



Town of Lexington

Police Department

Subject: Selection of Police Officers

Reference: 32.1.5; 32.1.6; 32.1.7; **32.2.7; 32.2.8;** 32.2.10

Effective Date:
12-1-2011

Review Date:
Annually

By Order of: Mark J. Corr, Chief of Police

**Policy &
Procedure**

32A

The Municipal Police Institute, Inc. (MPI) is a private, nonprofit charitable affiliate of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association. MPI provides training and model policies and procedures for police agencies. This policy is an edited version of MPI Policy 4.23 "Recruitment and Selection"

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The selection of police officers from a field of potential candidates is a very important task affecting not only the police department, but the community as well. Candidates should possess intelligence, have the ability to work independently, have strong interpersonal skills, and be motivated, but also should be able to respect the command structure and protocols. The selection of a police officer is not only a commitment for that officer to the Town of Lexington, but a commitment from the town to the police officer as well. It is the policy of the Lexington Police Department to conduct a selection process in full compliance with the law and the highest level of ethical standards.

PROCEDURES

- A. Eligibility for Selection
1. To be eligible for the selection for employment as a full-time police officer, a candidate must be certified as such by the Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD) and placed on an eligibility list.
 - a. Certified eligibility lists are established by HRD following statewide police entrance examinations and are valid for two years from the date the list is certified.
 - b. These "lists" will be requested by the Lexington Police Department only when there is a need to fill vacant positions and or there is sufficient payroll to sustain such position(s).

32A – Selection of Police Officers

2. Candidates must have reached their twenty-first (21st) birthday at the time of application for employment to be appointed to the Lexington Police Department.
 3. No person shall be eligible for appointment to the Lexington Police Department unless such person possesses:
 - a. A high school diploma; or
 - b. A high school equivalency diploma (GED).
 4. Full-time police officers from other Civil Service police agencies in Massachusetts may seek a lateral transfer to Lexington. The appointing authority in each community must approve a lateral transfer. Such persons shall still be required to participate in all other aspects of the selection process including background investigations.
 5. Officers who have been laid off from other Civil Service police departments will be placed on a “Rehire” list by HRD. Officers on this list, who express an interest in working for Lexington, must be considered for employment prior to new applicants.
 6. An officer choosing to accept an offer of employment off of the “Rehire” list must still satisfactorily pass a background investigation. See also Department policy **32B - Background Investigations**.
- B. Selection Process: This process is initiated when the Town Manager, as the Appointing Authority for the Lexington Police Department, requests a list of eligible candidates from HRD then the following steps occur:
1. Eligible candidates are notified by HRD to report to the appointing authority to sign the Civil Service list indicating their willingness to accept employment.
 2. Candidates who sign indicating that they are willing to accept employment are given a packet to complete and return to the Department. This packet is to assist the assigned background investigator in researching candidates for employment.
 3. When the completed packets are returned, candidates will meet with the background investigator at the police station for a brief overview of the selection process.
 4. Packets will be reviewed to ensure completeness and used to assist in background investigations.
 - a. Applicants will not be rejected at this stage due to an error or omission in the packets.
 - b. Candidates will be given the opportunity to remedy the error or omission.

32A – Selection of Police Officers

5. Candidates successfully passing the background investigation may be interviewed by the appointing authority but this is typically delegated to the Chief of Police.
6. The Chief of Police will recommend to the Town Manager (appointing authority) candidates to fill the position(s) and will then grant a conditional offer of employment contingent on the candidates successfully passing the:
 - a. Medical Examination: candidates shall undergo a medical evaluation conducted by a physician selected by the Town to certify the general health of the candidate. The physician may have specialization in industrial medicine. The evaluation will include screening for controlled substances and the ability to physically perform tasks, which have been determined to be critical job functions. [32.2.7]
 - b. Psychological examination: candidates shall undergo an emotional stability and psychological fitness examination by a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist selected by the Town, and approved by HRD. [32.2.8]
 - i. The psychological screening of all viable candidates will include indicators of abusive tendencies.
 - ii. The Department will not hire candidates with tendencies indicative of abusive behavior.
 - c. Physical fitness/ Physical Abilities Test (PAT): candidates selected for employment as sworn officers who have not completed a basic recruit municipal police-training academy must complete the HRD administered physical agility test (PAT) prior to enrollment in an academy. A “waiver” may be obtained from the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC) for those that have completed equivalent academies in other states.
7. Whereas HRD has delegated almost all of the hiring process to the local appointing authority, Lexington shall document and retain all selection material including authorization for employment and bypass letters.
8. Candidates selected for employment will be sent to and must successfully complete a MPTC sanctioned Basic Police Officer Academy program (unless a valid waiver is obtained as outlined in 6.c above).
9. Candidates not selected for employment will be notified in writing within 30 days of the decision consistent with Massachusetts General Law. [32.1.5]

32A – Selection of Police Officers

C. Probationary Period

1. Following the successful completion of a Basic Police Officer Academy program and appointment as a full-time police officer, there will be a field-training program for those with no prior involvement with Lexington and/or police service. Only after passing the field-training program (or any remedial training deemed necessary in that program) will the officer then begin a 12-month probationary period. Individuals must perform the duties of a police officer on a full-time basis for this twelve-month period before they shall be considered as full-time tenured employees. See also Department policy on ***Field Training and Evaluation Program***. [32.2.10]
2. Lateral transfer police officers with prior field law enforcement experience or new hires with prior work experience for this Department in some other capacity shall complete an abbreviated field-training program designed to familiarize them with the community and with local policy and procedures. [32.2.10]

D. Access to and Disposition of Selection Records

1. All selection records and materials shall be stored in a secure file cabinet in the Chief's Office or Human Resource Director's office. Full access to selection materials and records shall be limited to the Town Manager, Chief of Police, Police Captains and director of Human Resources for the Town of Lexington.
2. Results of all medical examinations and psychological testing are strictly confidential with access limited to the Town Manager, Human Resource Director or the Chief of Police, or his designee.
3. Other individuals involved in the process such as the Detective Bureau Commander and the Background Investigator may have limited access on an as needed basis to selection records. Access will be granted by the Chief of Police.
4. Selection records, including background information and results of medical examinations and emotional stability and psychological fitness examinations of individuals hired, as police officers will be retained in personnel folders. These folders will be retained in a secure file cabinet in the Chief's Office. [32.1.7]
5. Selection records, including background information and results of medical examinations and emotional stability and psychological fitness examinations, of unsuccessful candidates will be retained for a period of two years, or until all rights of appeal have been exhausted, then destroyed by shredding. These records shall be maintained in a secure file cabinet in the Chief's Office. [32.1.6]

32A – Selection of Police Officers

E. Evaluation of Selection Process

1. The Captain of Administration shall ensure that the Department's selection process for sworn entry-level positions complies with all current and applicable laws, rules, regulations and applicable collective bargaining agreements. To accomplish this, the Captain of Administration shall:
 - a. Keep abreast of all changes in Massachusetts General Law, the rules and regulations of HRD, and the directives of the Department;
 - b. Evaluate and review with the Chief of Police, all elements of the selection process administered by the Department;
 - c. Offer recommendations for change or improvement to the Chief of Police; and
 - d. Revise, or oversee the Accreditation Manager's revision of this policy annually in the Department's policy and procedure manual, as well as corresponding directives on selection, recruitment and promotion to reflect any changes.