

Cobb County Police Department

Policy 2.05

PROMOTIONS AND COMMAND STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Effective Date: October 4, 2012
Rescinds: Policy 2.05 (July 20, 2012)
Related Orders: None
Issued By: Chief J.R. Houser Page 1 of 10
The words "he, his, him," which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.

The purpose of this policy is to establish policies and procedures pertaining to the Department's promotional system for Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant and Command Staff Appointments.

I. APPLICABILITY

These procedures apply to qualified sworn personnel who wish to participate in the promotional process for the ranks of Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant, and who are eligible for Command Staff Appointments.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy, the following words and terms shall have the meaning ascribed:

- A. Continuous Service:** Uninterrupted employment by the Cobb County Police Department (breaks in service for military duty, medical purposes, family emergencies, or kindred purposes authorized by the Department, shall not be construed as interruptions of continuous service).
- B. Department:** The Cobb County Police Department.
- C. Department Test Coordinator:** An identified person/position within the Police Department who assists Human Resources with the administration of the promotional process. This task is normally assigned to the commander of the Cobb County Public Safety Training Center.
- D. Formal Disciplinary Action:** Any Code of Conduct or Policy Manual procedure violation which results in a loss of rank or a suspension without pay for more than three days, or a pattern of three or more incidents which results in a formal reprimand or suspension.

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- E. **Human Resources:** The Cobb County Department of Human Resources (not the Department of Public Safety Personnel Unit).
- F. **Sworn Officer:** An officer of the Cobb County Police Department designated as a Police Officer II or Police Officer III.
- G. **Test Consultant:** A service provider contracted by the County to provide job-related, non-discriminatory test(s) and scoring used for the evaluation of promotional candidates.

III. PRE-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR SERGEANTS AND LIEUTENANTS

A. Notification of Promotional Exam

Announcements of an upcoming promotional process will be made electronically to all officers of the Department. Additionally, unit commanders shall post printed copies of the notification announcement in prominent places (such as bulletin boards).

1. At least 60 days prior to the date of the written test, Human Resources will announce the opening and closing dates for registering for the promotional exam.
2. The announcement will contain other pertinent facts related to the exam, to include:
 - a. A list of all test resource materials and recommended study materials;
 - b. Registration process requirements;
 - c. Weights assigned to test components; and
 - d. The projected number of participants in the assessment center.

B. Qualification of Applicants

Human Resources shall be responsible for qualifying applicants who meet the minimum requirements for an announced promotional exam. A waiver of qualifications for eligibility is not granted to applicants erroneously permitted to participate in the promotional exam process.

The following minimum qualifications must be met to compete in the promotional process.

1. Police Sergeant

To compete for the rank of Police Sergeant, candidates must meet the following minimum requirements prior to the effective date of the promotional roster:

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- a. Have a minimum of five years of total service as a Sworn Officer with the Department, prior to the effective date of the promotional roster. Three of the above five years must be of Continuous Service with the Department immediately prior to the effective date of the promotional roster.
- b. Have completed the Georgia POST Field Training Officer (FTO) course.

2. Police Lieutenant

To compete for the rank of Police Lieutenant, candidates must have three years Continuous Service as a Police Sergeant with the Cobb County Police Department immediately prior to the effective date of the promotional roster.

C. Registration for Promotional Exam

1. Candidates must complete an application through the Cobb County Human Resources Department in order to register for the promotional exam.
2. Candidates on active military duty will be afforded an opportunity to participate per the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

D. Administration of Promotional Exams

1. Promotional exams for Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant shall be administered by, or under the direction of, Human Resources, with the assistance of the Department Test Coordinator.
2. The Department Test Coordinator will ensure that the Cobb County Superior Court, the Cobb County State Court, the Cobb County Magistrate Court, the Cobb County District Attorney's Office and the Cobb County Solicitor General's Office are notified of the testing dates and times as they become available.
3. Should a candidate receive a subpoena which requires his appearance in court at the time of the written test or the assessment center, he should immediately contact the Department Test Coordinator. The Department Test Coordinator will assist in resolving the conflict by:
 - a. Determining the feasibility of re-scheduling the candidate's appearance in court;

- b. Determining the feasibility of re-scheduling the candidate's time for taking the written test or assessment center; or
- c. Any other reasonable means for ensuring that the candidate is able to fully participate in the promotional process.

IV. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR SERGEANTS AND LIEUTENANTS

The Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant promotional processes are normally administered every two years.

