

North Vernon Police Department

General Order 20 HIRING SWORN PERSONNEL

Issuing Authority: James Webster, Chief of Police
Annual Review Date: November

Policy

North Vernon Police Department strives to obtain the best law-enforcement officers possible to help achieve the department's policing goals. To that end, the department shall practice a regimented, rigorous selection procedure while simultaneously affording equal opportunity to everyone regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or age. The department does not discriminate against people with disabilities and affords them the same access to employment provided to all citizens. Where possible, the department provides reasonable accommodation to the known disabilities of qualified people. All personnel who participate in screening and hiring applicants shall be guided by fairness, equal opportunity, and consistency in applying the procedures set forth in this order.

Purpose

The purpose of this order is to outline hiring requirements for police officers.

Procedures

- A. The minimum qualifications that all applicants for the position of police officer must meet include the following:
1. Must be a resident citizen of the United States.
 2. Must be 21 years old to apply and not have reached their 36th birthday by date of appointment or reappointment.
 3. Must have a high school diploma or GED certificate.
 4. Cannot have a felony conviction.

5. Cannot have a misdemeanor conviction involving domestic violence under [18 USC § 922 (g)]
6. Must possess a valid driver's license from their state of residence.
7. Must be a resident of Jennings County, Indiana or one of the six adjoining counties at the time of appointment to the Department.
8. Cannot have been dishonorably discharged from the military.
9. Must successfully complete all phases of the hiring process to be considered for employment.

B. The applicant must perform the following:

1. Complete a written application and submit it to the records clerk.
2. Passing a physical agility test.(will include Academy Standards)
[Note: According to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, "tests for illegal use of drugs are not medical examinations under the ADA and are not subject to the restrictions on such examinations." Similarly, "physical agility tests are not medical examinations and so may be given at any point in the employment application process." The medical screening (defined by the EEOC as "procedures or tests that seek information about the existence, nature, or severity of an individual's physical or mental impairment, or that seek information regarding an individual's physical or psychological health") shall not take place-nor shall the background investigation be completed (but can be started)- until after a conditional offer of employment has been accepted.]
3. Arrange with the North Vernon Police Department to take the written test.
4. Interview with hiring board.
5. Passing a background investigation which includes the following:
[Note: The background investigation will start at Phase 5, but will not be completed until a conditional offer of employment has been accepted.]
 - a. Personal and family history;
 - b. Credit history, including current creditors;
 - c. Education, including all schools attended and degrees or certificates obtained;
 - d. Comprehensive employment history;

- e. A fingerprint-based criminal history search, including all arrests, locations, dates, and dispositions;
- f. Traffic summons and accidents
- g. An inquiry of family, friends, and associates as to character and reputation, plus an informal interview with the applicant's spouse or "significant other."

C. The employee(s) assigned to investigate the applicant shall perform the following:

1. Ask the applicant whether he or she needs reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the application process itself.
2. Obtain the applicant's driving record from BMV.
3. Have the applicant sign appropriate release forms.
4. If the applicant has recently lived outside Jennings, request records checks through agencies in the applicant's previous communities.
5. Obtain references from the applicant's current and past employers.
6. Obtain an NCIC/IDAC criminal history check.
7. Conduct interviews of neighbors near applicant's residences over the past three years.
8. Provide a complete background investigation file to the chief of police.
9. Provide information to the applicant about the written examination(s).
 - a. The written exam includes a comprehensive reading/writing component. The applicant must achieve a score of not less than the minimum score established for the test.
10. Present the finding to the hiring board. The hiring board consists of the chief of police, mayor, and safety board.
 - a. The employee conducting the background investigation shall present information on the applicant to the Chief of Police with the objective of allowing the hiring board to form a view of the applicant's morality, integrity, reputation, honesty, dependability, qualifications, experience, associations, emotional stability, prejudice, and loyalty.

- b. Be of good moral character [*Good moral character is determined by a favorable report following the comprehensive background investigation. The interview shall be employed to help evaluate good moral character. Good moral character ensures compatibility with the department's community-oriented policing goals*]

D. The chief of police shall perform the following:

1. Interview all applicants and make the final selection upon confirmation from the hiring board.
 - a. During the interview, the chief of police shall consider the applicant's appearance (for neatness and cleanliness), mannerisms, judgment, maturity, resourcefulness, and compatibility with community-oriented policing goals.
2. Ensure that the applicant fully understands the selection process and the conditions and procedures for re-application.
3. Make a conditional offer of employment. Prior to the Physical examination and Psychological evaluation, the candidate must undergo a MMPI test.
 - a. Further, no conditional offer will be considered final until after a satisfactory psychological and medical evaluation and completion of the background investigation.
4. Ensure that the appointee understands job benefits, health plans, administrative matters concerning overtime and off-duty employment, plus conditions of employment, pension, and disability.

