. In this process, candidates are evaluated and rated based on such considerations as appearance, image, demeanor, attitude,

communication ability, mental alertness, judgment, reasoning, analytical ability, general personality, social interaction, interpersonal and human relations, and overall suitability.

#### H. *PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION* –

1. The psychological evaluation, provided by the City and conducted by qualified psychological or psychiatric professionals, is conducted on the selected candidate to determine whether the candidate possesses an appropriate, adequate, acceptable, and desirable psychological profile to perform as a Whitehall Police Officer. The candidate may be administered a variety of psychological tests, and may participate in a variety of procedures and exercises to help reveal personality characteristics and tendencies. Such identified characteristics and tendencies are used by the psychological or psychiatric professionals to rate candidates. The rating and summary information is then utilized by the Safety Director and the Chief of Police to assess the overall acceptability of the candidate to perform as a Whitehall Police Officer.

2. Candidates are either “recommended,” “recommended with reservations” or “not recommended.” A candidate must receive “recommended” in order to move forward in the selection process.

3. Negative attributes which may cause less than a “recommended” report include, but aren’t limited to: anti-social behavior patterns and/or attitudes, being quick-tempered, the inability or unwillingness to accept supervision and to carry-out the orders of a superior, a lack of compassion, a low level of self-esteem or confidence, an inordinately high level of self-esteem or confidence, the inability to accept constructive criticism, the inability to handle verbal abuse in a proper and effective manner, the inability to endure the stress associated with the job of a Police Officer, and deceptive and incomplete responses when answering questions and providing information.

I. *MEDICAL EXAMINATION* - The medical examination is provided by the City. It is administered to ensure that the candidate has sufficient health and the physical ability necessary to perform as a Police Officer, and that no condition exists that would pose a threat to the health or safety of the candidate or others. The candidate must be certified as being in good general health and able to perform the full, regular and demanding duties of a Police Officer. Though standardized testing is in place, the examining physician(s) or medical entity will be authorized to conduct any additional lab work, tests or exams which he/she/they believe are necessary to best determine condition of health. Candidates are specifically evaluated based upon the requisites of the Ohio Police and Fire Pension System and on the following, minimum, local standards that are deemed to negatively affect the applicant’s ability to complete the essential functions of the job:

1. must not be missing either eye, any limb, or the regular use thereof;
2. must be free of cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary disease;

3. must pass a vision exam based on visual acuity, depth perception and color perception;
4. must have eyesight correctable to 20/20 in both eyes with eyeglasses or contact lenses;
5. must have eyesight with a minimum, uncorrected vision of 20/40 in one eye and 20/100 in the other;
6. must have eyesight that's free of any visual color deficiencies or any disease;
7. must be free of contagious diseases;
8. must not show evidence of intemperance in the use of stimulants, depressants or other drugs;
9. must have no obstruction to free-breathing, nor may there be severe sinus disease;
10. must have no disease of the ear, nose or throat;
11. must have normal hearing in both ears;
12. must be free of hernia;
13. must have no back problems;
14. must possess an index, middle and ring finger and a thumb on each hand;
15. must possess a great toe on each foot;
16. must be free of defects of the brain and nervous system;
17. must have no epilepsy;
18. must have healthy kidneys and the urine must be normal.

J. *DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE SCREENING* - This medical examination is provided in an impromptu fashion by the City.

*A candidate may be provisionally appointed to the position of Regular Police Officer or Auxiliary Police Officer contingent upon the successful completion and passing of the aforementioned steps in this section.*

### **III. Training and Probation**

A. Auxiliary Police Officers must already be certified as an Ohio Peace Officer in order to apply for the position. Auxiliary Officers are volunteer, at-will employees who work at the pleasure of the Chief, and may have their commission revoked without appeal rights.

B. The Whitehall Division of Police reserves the right to review transcripts of Police Academy academic grades for acceptability for positions of both Auxiliary and Regular Police Officer. Candidates who fail to achieve minimum academic grades will be precluded from being appointed to the position of Regular Police Officer or Auxiliary Officer; or, in the case where a candidate is commissioned as a Regular Police Officer and then sent to the Police Academy, that Officer will be terminated from the position of Regular Police Officer if s/he fails to achieve the minimum academic standards in the Police Academy.