A. Promotional Exam Components

The Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant promotional exams are comprised of the written test and the assessment center.

1. Written Test

- a. The written test will consist of a battery of 80 to 120 multiple choice questions, based on a 100 point scale. These questions will be developed from the resource materials and reading list provided to the candidates.
- b. Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant Candidates will receive their results prior to the commencement of the assessment center.

2. Assessment Center

The assessment center is comprised of job-related exercises during and/or after which each participant's performance is evaluated by two or more trained assessors.

a. Qualifications for Advancement to the Assessment Center

All candidates who sit for the written test and who sign up for the assessment center by the deadline date provided will be allowed to continue forward to the assessment center.

b. Administration of Assessment Center

1. Use of Assessors

Multiple assessors will be used in each exercise of the assessment center. All assessors will be selected from police departments other than the Cobb County Police Department. Should an assessor have to withdraw during the assessment center, the process will continue with the

remaining assessors. Generally, there will be a subject matter expert from Cobb County Police Department available to answer questions for the assessors regarding appropriate protocols used by Cobb County Police Department. This expert will not be involved in the scoring.

2. **Qualifications of Assessors**

Assessors for the assessment center must be at least equal in rank and responsibility to the rank being evaluated. Assessors will be trained by the Test Consultant for their duties in the promotional process. Considerations for assessors include availability, experience, and diversity.

3. **Examination of Candidates**

Assessment center candidates shall be presented to the assessor panel in an order determined necessary to maintain adequate staffing of the Police Department. Final grading by the assessor panel shall be accomplished outside the presence of the candidate.

Each candidate will receive performance feedback based on scores for each exercise in the assessment center.

4. **Receipt of Results**

Candidates will receive assessment center results by or through the Human Resources Department.

B. List of Eligible Candidates

Following the examination process, a list of eligible candidates will be established. The list will remain in effect for two calendar years from the date of establishment. If the list of eligible candidates is exhausted prior to its expiration date, a new list may be established immediately following a new examination process.

1. **Final Score**

The final score is determined by:

- a. The written test score (by weight) and the assessment center score (by weight).

- b. The Human Resources Department will include the weights of each test component in the test announcement.
 - c. For a candidate to be placed on the list of eligible candidates, the final score must be 70% or above.
2. Candidates will be placed on the list of eligible candidates in order based upon their final score.

C. Grounds for Applicant Disqualification

Applicants disqualified from the promotional process will not be entitled to continue in the promotional exam process, which includes the establishment of any subsequent list of eligible candidates from remaining candidates when a current list of eligible candidates is exhausted. Grounds for disqualification are, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to participate in any phase of a promotional exam;
2. Achieving an overall score of less than 70% on the entire process;
3. Arriving at a test site after the appointed starting time for any part of an exam; or
4. Cheating on any part of the promotional exam.

V. POST-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR SERGEANTS & LIEUTENANTS

A. Notification to Candidates of Testing Results

Each candidate for Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant will be notified of the results of his promotional exams by the Human Resources Department.

B. Appeal Procedures

1. Upon completion of the test

A candidate may appeal testing conditions during the test or before leaving the test site. Improper testing conditions include: incorrect or incomplete instructions given, testing material that is not readable, or environmental conditions that would interfere with the candidate's ability to take the exam.

Upon completion of the test, each candidate will be escorted to a copy machine and provided with a copy of his test answer sheet. The candidate will then proceed to a designated area where there will be an opportunity to view the intended test answer key and self-score the photocopied answer sheet. At the test site, candidates will be provided detailed information on how to appeal or rebut an item, any test question(s), or keyed answer(s). Appeals will be published without the name of the

appellant so that other interested candidates may support or file a rebuttal. Once appeals are posted, candidates may submit a rebuttal to an appealed test item/keyed answer and give reason(s) and documentation supporting why the test item should stand as is or the answer remain as keyed. An Exam Review Committee (comprised of subject matter experts) will review the appealed item(s) and rebuttal(s). The Exam Review Committee, without knowledge of the name of the individual appealing or rebutting the item(s), will review all appeals using the five-pronged test below. Their decision will be final.

- a. Does the question come from the cited source?
- b. Is the question taken correctly from the cited source?
- c. Is the keyed answer correct according to the cited source?
- d. According to the cited source, is one or more of the distracters an equally correct answer?
- e. According to the cited source, does one or more of the distracters create so much ambiguity that it is not possible to choose a best answer?

An answer of “no” to questions “a” – “c” or an answer of “yes” to questions “d” or “e” could result in the test item being either re-keyed with a different answer; re-keyed with more than one answer; or everyone being given credit.

