

POLICY: 1.9 Hiring Standards and Process



City of Oak Point Department of Public Safety Fire Department

TITLE: HIRING STANDARDS AND PROCESS

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POLICY

The Department strives to obtain the best members possible to help achieve the department's policing goals. To that end, the department shall practice a regimented, 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 persons. 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.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to outline minimum hiring requirements and selection process for Fire /Rescue members and non-sworn members of the department.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Disability - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities.
- B. Good moral character- The attributes of a prospective employee that enhance his or her value to the department and the goals of community-oriented policing which include honesty, integrity, truthfulness, obedience to the oath of office and the code of ethics, respect for authority, and respect for the rights of others.

III. QUALIFICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

- A. The minimum qualifications for paid personnel are that all applicants for the position of fire officer must meet TCFP standards, as well as:
1. Age of 21.
 2. High school graduate or GED.
 3. Pass a written examination.
 4. Pass a background investigation which includes the following:
 - a. Personal and family history;
 - b. Credit history, including current creditors;
 - c. Education, including all schools attended and degrees or certificates obtained;
 - d. All residences for the past ten years;
 - e. Comprehensive employment history;
 - f. A fingerprint-based criminal history search, including all arrests, locations, dates, and dispositions;
 - g. Traffic summonses and accidents, and
 - h. An inquiry of family, friends, and associates as to character and reputation, plus an informal interview with the applicant's spouse or "significant other," as well as ex-spouses.
 5. Pass a polygraph test (background dependent)
 6. Pass an oral interview.
 7. Pass a physical examination, psychological screening(background dependent), and drug test.
 8. Be of good moral character.
 - a. 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.
 9. Any other standards set by law or by policy of the city

IV. DISQUALIFIERS FOR EMPLOYMENT

The following are absolute disqualifiers for employment as a fire officer.

1. Conviction or admission of any felony within the last 10 years, or misdemeanor within the past 2 years.
2. Conviction or admission of any illegal controlled substance use within the past 5 years, or use of marijuana within the past 2 years.
3. Conviction of family violence.
4. Dishonorable discharge from the military.

V. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SWORN

A. The applicant must complete the following:

1. Complete a written city application and personal history statement and submit it to the Director. Copies of the following documents will also be submitted:
 - a. Birth Certificate
 - b. Driver's License
 - c. High School Diploma or transcript, or GED certificate.
 - d. Credit report dated no more than 90 days prior
 - e. Any college transcripts
 - f. Copy of military discharge papers
2. Arrange with the Director to take the written test and appear for other selection process steps.

VI. SELECTION PROCESS FOR SWORN (Full-Time)

- A. The Director, or designee, will review the application and documents for basic qualifications. If basic qualifications appear to be met and an opening exists, the Director assigns a sergeant to conduct a preliminary review of the candidate and schedules appropriate testing. If no opening exists, the application will be placed in a file to await an opening for 120 days. When an opening occurs, the applicant will be contacted to determine if they are still interested in the position.
- B. The Sergeant assigned to conduct a preliminary review of the applicant shall perform the following:
 1. Instruct the applicant to obtain the applicant's driving record from DPS.
 2. Have the applicant sign information release forms.

3. If the applicant has recently lived outside the county, request records checks through agencies in the applicant's previous communities.
 4. Instruct the applicant on how to obtain a criminal history check through FAST.
 5. Administer the written examination.
 - 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. The department shall maintain examination results.
 6. If more than one applicant is given the written test at the same time, the results are assembled with the highest grade first and submitted to the interview board. The Interview board consists of the Director and two other departmental members. The candidate is graded on an applicant interview sheet and either passes or fails the interview.
 7. Those passing the interview will then be considered for conditional offers of employment. The applicant's packages will be forwarded to the Director for offering employment.
- C. The Director will meet with the applicant who best meets the need of the department and conducts a detailed interview with the candidate. If he approves, he will issue the candidate a Conditional Offer of Employment. A copy will be given to the applicant. The Offer of Employment is conditional upon passing:
1. A polygraph examination (if required)
 2. A physical and drug screen, and
 3. A psychological screen (if required)
- D. After a conditional offer of employment is made, the officer assigned to conduct the background investigation may question the applicant regarding his or her prior medical problems including any worker's compensation claims and conditions. The officer will then conduct a detailed background investigation. He shall also schedule the applicant for any further testing.
- E. The background shall include contact all former fire employers.
- F. The polygraph examination if requested will be conducted by an operator certified and licensed by the State of Texas to conduct polygraph examinations.
- G. Upon completion of all testing and the background investigation, the applicants file will be returned to the Director for the final decision.

1. Following a medical examination, an offer of employment may be withdrawn if the applicant is incapable of performing the core job functions for the position or 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 Director must base the threat on medical knowledge, not just speculation.
- H. If the individual is approved for hire, the Chief will make all the necessary arrangements for processing a new employee. If the individual is not selected, a letter will be sent to the applicant advising him or her that the Conditional Offer of Employment has been withdrawn and the reason stated plainly.
- I. Unsuccessful applicants, that do not have permanent disqualifiers, may re-apply after 6 months from the date of last application if a vacancy exists.
- J. Part time Firefighter.
1. A licensed fire officer from another Texas agency must meet the same criteria set forth above. If the potential member is in good standing at an area fire department and can pass entry level functions testing all other tests may be waived except the drug screen.
 2. The employee assigned to investigate the applicant shall ensure that an applicant with prior fire experience has not had his or her licenses suspended or revoked. A query will be made to the TCFP to determine all other agencies where the licensee has worked. These agencies will be contacted before completion of the background to determine work history and any significant details of their employment.

VII. PERSONNEL RECORDS

- A. For each employee, the department maintains a personnel file. This file contains the background investigation package, a copy of all forms completed during the hiring process, all evaluations, disciplinary action amounting to a written reprimand or higher, leave/attendance record, and assignments. The original of the officer's background investigation and all selection materials is sealed in an envelope in this file and is confidential. All TCFP required documents are maintained in this file.
- B. The Director maintains and controls all disciplinary personnel records. The department complies with the records retention schedule set by state law and city policy.

- C. Employees may review their records at any reasonable time upon request. The Director may release a copy of a record from file upon obtaining a signed authorization from the employee.
- 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 Director.
- E. If the Director deems it necessary to include derogatory information in a personnel file, he/she shall provide the employee a copy of the information. The employee may protest the inclusion of such information in writing to the Director, but must do so within 7 days. 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 Director. The Director shall disclose the employee's performance record consistent with current law.