

COLCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

		SUBJECT: Selection Process	
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POLICY: The Colchester Police Department shall observe all applicable federal, state and local laws, as well as applicable collective bargaining agreements during hiring processes. The process is designed to select the highest caliber candidate possible with the skills, knowledge and abilities to provide outstanding service to the town of Colchester.

The Colchester Town Manager is the appointing authority for all police department employees. The authority and responsibility for administering CPD's selection process lies with the Chief of Police, who may delegate the responsibility to one of the Lieutenants.

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I. SELECTION PROCESS FOR SWORN PERSONNEL

- A. Any person expressing interest in employment with the Department shall be referred to the Support Services LT who shall accept the application of any person for a sworn position, provided that the following minimum requirements are met:
- 1. Must have legal status to live and work in the United States.
 - 2. Applicant must possess a high school diploma or a General Educational Development Certificate (GED) as prescribed by the Vermont Department of Education.
 - 3. Applicant must have attained his/her 18th birthday at the time of application.
 - 4. Applicant must be able to perform all of the essential functions of the job of police officer.
 - 5. Applicant must obtain and maintain a valid driver's license.
 - 6. Applicant must have no felony or serious misdemeanor convictions, nor any habitual or serious traffic offenses.
 - 7. Must have no less than 20/20 corrected vision in each eye and must be free from color or night blindness and possess the ability to determine depth.

- B. The following describes all phases of the selection process for sworn personnel. All phases of the selection process for sworn personnel shall be job-related and non-discriminatory.
1. **APPLICATION PLUS LETTER OF INTENT AND RESUME** – Completion of a CPD application, plus submission of a letter of intent to apply and a resume is the first step in the selection process. Once these are received, the person is considered an "applicant" for employment.
 2. **INITIAL APPLICATION REVIEW & NOTIFICATION OF TESTING DATE** – All applications shall be screened to ensure that they are complete and that minimum requirements for employment are met (except for criteria #7 which will be verified during medical exam). When a testing date becomes available all applications will be acknowledged via phone or mail. It is the applicant's responsibility to inform the Department of any change in address or phone number.
 3. **VPA REQUIRED ENTRANCE TESTING** – all applicants must pass the Vermont Police Academy required testing before proceeding to the next step in CPD's process.
 - A. **WRITTEN ENTRANCE TEST** - This is a statewide-standardized entrance exam administered by the Vermont Police Academy. A minimum score of 70 is required in order for the applicant to move on to the next phase. In the event an applicant fails the written test, he/she shall be notified on the spot and may retake the test consistent with the rules of the Vermont Police Academy. Any cost for this portion of the hiring process shall be borne by the applicant.
 - B. **PHYSICAL STANDARDS TEST** - This statewide-standardized test may be administered at the Vermont Police Academy or by certified Department personnel. Required performance levels are adjusted by gender and age. This is a pass/fail test. In the event of a failure, the applicant will be immediately notified that he/she is disqualified from the process. Any cost for this portion of the hiring process shall be borne by the applicant.
 - C. **PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE EXAM** - A standardized psychological evaluation. This is not a pass/fail test. Results are assessed by a qualified professional psychologist. Any cost for this portion of the hiring process shall be borne by the applicant.
 4. **SECOND LEVEL REVIEW** – Upon successful completion of the preceding steps, applicants shall be evaluated on their overall test results and other credentials such as college degrees, military or prior law enforcement experience, demonstrated leadership experience, etc. Applicants will be sorted into general categories and the most qualified applicants will be offered an oral interview.
 5. **WRITING EXEMPLAR & ORAL BOARD INTERVIEW** – Applicants will be asked to submit a writing sample on the day of the Oral Board Interview. This is

not pass/fail. Following completion of the writing exemplar, applicants will be interviewed by a multi-member panel intended to determine the applicant's suitability for employment as a Colchester Police Officer. Amongst other things, the interview is intended to evaluate the applicant's poise, appearance, honesty, judgment, motivation, communication skills, attitude, and potential for prejudice. Applicants will be scored as either fail, pass or recommended. If the applicant is disqualified at this stage of the process, he/she will be notified in writing within two weeks. If the applicant is scored as recommended, he/she will move on to the next phase. If the applicant is scored as pass, he/she shall move on to the next phase only in the absence of applicants scored as recommended. All applicants who pass this step of the process shall be considered "candidates".