E. Re-application

Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply after 90 days from the date of last application if a vacancy exists.

F. Lateral entry

1. An already-certified officer in another Indiana agency must meet the criteria set forth above. If accepted for employment, the officer will not be assigned to attend a basic academy, subject to the status of the officer's certification and training.
2. The employee assigned to investigate the applicant shall ensure that an applicant with prior law-enforcement experience has not been decertified.

G. Disqualification

1. In disqualifying an applicant following any test or examination, the chief must show that:
 - a. the applicant cannot perform the essential requirements of the job; and
 - b. that no reasonable accommodation would enable the applicant to perform the essential requirements of the job.
2. Following a psychological and medical examination, an offer of employment may be withdrawn if the applicant poses a “direct threat” in the workplace (per EEOC guidelines, “a significant risk of substantial harm to the individual or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced...through reasonable accommodation”). The chief must base the threat on medical knowledge, not just speculation.

20.1 Validation of Selection Procedures

The department’s hiring procedures meet standard tests of validity. The department must be able to validate any selection criteria by showing proof that the process either predicts job performance or detects aspects of prospective candidates’ work behavior as related to the position of police officer. The chief in consultation with the Mayor and Safety Board of the North Vernon Police Department shall review selection procedures for their validity and utility at least every two years. Departmental hiring procedures meet the following tests of validity:

- A. Validity related to criteria: The selection procedure correlates written test scores with pre-determined criteria. A high correlation of the two demonstrates that the test scores predict job performance.
- B. Validity related to construct: The selection procedure measures the degree to which the candidate has certain required traits or characteristics important in law-enforcement work.
- C. Validity related to content: The selection process is validated by showing that it represents actual job behavior.
- D. Utility: The department’s selection processes also demonstrate utility, which refers to the practical value of a component of the selection process based on validity, selection ratio, number of candidates to be selected, and the nature of the job.

E. Adverse impact

1. Adverse impact refers to a selection procedure that works to the disadvantage of a racial or ethnic group, or of a sex.
 - a. The department shall reduce adverse impact as much as possible in its hiring procedures.
 - b. The department retains records of hiring tests to monitor adverse impact.

20.2 Probation

- A. All newly hired officers shall be considered on probation for one year from the date of employment. The same probationary period applies to officers hired through lateral entry.
- B. The date of employment for officers generally never exceeds one year before the beginning of a basic academy class to which the appointee has been assigned. If the officer begins work before a basic academy, he or she shall be under the supervision of a Field Training Officer and meet State requirements of pre-basic certification.
- C. At the end of the probationary period, the Field Training Officer shall write a performance evaluation in which he or she must rate the appointee at least a minimum acceptable performance rating in each category or behavior. The chief reserves the right to extend the probationary period an extra 90 days because of an unsatisfactory rating. A second unsatisfactory rating, at the end of 90 days, in any category shall provide cause for dismissal.
- D. The work performance of each probationary employee shall be evaluated using valid, nondiscriminatory procedures.
- E. Probationary employees who wish to protest their ratings have no grievance rights except to request an interview with the chief of police.

20.3 Records

- A. For each employee, the department maintains a personnel record which includes all forms completed during the hiring process, all evaluations, complaints, commendations, leave/attendance record, and assignments.
- B. The chief of police maintains and controls all personnel records. The department complies with the records retention schedule set by the state.

- C. Employees may review their records at any reasonable time upon request. The chief may release a record from file upon obtaining a signed receipt from the authorized person with a need to review it.
- D. All personnel records are considered confidential, sensitive information available for review to supervisory or investigative personnel who have a need, as determined by the chief of police.
- E. If the chief deems it necessary to include derogatory information in a personnel file, he/she shall notify the employee of the fact in writing. The employee may protest the inclusion of such information in writing to the chief. Probationary employees have no right of protest in such matters.
- F. Personnel records are permanent property of the department.
- G. Officers from the department may terminate employment and seek a lateral hire with another agency. Requests for employment information on these officers shall be referred to the chief. The chief shall disclose the employee's performance record.
 - 1. Any request for information on a present or past employee shall be limited to information contained only in the official personnel file.