

Policy Number: 07-009

Lucas County Sheriff's Office

Policy and Procedure



Approved by Sheriff:

Michael J. Navarre

Sheriff Michael J. Navarre

DATE FOR REVIEW:

Pages:

7

SECTION: PERSONNEL

PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Lucas County Sheriff's Office to adopt criteria under which potential employees will be screened for suitability of employment. The goal of Lucas County Sheriff's Office is to recruit and hire qualified individuals while providing equal employment opportunities. The Lucas County Sheriff's Office shall provide equal terms and condition of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability or genetic information. This applies to all terms or conditions associated with the employment process, including hiring, promotions, terminations, discipline, performance evaluations and interviews.

It is a requirement of the Lucas County Sheriff's Office that all candidates for employment as Corrections Officers, Deputy Sheriffs, Counselors, Record Clerks and Nurses submit to a pre-employment background investigation to determine suitability for employment with the office. Background investigations for other Lucas County Sheriff's Office positions shall be at the discretion of the Sheriff.

II. PROCEDURES

The following procedures are established to provide the Background Investigator with a standardized approach to conducting background investigations on applicants. The Office will perform background investigations on full time new hires and rehires. To determine an individual's suitability and stability for employment, the Lucas County Sheriff's Office relies upon background investigation, psychological evaluation, physical examination, and oral interviews. The Sheriff or designee will determine the process for selection of those appointed as Reserve Deputy Sheriffs. In addition, a physical ability test will be a prerequisite to being appointed a Reserve Deputy or being hired as a Corrections Officer, Deputy Sheriff, or Counselor.

A. APPLICATIONS

1. Applications are distributed when the need for a position becomes apparent (based on projected losses of work force due to transfer, promotion, and resignation.)

2. Applications must be completed and returned before or on the designated due date.
3. Applications must be completed and returned with all transcripts (at least a copy of diploma), military report of separation long form DD-214, and release of information authorization, and any other required forms specific to the position.

B. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

1. Purpose:
 - a. To learn how an applicant has behaved under a wide variety of circumstances and from this to base a prediction concerning future performance as an employee.
 - b. To verify all statements made by an applicant in their application.
 - c. To screen for deficient behaviors and traits, as well prevent hiring a person who will prove to be unqualified.
 - d. Whenever practicable, the background investigator will obtain information on an applicant through personal interviews with persons who have knowledge of the applicant.
2. The background investigation includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Applicants are fingerprinted and subjected to a search of local, state, and national records and fingerprint files.
 - b. The investigator should ask the applicant to clarify or explain any issues that arise as a result of these checks in a follow up background interview. The investigator will summarize the interview in reference to the driving and criminal history and place the notes in the applicant's file.
 - c. Background assessment will be completed to gauge which applicants will be disqualified. The background assessment is on a negative point scale in which a candidate may not have more than twelve (12) combined criminal and traffic background points.
 - d. An applicant is disqualified if convicted of a felony offense. Per Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission, no person convicted of a felony offense may attend any portion of the Corrections Basic Training program or the Ohio Peace Officer Basic Training program. This includes felony convictions that have been sealed or expunged by court order.
 - e. An applicant may be disqualified if convicted of a misdemeanor offense. The Sheriff or Designee will review such applications on

a case-by-case basis.

- f. Additional disqualifiers include crime of moral turpitude (Ohio Revised Code 4776.10A) or a substantiated history of atypical or violent behavior. An applicant will not be considered if they are under indictment for any criminal offense, are on probation, or if they have pending fines or court costs.
3. Other factors such as treatment in a mental health institution are grounds for possible disqualification, depending on circumstances. The Sheriff will use the accumulated point totals concerning each applicant as a decision-making guide only.
 4. Military History
 - a. Applicants that were in the military will supply a copy of their DD-214 (long form, military report of separation) to the background investigator.
 - b. Other than honorably discharged from the United States military service for reasons that are job related may be disqualified.
 - c. The investigator will note any action that was taken against the applicant by the military and place it in the applicant's file.
 5. Employment History
 - a. The purpose of the employment history verification is to obtain information on the applicant's work history, work ethics, dependability, and personal relationships. The background investigator will verify past and present employers.
 - b. An applicant's work history that indicates termination, a pattern of unexcused absences, discipline, any suspensions, criminal activities, or overall poor behavior will be thoroughly examined and may be grounds for disqualification.
 - c. The background investigator will place all correspondence concerning employment history in the applicant's file.
 6. Educational Verification
 - a. The purpose of the education verification is to ensure that the applicant's educational credentials are accurate and meet the minimum qualifications. An original or copy of certified academic transcripts are preferred. At a minimum, a copy of a diploma from an accredited education institution is required. All correspondence concerning education will be placed in the applicant's file.

- b. An applicant's education history, including a pattern of unexcused absences, discipline, suspensions, discharges, or criminal activities, will be thoroughly assessed and may be grounds for disqualification.
7. Personal Reference Check
- a. The purpose of the reference check is to obtain background information on the applicant from the listed references. When possible, at least three personal references will be checked.
 - b. The background investigator will verify all of the references listed in the Personal History Questionnaire.
 - i. While it is preferred that the reference check be conducted in person, verifications may be made by telephone or electronic correspondence.
 - ii. If the reference cannot be contacted after several attempts, the background investigator will note this in the file.
 - c. The summary of the interview or any correspondence will be noted in the applicant's file.
8. Neighborhood Interviews for the Corrections Officer and Counselor positions may be conducted if warranted.
- a. The purpose of the neighborhood interviews is to obtain background information on the applicant from their neighbors.
 - b. The results of the neighborhood interview will be summarized and noted in the applicant's file.
9. Home Visit for the Corrections Officer and Counselor positions may be conducted if warranted.
- a. The purpose of the home visit is to evaluate the candidate in their home environment.
 - b. The background investigator will summarize the interview and place it in the file.

C. PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST

- 1. Lucas County Sheriff's Office requires those hired as counselors complete the corrections officer academy. State of Ohio corrections officer academies use a psychomotor domain of teaching. Student performance objectives require demonstration of fine and gross motor skills.

2. Corrections officers and counselor applicants need to be at a certain level of physical fitness in order to qualify for the job. The Correction Officer Physical Ability Test (COPAT) will measure a candidate's ability to perform the essential job functions in a corrections facility.
3. The type of physical ability test program shall be determined by the Sheriff and will identify measures of strength, endurance, and flexibility that are closely related to performing the central job functions of a Corrections Officer.
 - a. Wavier – Prior to participating in the physical ability test, the applicant must complete the Lucas County Sheriff's Office Release Form attesting that the applicant is physically capable of performing the physical ability test and will not hold this agency or its facilitators liable for any injury or health problems which may occur while partaking in this event.
 - b. The COPAT will consist of the following components:
 - i. Weight carry – which stimulates the need to carry equipment to a location within the correctional facility.
 - ii. Stair climb – which simulates the need to respond to a situation in a multi-level facility.
 - iii. Obstacle run – which simulates responding to a situation some distance away.
 - iv. Pegboard – which simulates responding to a situation where upon reaching an end of a corridor, a corrections officer needed to open a gated or locked area.
 - v. Dummy drag – which simulates arriving to a scene where an inmate needed dragged to a safe environment or holding room after being suppressed.
 - vi. Lie down/stand ups – which simulates being knocked to the ground after having struggled with an inmate.
 - c. Testing schedules:
 - i. Test and retest date(s) are set by the office.
 - ii. Candidates will have two (2) attempts to complete the COPAT physical ability test successfully. Candidates must wait two (2) weeks to retest upon availability of test location. If the candidate is unsuccessful after two (2) attempts, they will be eliminated from the process but may reapply during the next recruitment.

- d. Score expiration – A passing physical ability test is good for one year from the date of the test.

D. INTERVIEW

1. Those who pass the background investigation are scheduled for appearance before an interview board. The board is composed of representatives of the division and section to which the applicant would be assigned.
2. Interview questions and applicant assessments will be scored individually on a 0-to-5-point scale. Each board member will determine a composite score for the applicant and the scores of all board members will be averaged. Board members will then write a brief summary of their overall impression of the candidate. Each board member will then make a recommendation to the Sheriff regarding the candidate, placing them in the category of either hire, re-evaluate at a later date, or do not hire. The Sheriff ultimately decides which candidates are disqualified based on the interview.
3. Unsuccessful completion of this component will eliminate the candidate from the process but he/she may reapply during the next recruitment.

E. PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST

1. A psychological examination (MMPI/CPI or other testing instrument approved by the Sheriff) is mandatory for all employment candidates who pass the background investigation and interview portions of the selection process. The examination may be scheduled either before the interview board session or after.
2. The examination may be followed by an interview with the psychologist. The need for an interview is to clarify the psychologist's interpretation of the test. The psychologist may score the MMPI/CPI or the Lucas County Sheriff's Office will use a clinical assessment scoring service.
3. The psychologist determines whether the candidate, based on his/her test results, and interview (if completed), has a personality that will allow him/her to function successfully at the Lucas County Sheriff's Office in the area of Corrections. (This provision is consistent with paragraph 16 of the stipulation contained in the Jones v. Wittenberg litigation.)
4. The psychologist might also determine that the test results and interview indicate that the applicant would function marginally successfully or would not be suitable for the assigned position.
5. Applicants falling into category d of this section will not be considered for employment and will be notified. Unsuccessful completion of this component will eliminate the candidate from the process but he/she may reapply during the next recruitment. Permanent exclusion from potential

employment may occur if recommended by the psychologist due to gross personality defects that would interfere with proper functioning in the position.

F. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

1. Those candidates who pass the psychological test are required to undergo an extensive physical examination, which includes but are not limited to blood work, vision testing, hearing testing, and urine drug screening.
2. If the examination indicates a need, further medical testing will be conducted (i.e., stress test, pulmonary function test, or fitness for duty exam) to determine with accuracy the state of the applicant's health.
3. The examining physician determines whether the applicant's current health is of a standard to allow him/her to function successfully in the assigned position.
4. Should an applicant fail the physical examination or the drug screening, he/she will be notified. Unsuccessful completion of this component will eliminate the candidate from the process but he/she may reapply during the next recruitment.

G. POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION

1. The Sheriff or Designee may request a polygraph examination at any point during the Pre-employment screening process.
2. Should an applicant fail the polygraph examination or the drug screening, he/she will be notified. Unsuccessful completion of this component will eliminate the candidate from the process but he/she may reapply during the next recruitment.

H. FINAL SELECTION

1. The Sheriff may or may not conduct a final interview with the applicant and may offer employment to applicants relying solely on the information obtained during the above listed criteria.
2. The Sheriff has final authority to select or reject applicants at the end of the pre-employment screening process.

I. NURSE APPLICANTS

1. At the Sheriff's discretion, nurse applicants will undergo background investigations identical to those conducted on corrections officers, counselors, and record clerk applicants.
2. Representatives of the corrections division and the medical section will interview nurse applicants.
3. The Sheriff has final authority over the selection of nurse candidates.