

# Cobb County Police Department

## Policy 2.05

### PROMOTIONS AND COMMAND STAFF APPOINTMENTS

<b>Effective Date:</b> January 6, 2019	<b>Issued By:</b> Chief M.J. Register
<b>Rescinds:</b> Policy 2.05 (November 1, 2017)	<b>Page 1 of 11</b>
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 to participate in the selection process 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 employment).
- 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 person is assigned by the Chief of Police or his designee and will be a member of the Command Staff.
- D. Formal Disciplinary History:** Any Code of Conduct or Policy Manual procedure violation within the past 36 months, which resulted in a written reprimand, suspension, or demotion.
- 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 who has successfully completed Phase II of the Field Training Program.

- G. Test Consultant:** A service provider contracted by the County to provide job-related, non-discriminatory testing and scoring used for the evaluation of promotional candidates.

**III. PRE-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR SERGEANTS AND LIEUTENANTS**

**A. Notification of Selection Process**

At least 45 days prior to the commencement date of a selection process for promotion, Human Resources will announce the opening and closing dates for the position. The announcement will contain pertinent facts related to the process, to include:

1. Registration process requirements;
2. Components of the selection process, as well as associated weights assigned to those components; and
3. A list of any resource/study materials;

**B. Qualification of Applicants**

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 by the closing date for application as defined in the notice sent by Human Resources:

- a. Have a minimum of five years of total service as a sworn officer with the Department.
- b. In the event of a break in service, have three years of continuous service as a sworn officer with the Department, immediately prior the closing date for application as defined in the notice sent by Human Resources.
- c. Have completed the Georgia POST Field Training Officer (FTO) course, or possesses an Intermediate Certification through the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council.

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 closing date for application as defined in the notice sent by Human Resources.

Human Resources shall be responsible for ensuring applicants meet the minimum qualifications for participation in the promotional process. Should an unqualified applicant be allowed to participate in error, a waiver of the qualifications will not be granted and the candidate will not be considered for the promotional eligibility list.

**C. Registration for Promotional Exam**

Candidates must complete an application through the Cobb County Human Resources Department in order to register for the promotional exam. Once the application period closes, candidates may only reapply for promotion on the next announced application period.

**D. Conflicts**

1. In conformance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the Department will work with candidates who are unavailable for testing and assessment as a result of military duty.
2. In order to reduce scheduling conflicts with participants of the promotional process, 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 dates of the written exam and assessment center. Employees participating in the promotional process are still responsible for submitting court leave requests in a timely fashion so that the court may reasonably accommodate anticipated scheduling conflicts.
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 work to resolve 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**

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The Police Sergeant and Police Lieutenant promotional processes are normally administered every two years. They shall be administered by, or under the direction of, Human Resources, with the assistance of the Department Test Coordinator.

### **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 from Human Resources 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**

For a candidate to be eligible to participate in the assessment center, a final score of 70% or above must be achieved on the written test. Test scores will be rounded to the nearest hundredth of a percentile.

1. Candidates will be ordered from the highest to the lowest score on the written test.
2. Sergeant candidates with the top 45 highest passing scores on the written test will advance to the assessment center.
3. Lieutenant candidates with the top 25 highest passing scores on the written test will advance to the assessment center.
4. In the event of a tying cut-off score, all candidates with the tying cut-off score will proceed 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

- a. Assessors for the assessment center must be at least equal in rank and responsibility to the rank being evaluated, and preferably from an agency comparable in size and function to the Cobb County Police Department.
- b. Assessors will be provided the list of candidates who will be participating in the assessment center. The assessors will be required to disclose any knowledge of, or personal relationship they may have with, any of the candidates.
- c. 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 generalized 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. Appeal Procedures**

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.

1. During or upon completion of the written test

At the test site, candidates will be provided detailed information on how to appeal testing conditions and how to appeal or rebut any test question(s).

A candidate may appeal testing conditions during the written test. 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. Appeal issues relating to testing conditions shall be brought to the attention of the test proctor immediately upon discovery. The test proctor will resolve the issue immediately to the best of their ability. Should the candidate feel the issue is not resolved adequately, he will notify the Department Test Coordinator immediately.

A candidate may appeal or rebut any test question(s) at the exam site or up to 5:00 PM on the day immediately following the exam date. An Exam Review Committee (comprised of subject matter experts) will review any appealed or rebutted test questions. 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?

Based upon the findings of the Exam Review Committee, appealed items could remain as keyed, be re-keyed with a different answer; be re-keyed with more than one answer; or have credit given to all participants.

