

# HARRISONBURG POLICE OFFICER CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACKET



## HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

HONOR – ACCOUNTABILITY – DEDICATION – INTEGRITY – PROFESSIONALISM

- **HPD Vision and Mission Statement**
- **Qualifications**
- **Application Process**
- **Salary & Benefits**
- **Disqualifying Criteria**
- **Supplemental Information**
- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

### *Where to find us:*

The Police Department is located at 101 North Main Street Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Professional Standards Unit 540-437-2664

[www.harrisonburgva.gov/police](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/police)    [www.facebook.com/HarrisonburgPoliceDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/HarrisonburgPoliceDepartment)

[harrisonburgpolicerecruit@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:harrisonburgpolicerecruit@harrisonburgva.gov)

Updated May 2025

# HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT



## Our Mission

The Harrisonburg Police Department will partner with our community to reduce crime, solve problems and improve quality of life.

## Our Vision

An unwavering commitment to community safety and security through selfless acts of service.

## Our Core Values

These values guide how we treat each other and the public we serve. We use these as the basis for our actions including training, reinforcement, rewards and consequences, and alignment of policies.

**Honor**: We are honorable because it is the foundation on which all other values depend.

**Accountability**: We are accountable in word and deed because our actions have a direct effect on the community we serve.

**Dedication**: We are dedicated to delivering the highest quality service because we are committed to earning the trust and respect of our community.

**Integrity**: We act with integrity because it is the cornerstone on which the trust of our community is built.

**Professionalism**: We are a professional organization because we are committed to providing the highest level of service and safety.

## **Information Summary**

The purpose of this packet is to give the applicant a better understanding of our hiring process, the qualifications needed to become a Harrisonburg Police Officer and common factors that eliminate candidates. In addition, this packet includes salary and benefit information, as well as an overview of specialty positions and teams within HPD.

The Harrisonburg Police Department conducts police officer testing several times per year. The written test, physical agility test, and interview are typically conducted on the same date to determine eligibility in the remainder of the hiring process. Scheduling for these dates is dependent upon current vacancies and with ample time for the hiring process to conclude prior to the next academy start date.

Candidates must register for testing online. Advertisements for police officer testing will be posted on the City of Harrisonburg Employment website. You may sign up to be electronically notified for future testing dates and Police Officer vacancies at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/jobs](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/jobs).

The City of Harrisonburg, Virginia is an Equal Opportunity Employer. If an applicant requires reasonable accommodation (per Americans with Disabilities Act) in order to participate in any phase noted herein, the applicant must advise Human Resources in writing along with supporting medical documentation. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The submission of a request does not necessarily mean that the request will be granted.

# **Qualifications**

## **AGE:**

Candidates must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age by completion of academy (currently 20 weeks). **Do not submit your birth certificate or other legal papers with your application. This information will be requested later in the hiring process.**

## **EDUCATION / EXPERIENCE:**

Minimum requirement for a Police Recruit position is a high school diploma or G.E.D., with college degree or military experience preferred. **Do not submit proof of education or military service with your application. This information will be requested later in the hiring process.**

Must meet and maintain all department standards, state training, and education requirements for position including, but not limited to completion of basic training and certification as a police officer in the Commonwealth of Virginia and completion of field training within one year of employment.

## **CITIZENSHIP:**

Candidates must be a United States Citizen. Proof of such must be presented prior to appointment. Acceptable proof of United States citizenship shall include a birth certificate from within the United States, naturalization papers, a United States passport, or a Certificate of Live Birth Abroad of a United States Citizen. DCJS will consider a waiver if the individual is a permanent resident and is in the process of obtaining citizenship. **Do not submit proof of citizenship or other legal papers with your application. This information will be requested later in the hiring process.**

## **DRIVING RECORD:**

Candidates must have a valid motor vehicle operator's license, or the ability to obtain a valid motor vehicle operator's license by date of hire, and a credible driving record.

## **THE ABILITY TO PERFORM THE ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:**

Police officers are required to maintain an acceptable level of physical fitness. In addition, officers must be able to work 12-hour shifts (currently 6am-6pm or 6pm-6am). Candidates must be capable of performing the essential job functions of an entry-level police officer with or without reasonable accommodation. All phases of the examination are designed to measure a candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of the job. Please refer to the section titled Essential Duties & Responsibilities for a list of essential functions.

## **DUTIES AND WORK RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Police officers are responsible for performing the essential functions of the job which include the suppression of crime, the protection of life and property from criminal activity, the apprehension and arrest of violators of criminal and traffic laws, the recovery of stolen property and the regulation of non-criminal conduct. Please refer to the Essential Duties & Responsibilities section for further details.

## **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS:**

Must reside or be willing to relocate within a one-hour drive of the City.