C. Regular Police Officer candidates who are not yet State-Certified through an approved Police Academy may receive a provisional appointment for the purpose of obtaining the necessary training and qualifications. Inadequate or unacceptable performance of the candidate during the course of Police Academy training will likely cause termination of the candidate. Failure to acceptably complete or pass the Police Academy course, the state certification exam, or to receive state certification will cause termination of the candidate. As well, recommendation from the Police Academy staff that the candidate not continue in the Police Academy will result in termination of the candidate.

D. Certain candidates for provisional appointment, who have already been State-Certified, may be required to again attend a basic Police Academy for updates. Updates are usually governed by the assessment and requisites of the Ohio Peace Officers Training Council. But certain updates may be required by Division of Police or Civil Service Rules. Failure to acceptably complete the Police Academy updates or to maintain State Certification will cause termination of the candidate.

E. Certain candidates for provisional appointment, who have already been State-Certified, may be required to again attend a basic Police Academy for the entire academy course. Such considerations are made on case-by-case bases by the Safety Director and usually depend upon such things as the length of time since the candidate's prior academy training, or the acceptability of the candidate's prior academy training. Failure to acceptably complete the Police Academy course, pass the state certification exam or to receive a new State Certification will cause termination of the candidate.

F. After all academy courses and/or updates are completed, the candidate must successfully complete an on-the-job-training course which is generally referred to as field training. The candidate must successfully complete all aspects of field training.

G. After successful completion of field training, the Regular-Officer candidate will be considered for original appointment to the position of Police Officer subject to a probationary period of 180 days. This probationary period is considered to be the ultimate test of the job. If the candidate cannot perform acceptably as a Probationary Police Officer for 180 days, the candidate will be terminated.

#### **IV. Candidate Disqualifiers**

The following occurrences or incidents in a candidate's background *will* result in permanent disqualification of the candidate from the selection process.

## A. DRUG ABUSE

1. Sold for profit, offered for sale, manufactured or transported for sale any illegal drug in your lifetime, excluding case by case factors mentioned below.
2. Knowingly used any scheduled felony drug more than three (3) times in 23 years of age or younger. No use of any felony scheduled drug or non-prescribed drug in permitted at 24 years of age or older. The only exception is the use of the hallucinogenic drug, LSD, which is limited to no more than one time (one-unit dose) for the life of the candidate.
3. No use of any non-prescribed drug one year prior to the date of application. No non-prescribed drug use for recreational purpose more than three (3) times if 23 years of age or younger. No recreational use of any non-prescribed drug in 24 years of age or older (Adderall and its relative equivalents are handled on a case by case basis).
4. No use of Steroids one year prior to the date of application. No steroid use more than two (2) cycles which is between 6-12 weeks of consistent usage per cycle. No usage if 24 years of age or older.
5. No use of marijuana one year prior to the date of application.
6. Is under indictment for or been convicted of any offense involving the illegal possession of any drug of abuse (ORC section 2925).

*The suitability of an applicant will be evaluated on the basis of circumstance of involvement, use, length of use, quantity of use and **may** be permitted to continue in the hiring process when any of the following exist:*

1. Marijuana usage will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
2. If the offense involving the illegal possession of any drug of abuse conviction is expunged from the record.
3. Sold for profit or offered for sale marijuana, and/or Adderall (or relevant equivalent of) will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine patterns.

## B. CHEMICAL ABUSE

The use or abuse of solvent-based chemicals, for any definitive period of time including, but not limited to, the sniffing or inhaling of glue, paint thinner, solvents and/or other chemical agents, for the purpose of obtaining a state of “high” or intoxication.

### C. ALCOHOL ABUSE

1. The non-recovered use or abuse of alcohol to the extent where serious side effects have resulted, or may result, or where alcohol has been shown to be the primary cause/factor in such areas as marital problems, health problems, employment problems, criminal problems, traffic problems, or psychiatric or psychological complications;
2. The use or abuse of alcohol to the extent of dependency, or the level of inability to function without the consumption of alcohol for any period of time.