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

2. After the written test score 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 5 business 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. During or upon completion of the assessment center

Before leaving the assessment center, the candidate may complete the provided appeals form listing any concerns that the candidate had about the process. 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.

4. After the assessment center score 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 5 business 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.

## **V. LIST OF ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES FOR SERGEANTS & LIEUTENANTS**

Following the examination process, and once any appeals have been addressed, a list of eligible candidates will be established and certified by Human Resources. This list will remain in effect for two calendar years from the date of establishment. However, should a situation require, an existing list may be extended beyond the two-year expiration date. 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.

### **A. Establishing the List**

1. Candidates will be placed on the list of eligible candidates in order from highest to lowest score, based upon their overall final scores.
  - a. Final score is determined by the written test score (by weight) and the assessment center score (by weight). Human Resources will

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include the weights of each test component in the test announcement.

- b. For a candidate to be placed on the list of eligible candidates, the final score must be 70% or above.
2. Candidates will be listed by their Kronos ID number.
3. The list of eligible candidates will be published department-wide by the Chief of Police or his designee.

### **B. Selection of Most Suited Applicant to Fill a Vacancy**

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 performance appraisals (most recent three);
  - c. Candidate formal disciplinary history;
  - d. Candidate education; and
  - e. Candidate operational experience.
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 of Police, or his designee, 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.

## **VI. PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND SECURITY PROCEDURES**

### **A. Grounds for Applicant Disqualification**

Applicants disqualified from the promotional process for any stated reasons will be ineligible to continue in the process or be considered for promotion for the duration of the list being established. Applicants shall not be restricted from participating in future promotional processes. Grounds for disqualification include:

1. Failure to participate in any phase of a promotional exam;
2. Arriving at a test site after the appointed starting time for any part of an exam; or
3. Cheating on any part of the promotional exam.

### **B. Security of Written Test and Assessment Center Materials**

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1. Upon receipt from the Test Consultant, promotional materials will be secured and maintained by Human Resources.
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 shall 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. This applies to all Department personnel, whether or not such persons are participating in any part of a promotional process. Any violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **VII. COMMAND STAFF APPOINTMENTS**

### **A. Captain**

1. To be qualified to participate in the appointment process for Captain, a candidate must have three years continuous service as a Cobb County Police Lieutenant immediately prior to the closing date for application as defined in the notice sent by Human Resources.
2. Qualified candidates will participate in an assessment center.
  - a. The vendor chosen to conduct the assessment center will establish the rating criteria in conjunction with Department subject matter experts.
  - b. Results of the assessment center may be appealed in accordance with Section IV, B, 3 above.

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- c. Assessment centers will be conducted consistent with Section IV, A, 2, b above
3. Candidates will be placed on an eligibility list. The list will be effective for two years from the date of its commencement. 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.
4. In selecting the most suited applicant for a vacancy, the Chief of Police shall consider the following factors:
  - a. Candidate assessment center score;
  - b. Candidate annual performance appraisals (most recent three);
  - c. Candidate formal disciplinary history;
  - d. Candidate education;
  - e. Candidate time in grade; and
  - f. Candidate operational experience.

### **B. Major / Deputy Chief**

1. Appointment to a rank above Captain shall be made by the Chief of Police. A written announcement describing the selection process will be provided to eligible personnel. The process may vary according to rank and grade, and may consist of elements such as:
  - a. Interviews;
  - b. Written papers;
  - b. Review of annual performance appraisals (most recent three);
  - c. Review of formal disciplinary history;
  - d. Review of education;
  - e. Review of time in grade; and
  - f. Review of operational experience.
2. The following minimum qualifications must be met to compete in the appointment process for Major and Deputy Chief.
  1. Major  

To compete for the rank of Police Major, candidates must have two years continuous service as a Police Captain with the Cobb County Police Department immediately prior to the closing date for application as defined in the notice sent by Human Resources.
  2. Deputy Chief  

To compete for the rank of Deputy Chief, candidates must have one year continuous service as a Police Major with the Cobb County

Police Department immediately prior to the closing date for application as defined in the notice sent by Human Resources.

**VIII. NON-SWORN POSITIONS**

Human Resources is responsible for posting available non-sworn positions. Individuals who meet the qualifications may apply. The unit commander, or his designee, is responsible for reviewing applications forwarded from Human Resources. The unit commander may use selection criteria such as interviews, review of prior performance, education, training, and time in grade to aid in his selection of the most suitable candidate.