

Township of Spring Police Department SOP: Applicant / Employment Process (1.5.1)

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish effective and non-discriminatory selection and hiring standards for department positions.

POLICY:

All applicants must complete an employment application form and meet the job requirements listed for the available position before they will be considered for employment.

Pursuant to the laws of this Commonwealth, the selection and hiring standards and processes of the Township of Spring Police Department are not governed by civil service rules and regulations. While this Township of Spring Police Department SOP: Applicant/Employment Process (1.5.1) is intended to have some similarities with civil service rules and regulations imposed by law upon other governmental bodies, this policy is non-civil service based, contains material differences, and the Township of Spring Police Department reserves the right to adopt and has adopted its own conditions, requirements, and policies to fairly and impartially hire candidates best suiting its needs as well as the citizens of the Township of Spring.

PROCEDURES:

A. Applications and Qualifications – All positions

1. Eligibility for Examination

- In order to be eligible for employment for any position with the Township of Spring Police Department, every applicant must submit a completed application form before the deadline stated for that specific examination. The applicant must complete the application truthfully. The applicant is subject to the penalties of 18 PA C.S. §4904 relating to Unsworn Falsification to Authorities.

2. Discrimination

- The Township of Spring is an equal opportunity employer. It is the Township's policy to grant equal employment opportunities to qualified persons without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, veteran's status, marital status or non-job-related physical or mental handicap or disability. The Township will provide equal opportunities in employment and promotion.

3. Availability of Application

- Application forms shall be available to all interested parties by any means deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police, or their designee.

4. Age Requirements

- All applicants must have reached their twenty first (21st) birthday before the deadline for submitting completed applications.

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5. General Qualifications
 - Every applicant for any position in the Township of Spring Police Department shall possess at a minimum a diploma from an accredited high school or a graduate equivalency diploma, and any other requirement(s) published at the time the application process begins.

6. Rejection of Applicant
 - The Township of Spring may refuse to consider any applicant who is found to lack any of the minimum qualifications for which the applicant has applied. Rejected applicants may request reconsideration of the decision by writing to the Chief of Police within ten (10) days of the notice of rejection.

 - Any applicant who has been disqualified for any reason or has voluntarily withdrawn their application shall be considered ineligible for a position with the Spring Township Police Department for a period of 24 months from the date of disqualification or withdrawal. Applicants who previously voluntarily withdrew from a hiring process may request reconsideration of their eligibility.

7. Recording and Filing Applications
 - Applications for the positions in the Township of Spring Police Department shall be available at the Township building or by any other means deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police only after a hiring announcement has been advertised and before the deadline for receiving applications which will be set forth in the public advertisement. Applications will be received by the Chief of Police or his/her designees. Any application containing material errors or omissions may, at the discretion of the Township, be returned to the applicant for correction prior to the deadline for filing applications after which no new or amended applications will be accepted.

B. Applications and Qualifications – Sworn Officers

1. General Qualifications
 - In addition to meeting requirements listed under the job description for Police Officer, every applicant must be a United States citizen, be physically and mentally fit to perform the full duties of a police officer, and, prior to appointment, possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

2. Rejection of Applicant
 - The Township of Spring may refuse to examine, or, if examined, may refuse to consider after examination, any applicant who is found to lack any of the qualifications for the position of Police Officer. In addition, the Township of Spring may refuse to examine, or if examined, may refuse to hire any applicant who is physically or mentally unfit to perform the full duties of a police officer.

3. Test Notice
 - Each applicant will receive a written notice of when and where the written examination will take place.

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4. Public Notice

- At least two weeks prior to the close of the application period, the Township of Spring or by any other means deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police (e.g. the Berks County Chiefs of Police Association Testing Consortium) shall publish an announcement of the hiring test and the requirements for the position to be filled, where applications may be obtained for the examination, and the deadline for filing those applications in at least one newspaper of general circulations. In addition, the Township of Spring shall conspicuously post an announcement of the hiring in the Township building.

C. Examination

1. General Requirements for the Position of Police Officer

- The examination for police officer will consist of a written examination, a physical fitness test, and oral examination. The written and oral examinations will be graded on a one hundred (100) point scale with the written examination representing fifty (50%) percent of the final score and the oral examination representing fifty (50%) percent of the final score. The physical fitness test will be graded on a pass/fail basis for every applicant. After the examination phase, successful applicants will undergo a background investigation and will be graded on a pass/fail basis for every applicant. After an applicant has been extended an offer of employment, final appointment shall be contingent upon the applicant passing a polygraph examination, a physical examination, and psychological examination. The order of the entry level testing procedures will be determined by the Chief of Police or their designee.