## **CRIMINAL HISTORY:**

Candidates must be of good moral character and free of any felony convictions, any convictions that involve moral turpitude or that would harm public confidence in the Department. Please refer to Disqualifying Criteria for a list of common violations that eliminate candidates.

# **Application and Hiring Process**

A competitive, multi-step process is utilized to select police officer candidates.

- **Step One – Application & Personal History Statement**

The application and personal history statement will be used to assist in evaluating a candidate's eligibility and to assist in the background investigation and must be completed in its entirety. Common mistakes that eliminate candidates are incomplete or intentionally omitted information. It is imperative that applicants are truthful and thorough in this phase of the hiring process. Dishonesty, no matter how slight, will not be tolerated and is grounds for permanent disqualification. Candidates eliminated at this step will be eligible to re-apply for the position of police officer six months from the date their initial application was received

- **Step Two – Written Test**

The National Police Officer Selection Test (POST) is an entry-level basic skills test that helps law enforcement agencies select the most qualified applicants by ensuring that candidates possess the basic cognitive skills necessary to successfully perform the job. The POST is a valid, job-related test designed specifically for law enforcement use, which measures these basic skills: Arithmetic, Reading Comprehension, Grammar and Incident Report Writing. Candidates may attempt the written test three times within each calendar year. The study guide can be found at: <https://www.applytoserve.com/Study/>. Applicants who are already certified Police Officers will skip the written test

- **Step Three - Physical Fitness and Weapons Agility Test**

You must pass the written part of the testing to be invited to attend the physical agility test. Candidates may attempt the agility course three times on each testing day and may attend up to three testing days each calendar year. The physical agility (Law Fit Course) must be completed in less than one minute and thirty-six seconds. Refer to the Physical Ability Course section for details and further information.

- **Step Four - Panel Interview**

Following successful completion of the written and physical agility tests, applicants will advance to the panel interview. The panel interview staff will typically be comprised of members from all ranks and divisions of the Harrisonburg Police Department. Interviews may take up to an hour and candidates will be evaluated based on their responses to several questions presented by the panel.

- **Step Five - Polygraph**

A polygraph examination will be scheduled for the candidates that have successfully completed the Panel Interview. Polygraphs will be conducted at HPD by one of HPD's certified polygraphers. Typical examinations take approximately three (3) hours with preferred dress being business casual.

- **Step Six - Background Investigation**

Candidates shall be investigated as to character, conduct, driving record, drug and alcohol history, habits, environment, previous and current employment, criminal history, credit history, social media footprint, and references. Background Investigations will continue throughout the remainder of the applicant's hiring process.

- **Step Seven - Psychological Testing**

The psychological evaluation shall consist of a written psychological test and a personal interview with a psychologist retained by the department. Each candidate, in order to be eligible for the position of police officer, shall be recommended as qualified for the position. Psychological testing may take between 3-4 hours and, dependent upon scheduling circumstances, may occur before or after the Physical Examination.

- **Step Eight - Physical Examination**

Candidates shall be required to successfully undergo a medical examination by a physician retained by the department. Each candidate must show that there are no limitations, and no medical reasons, that the applicant would be unable to perform the job without reasonable accommodations. Physical examinations may take up to two hours and, dependent upon scheduling circumstances, may occur before or after Psychological Testing.

- **Step Nine - Packet Review by the Chief of Police**

Packets of candidates who have successfully completed the previous steps will be referred to the Chief of Police for a final review. Applicants will meet with the Chief of Police at this time. The final hiring decision rests solely with the Chief of Police.

- **Step Ten - Drug Screening**

Candidates shall be required to successfully undergo a drug screen. This step takes less than one hour and typically follows the review with the Chief of Police.

\*Applicants must pass each step in order to move on to the next step.

## **Salary and Benefits**

**Full-time employees are eligible for a comprehensive benefit package that includes:**

- Health and Vision Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Paid Leave
- Sixteen paid holidays
- Short Term Disability Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Flexible Spending Accounts- Medical and Dependent Care
- Virginia Retirement System
- Deferred Compensation Plan
- Employee Assistance Program
- Tuition Assistance
- Free/Discounted Gym Membership
- Discounted Movie Tickets
- Discounted Golf/ Greens Fee

| <b>Ranking</b>  | <b>Starting Salary</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Police Recruit  | \$47,569               |
| Police Officer<br>(Upon completion of field training) | \$55,312*              |
| Master Police Officer<br>(5 years of experience)      | \$60,299               |
| Career Police Officer<br><br>(17 years of experience) | \$65,728               |

**Additional salary increases upon participating in HPD's Career Development Program\*\***

*\*Certified Officers who transfer their employment to the Harrisonburg Police Department may receive additional compensation for prior years of service and certifications. Transferring officer salaries are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

*\*\*Refer to Career Development Program for details.*

### **Career Development Program**

The Career Development Program (CDP) is a program that is based on voluntary participation and is limited to full-time non-supervisory officers of the Harrisonburg Police Department. At its core, the CDP provides a career track for officers who wish to contribute to the department beyond the minimum requirements of their positions and provides incentives and recognition for those officers who choose to participate. Officers earn CDP points by accruing certifications, participating in community activities, and providing documentation of military and college credits.