Cobb County Human Resources will notify all candidates of the outcomes of the appeals/rebuttals process via e-mail.

2. After the written test notices have been sent

A candidate may appeal miscalculated scores. A candidate may file an appeal to the Director of Human Resources by written letter or by e-mail. The appeal must be received by the Director of Human Resources within 10 calendar days from the date that notices were postmarked or sent electronically. The Director of Human Resources, or his designee, will notify the candidate of his receipt of the appeal.

3. Immediately following the administration of the assessment center

A candidate may appeal the assessment center because the candidate believed that there were unfair or improper testing conditions or if the candidate had concerns about the administration of or how the assessment center process was conducted. Before leaving the assessment center, the candidate may complete the provided appeals form listing any concerns that the candidate had about the process.

4. After the final test notices have been sent

A candidate may file an appeal to the Director of Human Resources by written letter or by e-mail. The appeal must be received by the Director of Human Resources within 10 calendar days from the date that notices were postmarked or sent electronically. The Director of Human Resources, or his designee, will notify the candidate of his receipt of the appeal.

The Director of Human Resources is the final decision maker regarding the granting or denial of an appeal. The Director of Human Resources, or his designee, will notify the candidate in writing or electronically of the results of the appeal for each of the appeal periods. The final list of candidates for promotions will not be provided to the Chief of Police until all appeals to Human Resources have been resolved.

C. Location of Promotional Exam Records

All records pertinent to any promotional exam process shall be maintained by Human Resources, and as specified by any applicable laws.

VI. FILLING POSITION VACANCIES FROM LIST OF ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES

A. Selection of Most Suited Applicant

1. In selecting the most suited applicant for a vacancy, the Chief of Police shall consider the following factors:
 - a. Candidate examination score;
 - b. Candidate annual evaluations;
 - c. Candidate disciplinary history;
 - d. Candidate training history/experience;
 - e. Candidate education;
 - f. Candidate resumes (when requested by the Chief of Police); and
 - g. Counsel and advice of the Deputy Chiefs and the Command Staff.
2. The Chief of Police is not under any obligation to select a promotional candidate in order of test ranking.
3. Prior to appointment or promotion, the Chief shall conduct a final interview with the candidate.
4. Written documentation regarding the Chief of Police's reasons for a selection shall be submitted to Human Resources.

B. Test Results for List of Eligible Candidates

Written test and assessment center scores must be certified by Human Resources, at which point the candidates will be placed on a promotional list. The promotional list will become active when the prior promotional list expires.

C. Candidate Who Receives Formal Disciplinary Action

1. A candidate eligible for promotion who receives Formal Disciplinary Action after becoming eligible may become ineligible for promotion, and the Chief may remove his name from the promotional roster.
2. A candidate removed from the list for cause will be eligible to test and participate in the next promotional cycle.

VII. PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND SECURITY PROCEDURES

A. Applicability to All Personnel

This section applies to all Department personnel, whether or not such persons are participating in any part of a promotional process.

B. Security of Written Test and Assessment Center Materials

1. Upon receipt from the Test Consultant, promotional materials will be secured in accordance with Human Resources written procedures.
2. The Department's promotional examinations are considered proprietary and highly confidential. Therefore, personnel participating in any aspect of a promotional examination may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, which requires that the contents of that examination not be disclosed to anyone, except as provided for by law or policy regarding formal testimony or inquiry. Failure to sign a confidentiality agreement will render a candidate ineligible to continue in any promotional process. Failure to uphold the confidentiality agreement may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.
3. During the course of the promotional testing process, no candidate or subject matter expert with knowledge of the test material shall give or receive assistance, insight, or information of any kind regarding any aspect of that promotional process.
4. Personnel will not alter or change, or cause to be altered or changed, any device, apparatus, equipment, or material being used in a promotional exam process without prior approval from appropriate supervisory personnel.
5. Any employee who has knowledge of any violation of this policy is mandated to promptly report this information to the Department Test Coordinator, bypassing the chain of command. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

VIII. COMMAND STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Appointment to a rank above Lieutenant shall be made by the Chief of Police, who will be the appointing authority. A written announcement of the process will be provided to eligible personnel. The process may vary according to rank and grade, and may consist of elements such as interviews; review of prior performance evaluations, fitness scores, and education; as well as length of time in grade, etc. The Chief of Police shall conduct an oral interview with the candidate prior to the appointment.