



## **4200 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS**

### **4210 GENERAL (Revised April 1, 2009)**

All hiring processes are coordinated through the department's Human Resources Division (HRD). These guidelines are intended to provide a detailed overview of the background process for police officer and civilian hiring. Applicants for all entry-level positions will be subject to a background check and investigation.

#### **4211 Applicant Hiring Standards**

HRD shall be responsible for preparing a summary manual of the current hiring standards for all positions in the agency. These standards, which shall be approved by the Chief of Police, will be applied to all hiring decisions unless deviation from the standards is authorized by the Chief of Police or designee.

The Backgrounds Unit shall be responsible for ensuring that all pre-screeners in any process are properly trained on the most recent version of hiring standards in effect.

### **4220 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS PROCESS**

The Background Unit supervisor will coordinate a background investigation that is intended to verify an applicant's qualifications based on the information provided on the applicant questionnaires and information disclosed during pre-screening interviews. Backgrounds may be conducted by TPD staff or through an outside contract service provider. Background investigations conducted by an outside contractor shall adhere to the same standards and procedures as those done by the department.

If background investigations are not conducted by an outside vendor, members conducting background investigations will be trained in the procedure for collecting information, conducting criminal history record checks, and methods of verifying personal information.

HRD and the Backgrounds Unit shall have established written investigative standards and protocols to be applied when examining applicants for employment or other service with the police department. These standards shall ensure that all relevant information is taken into consideration, including criminal, financial, scholastic, family, military, reference and employment histories as appropriate.

#### **4221 Preliminary Screening Interviews**

Proper and thorough prescreening allows the department to eliminate undesirable applicants before it expends substantial resources on their processing. All applicants for sworn and non-sworn positions will be given a preliminary screening interview prior to the Civil Service written examination. These interviews are conducted under the direction of HRD.

The Background Unit in HRD will be responsible for the selection and training of sworn members used in the interviews. All such interviews shall be conducted per HRD guidelines and the



current department hiring standards in effect for the positions being tested. No candidate will be rejected based on information from the preliminary screening interview without the concurrence of the HRD Commander or Backgrounds Sergeant at the testing site.

#### **4222 Background Review**

Using federal criminal history information for background investigations is prohibited by Privacy Act Title 5 of the United States Code, Section 552a(b). When using the CopLink program, investigators shall not link to any federal database.

The Background Unit will prepare a file, which includes credit reports, for all applicants. The file is then assigned to investigators for thorough investigation and documentation of all information in the file. When the investigation is complete, the file will be returned to the Background Unit supervisor who has the responsibility to:

- Compare responses given during pre-screening to the disclosures made on the applicant questionnaire, (this includes previous applications submitted by the applicant).
- Ensure nothing substantive has been omitted from the applicant questionnaire.
- Flag items of concern as the background file is constructed.
- Check any arrest or traffic citation information against the disclosures made on the applicant questionnaire and pre-screening document.
- Review the credit report to ensure it matches the information on the applicant questionnaire.
- Review the background file with respect to the Tucson Police Department's current hiring standards.
- If there is cause to disqualify an applicant, prepare a disqualification memorandum for approval by the HRD Commander.

##### **4222.1 Extent of Background Investigations**

The extent of a background investigation will depend upon the nature and level of the position being filled. Requirements may vary between sworn, non-sworn, volunteers, interns, re-hired employees, etc. A listing of the various levels and their associated requirements shall be maintained in the Background Unit.

#### **4223 Applicant Interviews**

The Background Unit will interview applicants for positions at the police department as necessary and appropriate. The findings and results of all such interviews shall be documented in the background file.

#### **4224 Post Investigation Review and Reporting**

When the background investigation is completed the Background Unit supervisor will conduct a final review of the file. The Background Summary memorandum will contain a detailed synopsis of the findings of all background investigations and an overview of an applicant's qualifications. The memorandum to the HRD Commander shall note whether or not the applicant meets the current hiring standards in place for sworn or non-sworn positions. The memorandum shall also



identify any areas of concern regarding the applicant's background. If the finding is that the applicant does not meet applicable standards, the memorandum shall detail the reasons for such finding.

The HRD commander shall be responsible for reviewing and concurring with any finding or recommendation indicating that an applicant has failed to meet an applicable hiring standard.

**4225 Final Selection Meeting**

In selections for hiring of applicants for sworn positions, the HRD Commander shall coordinate a final selection meeting to determine who will receive conditional offers of employment.

Refer to *General Order 4150* for additional information.

**4226 Appointment**

The Chief of Police or designee is the appointing authority and will make a final selection for hiring purposes based upon all available information in the best interests of the department and the city.

**4227 AZPOST Requirements**

The HRD Commander through the Background Unit supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that the department maintains its standards and operations in full compliance with all AZPOST requirements. This includes updating standards as necessary, participating in audits of background files by AZPOST and the notification to AZPOST of appropriate applicant information.