The primary goals of the CDP are to provide non-supervisory officers an avenue to continuously build upon their career, motivate employees to achieve and maintain specialties and proficiencies, maintain a high level of employee retention, and recognize and reward employees' achievements and contributions to the goals of the Harrisonburg Police Department.

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## **Disqualifying Criteria**

The following listed activities may result in disqualification from further consideration for employment with the Harrisonburg Police Department. This list is not intended to be all encompassing, but to serve as a general guide for determining applicant eligibility.

### **General Eligibility**

- Applicants must meet the minimum standards as described on the Qualifications page.
- Applicants who exhibit uncooperative behavior toward any department personnel involved in the pre-hire process or who fail to comply with departmental hiring process requests may be disqualified from further consideration.
- False, misleading, or incomplete responses relating to information sought during any phase of the application process may disqualify an applicant from further consideration.
- Manifestations of any prejudice or aggressive tendencies toward a group or class of people are an automatic disqualifier.

### **Credit History**

- Information regarding financial irresponsibility including bankruptcy (pending or discharged), collections, garnishments, and assets seized or frozen by legal authority may be considered when determining applicant suitability.

### **Use of illegal drugs/narcotics**

- No use of any narcotic, other drug or substance (not including prescription drugs) in violation of Virginia law within the 12 months prior to the date of application.
- All other instances of narcotic or other drug or substance use, possession, distribution, or contact, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis on the following criteria set forth in Harrisonburg Police Department Policy:
  - Age at the time the behavior occurred
  - Passage of time
  - Patterns of past behavior
  - Severity of behavior
  - Probable consequences if past behavior is repeated or made public
  - Likelihood of recurrence
  - Relevance of past behavior to public safety employment
  - Aggravating and mitigating factors
  - Other relevant considerations

## **Traffic Offenses**

A minimally **acceptable** driving record includes the following components:

- Negative five (-5) or fewer demerit points;
- No driving while intoxicated/ driving under the influence (DWI/DUI) convictions within the last 3 years;
- An overall pattern of safe vehicle operation and driving habits

The following conditions are **unacceptable** driving record attributes, which normally prevent employment in a position that includes driving responsibilities:

- Negative six (-6) or greater demerit points;
- Any DWI/DUI conviction within the last 3 years;
- Any combination of violations, convictions, or accidents that creates a pattern which indicates that the applicant is a high-risk driver due to an ongoing history of unsafe driving habits.

## **Criminal Activity**

- Conviction of ANY felony
- Conviction of any misdemeanor crime of moral turpitude, or that which reflects/indicates a pattern of disrespect for the law
- Commission of serious or repetitive undetected crimes
- Conviction of domestic assault and battery crime
  - Mandatory disqualification for police applicants under the Violence Against Women Act/ U.S. Gun Control Act of 1994, 1996, and 18 U.S.C. 922 (g)(9).
- Any arrest or pattern of arrests/incidents where the applicant was the subject of an investigation by law enforcement that would harm public confidence or bring discredit to the department.
- Crimes against property when committed as a juvenile will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis

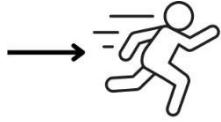
## **Physical and Psychological Conditions**

- Applicant must meet established medical, physical, and psychological requirements
- Satisfactory completion of the Physical Agility Test
- Applicant must possess the present ability to perform essential function of the position sought

Criteria will be confirmed through investigative means up to and including a polygraph examination.

# Preparation and Supplemental Information

## PHYSICAL ABILITY COURSE WORKSHEET



Applicant is given a physical description of a suspect. Time begins when the monitor says "Go".



Applicant must run 25 yards and complete a three foot jump.



Applicant must run 25 yards and climb over a 5 ft. obstacle.



Applicant must run 10 yards and crawl under the posted obstacle.



Applicant must run 10 yards and verbally identify the suspect that matches the physical description given at the beginning of the course.



Applicant must run 15 yards and climb through a window.



Applicant must run 25 yards and complete a 12 step circuit on an 8" step.



Applicant must run 15 yards, pick up a 150 lb. dummy, and drag it five yards.



Applicant must run 20 yards and place the barrel of their weapon through a 6" opening pulling the trigger once with their dominant hand and once with their non-dominant hand.



