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BECOMING A POLICE OFFICER IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Becoming a Police Officer in the state of New Jersey is a very competitive task to accomplish; however, it is a rewarding career for the right person. There are three ways to become a police officer in the State of New Jersey:

- 1) **Civil Service Testing:** This process begins when an applicant takes the NJ Department of Personnel (DOP) Civil Service test that is administered every other year and scores are kept on file for two years. The test is scored along with thousands of additional applicants' tests throughout the entire state of NJ. Your score, in addition to some other factors, will determine whether or not you will be contacted in writing from an agency in reference to filing paperwork for an application or interview process; this is called your certification.
- 2) **Chiefs Test:** This test is administered by each individual agency that is not a civil service department. A "Chiefs Test" agency can set the prerequisites on their application as they see fit. An example would be requiring a four-year college degree or sixty college credits combined with military service. These agencies will require you to take a written exam, a physical fitness test and sit through several oral interviews in order to get hired. Once hired the process becomes the same as every other agency.

Once an applicant is certified by an agency, they will usually meet with an agency representative to fill out an employee application packet. If at that time, the agency is still interested in the applicant, a background check will be started on the applicant.

- 3) **Alternate Route:** The Alternate Route Program is a program in which the recruit pays their own way through the police academy. The process is similar to the Chiefs Test. There is a limited number of recruits allowed into each class so the testing process is extremely competitive. Individuals should expect to pay upwards of \$5000, which includes tuition, medical testing, psychological testing, drug testing, uniforms, books and ammo. We will assist you with job placement but there are no guarantees. You must be hired within three years of the graduation date. Alternate Route graduates from the Essex County College Public Safety Academy boast a greater than 90 percent hire rate.

The next step in the process will be for the applicant to produce original documentation in reference to birth certificates, academic records, driving records, residency records, etc. The background interview has now begun its more extensive search and a team of detectives will verify ALL information provided by the applicant to verify that the applicant is of good moral character.

Once the above requirements have been satisfactorily met, the applicant will undergo a series of physical, mental and psychological examinations in which ALL tests must be passed.

If chosen under any of the above three scenarios, whether hired by an agency or chosen from the Alternate Route process, the new recruit will undergo an extensive physical training program as well as an intense defensive tactics and academics program in which the recruit will be tested every day on their physical and mental capabilities. Some of the physical aspects include but are not limited to: warm-up exercises, running, push-ups, crunches and weight lifting, to name just a few.

Academics that the recruit must learn include information on laws governing the State of New Jersey, use of force, firearms laws and weapons techniques, first responder, communication skills, report writing, how to use an ASP baton, and much more.

In conclusion, becoming a Police Officer is an exciting career, but it not for everyone. You must be prepared to work holidays, weekends and various shifts. Police Officers are public figures who must be able to withstand abusive language, at times, take orders and set an example for those whom you serve. There is a great deal of room for advancement and opportunity in different divisions as well as good pay and benefits packages for you and your family. If you are willing to work hard and have a career that will pay off, Police Officer is definitely a career worth seeking.

Job Announcements and information can be found on sources such as:

- NJ Civil Service Commission www.nj.gov/csc
- NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police www.njsacop.org (under the Standards & Professional Services tab – police exam schedule)
- Your local newspaper

Physical Fitness Requirements

The Pre-Academy Entry Physical Agility Testing video on YouTube will fully explain and demonstrate the physical fitness testing requirements for all Academies, providing both the proper method and improper method to perform each exercise.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QajrRGIBIPk>

This is a PASS / FAIL event.

The events and minimum scores to pass are:

- 1.5 mile run in 15:55 or less
- 300 meter run in 70.1 seconds or less
- Vertical jump of 15 inches or more
- 24 push-ups in 1 minute or less
- 28 sit-ups in 1 minute or less