*However, alcohol abuse history may be weighed in favor of the applicant if such history shows a stable recovering period, with no related medical history or side effects, for a period of at least five years.*

### D. INVOLVEMENT IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

1. Felony criminal activity including, but not limited to, convictions, admissions, or substantiated allegations for violations of any crime, the penalty for which is classified as a Felony-level crime under the Ohio Revised Code.
2. Has ever been convicted of domestic violence (ORC 2919.25) or a domestic violence related offense. Domestic violence related offense is defined as ever being found guilty or plead guilty to any charge reduced from an original charge of domestic violence.
3. Conviction of misdemeanor offenses involving dishonesty, false statements, or destruction of property.
4. Other conviction(s) of a misdemeanor offense(s). Each offense(s) shall be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the following criteria:
  - Type or kind of offense which resulted in the conviction.
  - Nature of original offense when the conviction was based upon a reduced charge which was the result of plea negotiations.
  - The age of the applicant at the time of the offense(s).
  - The length of time since the commission of the offense(s).

*However, involvement or activity in misdemeanors of a minor nature which haven't revealed a pattern, or which don't show repetitiveness, or which are in the distant past, may not automatically preclude appointment to the position of Police Officer.*

*Expunged records, court-sealed records, and diversion programs, as they relate to Law Enforcement position background investigations, can and will be sought and considered.*

*Also, as an example, minor, inadvertent, non-pattern thefts, from an employer of comparatively, inconsequential items such as pens, pencils and paper clips, are considered on a case-by-case basis and may not automatically preclude consideration from appointment to the position of Police Officer.*

### E. FALSIFICATION

1. Including, but not limited to, a deliberate falsehood, a deliberate attempt to conceal or withhold information, or deliberately relating false or incomplete information in any background paperwork, interview or test;
2. The candidate's involvement with incorrect, incomplete or false information from any other source;
3. Any information that leads the Division to believe the applicant has a proclivity toward dishonesty.

#### F. MARITAL AND FAMILIAL PROBLEMS

1. Including, but not limited to, the failure to provide proper and adequate support and care for family members for whom there exists a legal responsibility;
2. Any instance of abuse of children, spouse or family members;
3. Violations of protection orders, or failure to comply with provisions or orders of a court as they relate to child support, family support or alimony payments.

#### G. ETHICS, CHARACTER AND MORALS

1. Including, but not limited to, a background which indicates a question of trust, or a lack of ethics, maturity, character or morals as might relate to the position of a Police Officer, or community expectations of a Police Officer;
2. Has admitted to or evidence indicates the applicant was an instigator in any of the following acts:
  - Sexual relations with a person(s) of a child-like mind when the applicant was an adult.
  - Molestation.
  - Voyeurism as an adult.
  - Bestiality.
  - Public Indecency – Pattern Abuse.
  - Incest.
  - Bigamist.
  - Forced a person into a sexual act.
  - Coerced a person into a sexual act by intimidation, intoxication or deception.
  - An act covered in Section 2907: Sex Offenses of the Ohio Revised Code.

*The community requires police officers to have a higher degree of character than others in society. This view, and acceptance of such, contributes to an Officer's ability to be effective in his daily duties.*

## H. PUBLIC-TRUST EMPLOYMENT

Previous or current employment which indicates a violation of public-trust, public-trust standards or public expectations.

*Candidates who are employed or who have been employed in the public-sector or in a position of public-trust, especially those currently or previously employed in Law Enforcement or in Law Enforcement-related fields, are viewed a bit differently and with a bit more scrutiny. Generally, public-sector or public-trust employees are considered to be in positions of trust and dependability and are held to higher standards and expectations. Therefore, former or current public-sector or public-trust employees are in a position to be better evaluated for their aptitude, ability and inclination to perform well in a public-trust, Police Officer capacity.*

*Current or previous Law Enforcement employment is particularly scrutinized in such realms as termination, resignation, continued tenure of service, personnel evaluations, complaints, commendations, achievements, and eligibility for rehire. Significance is placed on the candidate's ability and inclination to follow and abide by rules, regulations, directives, written and oral orders, or other normally-expected performance levels. Attention is also given to the quantity and status of other Law Enforcement employment applications.*