Applicant must place their weapon on the table to stop the clock.

The physical agility course must be completed in one minute and thirty-six seconds, or less. The applicant will be allowed 3 attempts to complete the course before disqualification.

## **Professional Development**

Explore your options at the Harrisonburg Police Department and experience professional growth that other Shenandoah Valley agencies just can't provide. The Harrisonburg Police Department offers a wide variety of positions and specialty units usually found in larger departments. This provides officers with the ability to experience multiple disciplines throughout their career, encourages officer retention, produces professional development and increases our effective policing to the community. At HPD, officers are encouraged to attend the best training opportunities available. HPD will also assist with reaching your professional goals of obtaining any supervisory or non-supervisory position or specialty certification. Below are some of the exciting examples of what you can find.

### **Sworn Positions**

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Patrol                 | Community Resource Officer |
| Traffic/Motors         | D.A.R.E. Officer           |
| K-9                    | School Resource Officer    |
| Major Crimes Detective | Professional Standards     |
| Drug Investigations    | Personnel Development      |
| Gang Investigations    | Selective Enforcement Team |
| Evidence Technician    | Computer Forensics         |

### **Specialty Units**

|                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| SWAT                     | Honor Guard                      |
| Crisis Negotiations Team | Accident Reconstruction Team     |
| Civil Disturbance Unit   | Internet Crimes Against Children |
| Motor Carrier Inspector  | Police Training Officer I        |
|                          | Forensic Evidence Team           |

### **Supervisory Positions**

Chief of Police  
Deputy Chief  
Captain  
Lieutenant  
Sergeant

### **Civilian Positions**

|                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Crime Analyst                         | Property Clerk               |
| Records                               | Animal Control Officer       |
| Evidence Clerk                        | Accreditation Manager        |
| School Crossing Guards                | Administrative Support Staff |
| Police Chaplain                       | Information Technology       |
| Outreach and Communication Specialist |                              |

# Essential Duties and Responsibilities

## GENERAL DEFINITION OF WORK:

Performs responsible protective service work involving a variety of general or support duty police assignments; enforcing laws; investigating criminal activity; ensuring safety of public; testifying in Court; maintaining records and files; preparing reports; does related work as required. Much of the work is performed under emergency conditions and frequently involves considerable personal hazard. Work is performed under the limited supervision of a Police Sergeant.

## PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

This is medium work requiring the exertion of 50 pounds of force occasionally, up to 20 pounds of force frequently, and up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects; work requires climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching, standing, walking, pushing, pulling, lifting, fine-motor manipulating, grasping, and feeling; vocal communication is required for conveying detailed or important instructions to others accurately, loudly, or quickly; hearing is required to receive detailed information through oral communications and/or to make fine distinctions in sound; visual acuity is required for preparing and analyzing written or computer data, visual inspection involving small defects and/or small parts, use of measuring devices, operation of machines, operation of motor vehicles or equipment, determining the accuracy and thoroughness of work, and observing general surroundings and activities; the worker is subject to inside and outside environmental conditions, extreme cold, extreme heat, noise, vibration, hazards, atmospheric conditions, and oils. The worker may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens and may be required to wear specialized personal protective equipment.

## ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Regular, reliable attendance necessary.
- Operates a City vehicle in the performance of the job duties.
- On an assigned shift, operates a patrol vehicle, bicycle or walks to observe for violations of traffic laws, suspicious activities or persons and disturbances of law and order.
- Responds to radio dispatches and answers calls and complaints.
- Enforces traffic laws; issues citations for traffic violations.
- Serves warrants and makes arrests, maintains warrant records, testifies in court.
- Provides police escorts, directs traffic; performs residential and commercial checks.
- Fills out arrest records, fingerprints, photographs, etc.; performs prisoner security functions; investigates traffic accidents.
- Reports unsafe conditions existing in street or other public facilities.
- Assists with criminal investigations, conducts stakeouts, assists with the installation of surveillance equipment.
- Interviews victims and witnesses.
- Performs property and evidence duties.
- Prepares detailed reports on activities and assignments.
- Participates in a variety of in-service training programs.
- May handle animal complaints as assigned.
- Performs related tasks as required.

## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

Some knowledge of police methods, practices and procedures; general knowledge of the geography of the City and location of important buildings; some knowledge of the rules and regulations of the Police Department; ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions and to prepare clear comprehensive reports; ability to deal courteously, firmly and tactfully with the public; ability to analyze situations and to adopt quick, effective and reasonable courses of action with due regard to surround hazards and circumstances; possession of physical agility and endurance; skill in the use of firearms and the operation of a motor vehicle; ability to establish and maintain effective relationship with associates and the general public.