2. Written Examinations

- The written examination shall be graded on a one hundred (100%) point scale and the applicant must score seventy five (75%) percent or higher and receive one of the top twenty (20) highest scores including ties in order to continue in the application process. Applicants not receiving one of the twenty (20) highest scores or less than seventy five (75%) percent shall be rejected. Within thirty (30) days after the administration of the written examination, all applicants shall be given notice of their test results and passing applicants shall be given notice of their test scores and passing applicants shall continue in the testing process.
- The Chief of Police and/or the Township of Spring may elect to use a testing consortium for the written examination and physical fitness testing. The Department reserves the right to use the testing consortiums standard of passing scores for applicants to continue in the testing process. Or, it shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police and/or the Township of Spring whether a candidate can continue in this Department's hiring process if the candidate fails to score a 75 or higher on the written examination.

3. Physical Fitness/Agility Testing

- a. Testing done by outside agency/source, or by in-house personnel certified to conduct physical fitness/agility testing.

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- i. An applicant for the position of police officer in the Township of Spring must meet the standards/guidelines of the certified examiner. The test battery to be used for the physical fitness test shall be determined by the outside agency/source or the certified in-house examiner.
 - ii. Procedure
 - a. Applicants will be registered with the outside agency/source, or Township of Spring Police Department, whichever is applicable.
 - b. Prior to the physical fitness test, each applicant must be medically evaluated by a licensed physician, who must sign a Physician's Release Form.
 - c. Applicant will sign an "Informed Consent" Form.
 - d. Applicant will show photo identification.
 - e. Applicant will be administered the physical fitness test by the outside agency. The outside agency will notify the Township of Spring Police Department of the results of said testing.
 - f. Testing done by outside agency through a Testing Consortium—the Chief of Police and/or the Township of Spring may elect to use a Testing Consortium for the physical fitness testing.
4. Oral Examination
- a. When the written examination and physical fitness testing are conducted by this agency (outside a Testing Consortium), every qualified applicant who received one of the top twenty (20) scores including ties and scored seventy-five (75%) percent or higher in the written examination and passed the physical fitness test shall be given an oral examination.
 - When the written examination and/or physical fitness testing are conducted by a Testing Consortium, it shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police and/or the Township of Spring whether a candidate can continue in this Department's hiring process if the candidate scores between 70-74 on the written examination. The Chief of Police shall obtain the top twenty (20) scores in the written examination including ties and passed the physical fitness test from the Testing Consortium.
 - b. The oral examination will be graded on a one hundred (100) point scale with a score of seventy five (75%) percent or higher for passing. The oral examination shall involve questioning applicants on how they would handle situations relevant to police work. The top three (3) highest scoring applicants for every available position to be hired shall undergo a background examination.

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- c. Oral Review Board
 - i. Oral Review Board to consist of Spring Township Police Department personnel as determined by the Chief of Police or his/her designee, and at least one member from the Board of Supervisors if available. At his/her discretion, the Chief of Police may elect to have an Oral Board consist of at least three (3) members from outside police agencies.
 - ii. Each candidate will be asked identical questions and be judged on their responses, appearance, alertness, and judgment.
 - iii. Each member of the Oral Review Board will score each candidate separately.

5. Background Investigation

- a. The Chief of Police or his/her designee shall conduct a background investigation on each applicant who has received one of the top three (3) total overall scores for every available position to be hired.
- b. Applicants subject to a background investigation will be required to fill out a questionnaire and be interviewed by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. The information obtained will be used for completing the background investigation.
- c. The Chief of Police or his/her designee shall conduct a background investigation that complies with Pennsylvania Title 44 (Law and Justice), Chapter 73, Law Enforcement Background Investigations and Employment Information. See Township of Spring Police Department SOP 1.5.1 Appendix A for details.
- d. The background investigation for each candidate will include at a minimum the following:
 - i. verification of qualifying credentials;
 - ii. review of any criminal and non-criminal records;
 - iii, verification of personal and professional references (minimum of three total)
 - iv. education verification;
 - v. employment history verification;
 - vi. review of relevant national or state decertification records, if available;
 - vii. consistent with the First Amendment and all applicable laws, a check of publicly available internet and information-sharing sites to identify activity that promotes or supports unlawful violence or unlawful bias against persons based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
 - viii. Applicant's credit history

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- e. The records obtained in the background investigation may be considered when making decisions as to employability during the hiring process. The applicant may be interviewed additional time(s) when the information collected during the background investigation requires clarification or explanation.
- f. After the background investigation is completed, the Criminal Division Supervisor, or his/her designee's, shall make a written recommendation whether the applicant is appropriate for consideration for the appointment as a police officer. The Chief of Police shall make the final determination on whether the information collected during the background investigation warrants rejection of the candidate.
- g. Once completed, and no longer than is practical, the Chief of Police or his/her designee, will inform each applicant of whether he/she passed the background investigation.

