

Pre-employment Psychological Evaluation Guidelines

According to *Minnesota Rules*, Chapter 6700.0700, Subpart 1, a person eligible to be licensed must meet several minimum selection standards before being appointed to the position of peace officer. Section H., defines the standards for a pre-employment psychological evaluation as, “An evaluation, including an oral interview, shall be made by a licensed psychologist to determine that the applicant is free from any emotional or mental condition which might adversely affect the performance of the peace officer duties.”

The following procedure and evaluation guidelines are recommended as an outline for the pre-employment psychological evaluation process used for hiring peace officers.

Procedure Guidelines

Pre-employment psychological evaluations should be used as one component of the overall selection process. The evaluation should be conducted after the background investigation is completed.

It is best practice for an agency to develop and maintain a working relationship with a psychologist as early as possible in the hiring process. It is important that only licensed or certified psychologists trained and experienced in law enforcement assessments conduct and interpret the evaluation.

Duties the agency may expect the psychologist to perform are:

- Assist the agency to design interview questions used to identify the applicant’s psychological traits.
- Conduct an evaluation for employment purposes only with the new hiring agency. If an applicant is currently a peace officer with another agency, the results should have no bearing on the applicant’s current position.
- Work with the agency to generate a final report of the evaluation.
- Provide feedback to the agency, and also to the assessed individual if requested.
- Coordinate with the agency’s administration and training staff to help strengthen any developmental needs identified in the evaluation. Techniques such as coaching, simulation and evaluation of actual field performance may be used.
- Monitor the newly hired peace officer through their probationary period.
- Conduct follow up research as deemed necessary by the agency.

Evaluation Guidelines

A variety of instruments may be used including a comprehensive background investigation, an intelligence test, a personality assessment tool and a semi-structured interview. Recommended areas to be evaluated include:

- decisiveness/problem-solving skills
- team orientation
- life experience
- identification with community
- intelligence
- absence of serious psychopathology
- substance abuse potential
- moral development (integrity and honesty)
- stress resistance
- respect for authority
- tenacity
- interpersonal skills
- mental stability
- anger management
- absence of bias
- assertiveness/command presence

HISTORY

- criminal history
- psychiatric history
- family history
- chemical use history
- job/educational history
- social history

SKILLS

- problem solving skills
- interpersonal skills

The format of a final report may vary depending on the agency. Common sections generally included are:

- purpose of the evaluation
- types of traits/qualities examined for
- limits of reliability/validity of evaluation
- hire/no hire recommendation
- conclusion