6. **CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT & FINGERPRINTS** - Upon successful completion of the oral board, the candidate is given a letter from the Department stating its intent to place the candidate on a hiring list pending successful completion of the rest of the selection process. It is valid for one year and shall be immediately withdrawn if the candidate fails any of the subsequent phases. Additionally, the candidate shall complete an employment fingerprint card taken for criminal background check.
7. **PERSONAL HISTORY INFORMATION (PHI) & REVIEW-** The PHI is used to provide the Department with information regarding the candidate. It is used to verify that the candidate meets the minimum qualifications and is subsequently used as the basis of the background investigation. The PHI must be returned **by the established deadline. If the PHI is not returned by the deadline, the candidate will be disqualified from the current process.** Candidates disqualified at this step will be notified in writing. If the PHI is incomplete, the candidate must be given the opportunity to correct any omissions or deficiencies. The completed PHI will be reviewed to ensure that no disqualifying information is contained therein and that the candidate has provided all documentation needed to establish basic job requirements.
8. **BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION** - Each applicant must successfully undergo a thorough background and character check. Individuals convicted of a felony or any crime involving moral turpitude will not be considered. The areas of investigation include proof of identity, past residences, experience and employment, military history, education, financial history, criminal and motor vehicle histories, verification of at least three personal references, relatives and acquaintances, and specific qualifications and skills for the position. Personnel used to conduct background investigations will receive training in collecting the required information.
9. **POLYGRAPH** - A test designed to measure deception in response to questions specifically related to the applicant's suitability for the position of Police Officer. The test shall be administered and evaluated by certified polygraphers. Prior to the test, applicants will be given a list of areas from which the questions will be drawn. The polygraph results cannot be the sole reason for disqualification from the process. Revelations or additional information learned during the polygraph, in conjunction with information provided or concealed during previous phases, may be the basis for disqualification.

10. **COMMAND STAFF REVIEW** – The Command Staff will review the applicant's entire file to determine whether the individual is qualified for appointment.
 11. **MEDICAL EXAMINATION** - The applicant must be certified by the Town's contracted physician as medically qualified to perform the essential functions of the position of Police Officer and must meet the medical standards as established by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council for entry to the Vermont Police Academy. The medical examination does require a candidate to submit to a drug test. To ensure statutory compliance the drug test can only occur after the following criteria are met.
 - a. A conditional offer of employment must be on file.
 - b. The candidate, not less than 10 days prior to the date of the test, receives written notice identifying the drugs that will be tested for and that therapeutic levels of prescription drugs will not be reported.
 - c. The drug test is given in conjunction with the candidate's medical examination.
 - d. The test is administered in accordance with the statutory requirements provided in 21 V.S.A. 514. Blood tests are prohibited.
 12. **CHIEF'S INTERVIEW** – The Chief of Police shall interview all candidates prior to hiring. The Chief shall either recommend the candidate to the Town Manager for hire, disqualify the candidate or recommend that the candidate be placed on a list for consideration.
 13. **MEETING WITH TOWN MANAGER** - This is a prerequisite for employment and the Town Manager has final hiring authority for all Town Employees.
 14. **PROBATIONARY PERIOD** – The probationary period for all sworn personnel is twelve months from the date of hire and shall be contingent upon successful completion of the Department's Field Training Program. Probationary status may be extended, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, for an employee who requires remedial services such as specialized training or professional counseling; or for medical reasons or resolution of illness or injury.
- C. All phases of the selection process shall be documented, administered, and scored or evaluated in a uniform manner to ensure equal opportunity to all candidates with details retained in the candidates file.
- D. Candidates who are determined to be ineligible for further consideration based on the results of a single phase of the process shall be notified in writing no later than two weeks from the time of disqualification. Candidates who fail the Written Entrance Exam or Physical Standards test, however, shall be notified immediately if they do not qualify to continue in the selection process.

II. **SELECTION PROCESS FOR NON-SWORN PERSONNEL**

- A. The selection process for entry level civilian personnel shall follow the same guidelines as described for sworn personnel, except that non job related portions may be omitted. The Chief reserves the right to add components of the selection process as they apply.

- B. All components of the hiring process for non-sworn personnel shall be job-related and non-discriminatory.

III. RE-APPLICATION AND RE-TESTING

- A. An applicant who fails the written test or physical standards test will not be allowed to continue in the process. They may re-take the written test the next time it is given. The written and physical standards tests are administered by the Vermont Police Academy. As such, re-testing policies of the VPA apply.
- B. An applicant who fails any other portion of the CPD hiring process is eligible to re-apply for the next advertised vacancy. Under unusual circumstances, the Chief of Police may deem an applicant ineligible to reapply for a longer period of time, for just cause.

IV. STORAGE OF SELECTION PROCESS INFORMATION

Each candidate for employment shall have a separate file maintained in a secure/locked location in the Support Services Lieutenant's office as long as the candidate is in the selection process. These are "active" files. If disqualified, the file shall be designated "inactive" and stored in a locked storage area. Inactive files shall be maintained for five years from the date the entrance exam was taken. When purged, the contents of the file will be shredded. Files for candidates who are appointed to probationary status will become part of the employee's permanent personnel record.

V. CRITERIA FOR LATERAL ENTRY & RETURNING CPD EMPLOYEES

Any candidate that is a Vermont full-time certified police officer must successfully complete the following phases of the hiring process: Step 1, provide proof of step 3, and steps 5 - 14.

Any candidate that is full-time certified in another state must complete **all phases of the process**. If hired, the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council may waive the requirement that the officer attend the full-time certification academy if the officer's previous training is comparable and grant full-time certification upon completion of a certification course prescribed by the Council.

Any former Colchester Police Officer who has been separated from the agency for less than five years and wishes to rejoin shall complete the following steps: step 1, steps 8 – 14. The background investigation and polygraph shall concern his/her activities between the time of separation and the present. The decision to rehire will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police after consultation with the Command Staff. Any former Colchester Police Officer who has been separated from the agency for more than five years shall be required to participate in the entire hiring process.