D. Eligibility

1. Creation of Eligibility List

- a. At the completion of the examination requirements (written examination, physical fitness test, oral examination, and background investigation) and prior to any conditional offer of employment, the Chief of Police shall rank all passing applicants on a list with the applicant receiving the highest score at the top of the list and the applicant receiving the lowest passing score at the bottom of the list.
 - i. An applicant who is eligible for veteran's preference points pursuant to Section D(2)(a) shall have them added to his/her final score.
 - ii. If an applicant who qualifies as a veteran under Section D(2) is among the top three (3) applicants on the eligibility list then said applicant shall be hired for the open position before the application of points for other qualifications pursuant to Sections D(3) through (6).
 - iii. If all applicants are ineligible to receive veterans' preference points or the addition of those points to an eligible applicant does not place that applicant among the top three (3) applicants on the eligibility list then points for other qualifications pursuant to Section D(3) through (6) shall be applied to the score of any and all applicants who qualify for initial hire. Additional points for other qualifications pursuant to Section D(3) through (6) shall not be applied to candidates for promotion.
 - iv. In cases of tied scores, the ties will be broken by giving preference to the applicant who submitted a final completed application first. If both tied applicants submitted their applications the same day, the applicant's ranking shall be based on a coin flip.
- b. The eligibility list will remain in effect for at least twelve (12) months from the date of its adoption by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors may, at its sole discretion, before the original expiration date, by a vote of the majority of the Board at a duly authorized meeting, extend the list up to an additional twelve (12) months. The Board of Supervisors may, at its sole discretion, void an eligibility list at any time for any reason.

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2. Veteran Preference
 - a. An applicant who is defined as a veteran under the Veterans' Preference Law and has successfully passed the prescribed examinations shall be given an additional ten (10) points to his/her final score. An applicant must furnish official proof of discharge papers or separation documents (DD214, DD215 and/or NGB-22) that characterizes the type of discharge, in order to receive the Veterans' Preference points.

3. Police Experience Points
 - a. An applicant who has a Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Commission certification or a similar certification from another State, served continuously for a minimum one year or more as a law enforcement officer, is eligible for an honorable discharge from said law enforcement agency and furnishes official proof of law enforcement certification and law enforcement experience shall be given one (1) additional point on his/her final score for each consecutive full year of law enforcement experience not to exceed five (5) points total. "Each year of law enforcement experience" means that the applicant was employed as a full time police officer for three hundred and sixty five (365) days with another law enforcement agency, as calculated back from the deadline for the applicant to submit a complete application pursuant to Section A(1), where the applicant worked at least forty (40) hours/week and not less than 2,080 hours/year during that timeframe. Police Experience Points shall not be applied to an applicant that has not been employed as a full-time police officer for more than six (6) months prior to the date of application. By way of example:
 - i. One (1) full year of service as a law enforcement officer will be given one (1) additional point;
 - ii. Two (2) full years of service as a law enforcement officer will be given two (2) additional points;
 - iii. Three (3) full years of service as a law enforcement officer will be given three (3) additional points;
 - iv. Four (4) full years of service as a law enforcement officer will be given four (4) additional points;
 - v. Five (5) or more years of service as a law enforcement officer will be given five (5) additional points.

4. Township of Spring Residency Points
 - a. An applicant who is a resident of the Township of Spring for not less than 2 years and has furnished official proof of Township of Spring residency shall be given five (5) additional points on his/her final score.

5. Technical Skills Points
 - a. An applicant who possesses an active and valid EMT certification, or demonstrates verbal, reading and writing fluency in the Spanish language or proficiency in American Sign Language as confirmed after applicable testing, shall be given an additional five (5) points on his/her final score.

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6. Higher Education Points
 - a. An applicant who has received an associate's degree, or a minimum of sixty (60) credits from an accredited college or university and has furnished official transcript(s) from that college or university shall be given two (2) additional points on his/her final score.
 - b. An applicant who has received a bachelor's degree, or a minimum of one hundred and twenty (120) credits from an accredited college or university and has furnished official transcript(s) from that college or university shall be given four (4) additional points on his/her final score.
 - c. An applicant who has received a postgraduate degree from an accredited college or university and has furnished official transcript(s) from that college or university shall be given five (5) additional points on his/her final score.

