



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

# GENERAL ORDER ADM-44 SELECTION OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 21, 2012

---

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
- III. ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES
- IV. ORAL INTERVIEW
- V. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS
- VI. PROBATIONARY PERIOD
- VII. RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION

## **I. POLICY**

The Howard County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) shall maintain an efficient, effective, and fair selection process for civilian HCSO employees that results in the appointment of those individuals who best possess the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary. The HCSO will work closely with the Howard County Office of Human Resources (County HR).

## **II. PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. In accordance with County Law, the County HR Administrator coordinates all original appointments in the classified service.
- B. Although authority for selection is shared with County HR, the HCSO maintains the primary responsibility for background investigations, oral sequences, selection and probationary period assessments. These processes will be coordinated and administered by the Chief Deputy in conjunction with County HR.
  - 1. The Sheriff will retain certain responsibilities in the selection of personnel. These include identifying specific needs of the HCSO, and determining skills and personal attributes required for positions.
  - 2. The Sheriff, or his designee, will make the actual selection for all vacancies pursuant to Howard County Code Section 1.106(i).
- C. The selection process shall be comprised of various elements including, but not limited to, and interview process, Personal History Questionnaire (PHQ), background investigation, and pre-employment physical examination. Specific civilian positions may also require a written or skills assessment test, polygraph examination, applicant observation review or psychological examination.<sup>1</sup>
- D. All elements of the HCSO selection process for civilian members shall be administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner within the classification and under the auspices of County HR.
- E. Selections materials (blank written tests, answer keys, study materials, etc.) used by either the HCSO or County HR will be stored in a secure area when not being used. Access to the materials will be permitted only to those employees who are involved in the administration of the selection process.

---

<sup>1</sup> CALEA 32.1.1

**III. ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

- A. When there is a civilian vacancy within the HCSO, the Chief Deputy will send an employee requisition request to County HR, after approval by the Sheriff.
- B. Once the request to fill the vacancy is approved, the County HR Administer shall ensure public notice of the vacancy. The Job Announcement notice will be posted on-line through the County's website and will include a closing date or testing date.
- C. The job announcement shall include:
  - 1. A description of the duties, responsibilities, requisite skills, educational level, and other minimum qualifications or requirements;
  - 2. A notation that the HCSO is an equal opportunity employer;
  - 3. All elements of the selection process;
  - 4. The expected duration of the selection process; and,
  - 5. The agency's policy on reapplication.
- D. The County HR Administrator, or designee, will preliminarily review all applications and provide those that match qualifications, experience, and other eligibility requirements and forward them to the Chief Deputy who will further review the applications. The Chief Deputy shall then return a list of recommended candidates to County HR, who will finalize a list of at least three (3) and up to ten (10) names of applicants deemed most qualified for the position.
- E. Applications shall not be rejected due to minor omissions or deficiencies that can be corrected prior to the testing or interview phase.
- F. The County HR Administrator shall then provide the Sheriff with an alphabetical eligibility list that he will pass on to the Administrative Assistant who will attempt to make contact with each applicant to schedule an interview. The Administrative Assistant shall be responsible for maintaining documented contact with the applicant through the final employment decision.
- G. After conducting an interview of all available applicants, the Chief Deputy shall recommend a candidate from the eligibility list. The Chief Deputy will request a background investigation through the Recruitment/Employment Division. Upon the return of the investigation the Chief Deputy will make his recommendation to the Sheriff.
- H. Applicants not selected for hire will be informed, in writing, by the HCSO.
- I. Upon approval from the Sheriff, the County HR Administrator will extend an offer of employment to the selected applicant.

**IV. ORAL INTERVIEW**

An oral interview of each applicant shall be conducted using valid, useful, and nondiscriminatory procedures.

- A. A list of standardized questions will be asked of each applicant. Based upon the responses to the questions, the interviewer may ask additional follow-up questions for clarification purposes.
- B. Each interviewer shall take notes on applicant responses. After the applicant has completed the interview and left the interview room, the notes should be referred to for rating the different dimensions and making an overall rating.

- C. The Sheriff, or his designee, may interview the top applicants at the conclusion of the selection process. The Sheriff will recommend to the County HR Administrator the names of those applicants who he is choosing for appointment to probationary status.

**V. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS**

A. Background Investigation Requirement

The background investigation is the most useful and relevant component of the selection process. Whenever practical, the investigation should involve a home visit with the applicant and his family, as well as interview with neighbors.

1. A background investigation will be conducted of the selected applicant prior to appointment to probationary status to include a review of criminal history checks, at least three (3) personal interviews or verification of three (3) personal reference, verification of all credentials, and financial data.<sup>2</sup>
2. If a polygraph examination is administered, the background investigation will be conducted after the polygraph examination has been completed. The polygraph examination can point out areas that need particular attention in the background investigation.
3. Applicants who are scheduled for polygraph examinations will be provided with a copy of the areas that will form the basis of the polygraph questioning, prior to the examination.
4. An indication of deception during the polygraph examination will not be used as the single determinant of employment status; however, pre-test and post-test discussions that reveal adverse information will be documented and used in the subsequent selection process.

**VI. PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

- A. Upon initial appointment to a position in the classified service, an employee will serve a probationary period consistent with the Howard County Employee Manual.
- B. At the end of the probationary period, the appointing authority shall notify the County HR Administrator that he recommends:
  1. The employee be placed on permanent status;
  2. The employee's probationary period be extended for a period not to exceed six (6) months.
  3. That the employee be terminated because the employee's performance does not meet the required performance standards for the position or job assignment. A probationary termination is not appealable,
- C. A classified employee who is promoted shall serve a probationary period equal to the length of the probationary period for that position.<sup>3</sup>
- D. If a classified employee is promoted, and during the probationary period the appointing authority determines that the employee's performance does not meet the required performance standards for the new position, the appointing authority may dismiss the employee. If a classified employee is dismissed under this paragraph, the appointing authority shall make a good faith effort to place the employee in a vacant position before the employee is terminated.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> CALEA 32.2.1 a,b,c

<sup>3</sup> CALEA 34.1.7

<sup>4</sup> CALEA 34.1.7

- E. Movement from a designated trainee class to a full performance class is not a promotion.

**VII. RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITON**

- A. The HCSO will comply with all local, state, and federal requirements for the privacy, security, and access to information of all applicants' records and data.

Authority:

---

James F. Fitzgerald  
Sheriff