## I. DRIVING RECORD

*An applicant will not be approved to continue the application process if any of the following circumstances exist.*

1. Has six active points or more on their driving record at the application stage of the hiring process. ("Active" points means points within the last two years.)
2. Has more than one conviction for OVI in their lifetime. Anyone with an OVI conviction must wait five (5) years from the conviction date to reapply. An OMVUAC conviction will be considered an OVI conviction.
3. Been convicted of, or pled "No Contest" to, or admitted to any of the following motor vehicle offenses:
  - ORC 2903.06 – Aggravated Vehicular Homicide
  - ORC 2903.08 – Aggravated Vehicular Assault
4. Been convicted of, pled "No Contest" to, or admitted to any of the following motor vehicle violations in the last five (5) years or twice ever:
  - ORC 2903.06 – Vehicular Homicide
  - ORC 2913.03 – Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle
  - ORC 2921.331 – Fleeing and Eluding
  - ORC 4945.02 or 4945.021 – Hit Skip/Leaving the Scene of an Accident

5. Currently under a Financial Responsibility Suspension (FRA) and the applicant has filed proof of insurance with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and drivers license is valid. (The applicant will be permitted to apply once the suspension has been expired.)

*When evaluating an applicant's suitability, the applicant's driving record will be evaluated based upon the severity of the violation(s), the date and/or age of the applicant at the time of the violation, the time span between violations and the status of their driving privileges at the time of the violation. These criteria will be used to determine if the applicant is permitted to continue in the application process when any of the following circumstances exist:*

- Demonstrated a pattern of motor vehicle violations.
  - Been involved in traffic crashes to the degree the average person would question the applicant's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.
- J. Failure to appear for or cooperate in any required step of the selection or background process, or any other act of non-compliance in the selection or background process.
- K. Failure to appear for or to pass a required examination or test.
- L. A military discharge under less than honorable conditions; or having received a general court martial or more severe military disciplinary action; or having received other, lesser military disciplinary actions on multiple occasions, especially for the same or similar offenses.
- M. Medical or psychological disorders to include, but not limited to, certain awarded disabilities, certain previous or current psychological treatments or confinements, certain physical or mental disabilities which could pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the candidate, coworkers, or the public.
- N. Addictive or compulsive gaming or gambling.
- O. Racial, ethnic or social intolerance.
- P. Failure to file or pay taxes.
- Q. Lack of the ability or desire to obtain and retain a valid Ohio Driver License.
- R. General anti-American beliefs or threats
- S. Committed or substantial evidence indicates the violations of laws against society to include the following:
- Treason
  - Espionage
  - Advocating governmental overthrow

T. Renounced American Citizenship

U. Belonged to or supported individuals or organizations that have a history of violations against society. These violations would be advocating repression against individuals or societies because of their race, sex, religion, or ethnic origin.

V. Abused a position of trust. (This standard in no way serves to usurp and individual's "free speech" guaranteed under the United States Constitution, however, it may be disqualifying if the exercise of free speech is considered a direct and negative nexus to the position of police officer.)

W. Unable to comprehensively read, write, and speak the English language.

#### **V. Probable Candidate Disqualifiers**

The following occurrences or incidents in a candidate's background will *likely* result in disqualification of the candidate from the selection process.

A. A history of traffic accident involvement indicating a lack of defensive driving skills or ability; or the inability to demonstrate a level of automobile operation commensurate with the requisites for the position of Police Officer;

B. Poor credit history such as a low credit score, a history of financial problems, wage garnishments, bankruptcy, poor payment records, collections, late payments;

C. A monetary lifestyle which is currently dependent upon a superior income compared to the income of a Police Officer; or the inability to adequately survive on the starting salary of a Police Officer; or debt-to-income problems;

D. Poor employment history including but not limited to, certain terminations; certain resignations, particularly in lieu of discharge; poor attendance records; history of tardiness; poor quality of work; poor quantity of work; the inability to get along with superiors, subordinates or peers; or poor disciplinary records.