7. Appointment
 - a. The Board of Supervisors may fill any vacancy in an existing position in the police department which occurs as a result of expansion of the police force, retirement, resignation, disability or death by the reappointment or reinstatement of a former employee of the police department who had been furloughed. Except for the physical and psychological examinations, no other testing shall be required for a furloughed employee or a rehired or reappointed employee.
 - b. If no furlough lists exists or if positions remain to be filled after all of the officers on the furlough list were offered reemployment, every position, except that of Chief of Police, shall be filled only in the following manner:
 - i. The Chief of Police shall certify three (3) names from the list of eligible.
 - ii. If three (3) names are not available, then the Chief of Police shall certify the names remaining on the list, or request the list be voided.
 - iii. The Board of Supervisors shall make an appointment from one of the three names certified with reference to the merits and fitness of the candidates. However, for initial appointment to the position of police officer, when one of the three applicants on the certified list is a veteran, that applicant shall be selected for a conditional offer of employment.

8. Polygraph Examination
 - a. Applicants, who have been given an offer of conditional employment by the Township of Spring, shall fill out a personal data questionnaire and undergo a polygraph examination. The Township shall furnish each polygraph examiner with forms upon which the examiner shall state whether any of the applicant's responses to questions from the applicant's personal data questionnaire are deceptive. The report on each examination shall be submitted to the Township of Spring within five (5) days after the date of the examination.

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- b. The examiner shall ask questions based on the information contained in the personal data questionnaire before administering the test, the examiner shall ask each applicant whether there is any more information related to the personal data questionnaire which the applicant would like to provide. There shall be a post-test review, during which the examiner shall again ask the participant, if deception is indicated, whether there is any information the applicant is withholding.
 - c. If the examiner shall deem any of the applicant's responses to be deceptive, the examiner must tell the applicant immediately and give the applicant an opportunity to explain, deny or admit the deception. If the applicant denies being deceptive or if the explanation is found unsatisfactory by the examiner, the applicant will be given an opportunity to retake the test with a second examiner. Notice of the opportunity to retest shall be given in writing to the applicant. The second examiner will not have access to the results of the first test prior to re-administering the polygraph. If the second examiner finds no deception, the applicant will be considered as having passed the polygraph. If the second examiner also finds the applicant deceptive, the applicant will be considered as having failed the examination.
 - d. An applicant who has failed both tests may appeal to the Chief of Police for a third examination. The decision to give the applicant an opportunity to take a third test resides solely within the discretion of the Chief of Police. The cost for a third polygraph examination shall be the responsibility of the applicant. If the applicant is awarded an opportunity to take a third test and passes, then the applicant will be considered as having passed the polygraph test. If the applicant is found deceptive on a third test, the applicant will be rejected.
9. Physical and Psychological Examinations
- a. After the Board of Supervisors select a candidate from the list of three for conditional appointment to the vacant position, that candidate shall submit to a physical examination and a drug screen by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or certified nurse practitioner who is licensed in Pennsylvania and a psychological examination by a licensed psychologist. If the candidate successfully passed the physical and psychological examinations, then that candidate shall be appointed to the vacant position in the police department for which the application was submitted. Failure to pass either examination shall result in the candidate being rejected from consideration.
- 10) Upon successfully completing all components of the conditional offer of employment, the selected candidate shall be eligible for a formal offer of employment with the Township of Spring Police Department.
10. Probationary Period
- a. Every successful applicant hired as a patrol officer to the police department shall serve a twelve (12) month probationary period. The twelve (12) month probationary period shall start when the applicant has met the requirements to be certified as a police officer as established by the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission, or if already certified, on the date the applicant physically begins employment with the Police Department.

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- b. Any applicant, who does not meet the certification requirements of a police officer as established by the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission, shall be held financially responsible to the Township of Spring for all training expenses incurred should he/she fail to successfully complete all mandatory training/certification as established by the Commission.

- c. During the probationary period, a newly hired officer may be dismissed, at any time, for unacceptable performance. Notice of such unacceptable performance shall be provided in writing. Any officer, who is not informed in writing that their performance has been unsatisfactory, and successfully completes the probationary period as listed above, shall receive a permanent appointment to the new position.

By Order Of:

**Stephen D. Brock
Chief of Police**