

Proposed Adjustments to Sworn Disqualifiers

Dallas Police Department

November 19, 2007



Introduction

- The Dallas Police Department remains committed to hiring the best qualified candidates. Only nine percent of those who apply for employment are hired as police officers.
- As a result of stringent hiring standards and the quality of police recruits hired, the Dallas Police Academy, previously considered “at risk” has improved its performance to become the second best ranked Police Academy among large police agencies in the State of Texas.

Who are we seeking?

Individuals who are:

- Honest
- Men and Women of Integrity
- Structured
- Dependable
- Intelligent
- Trainable
- Of Good Character and willing to Serve

Hiring Philosophy

- In accordance with the Berkshire recommendations, the department has transitioned from a philosophy of “entitlement” in hiring to selecting-in the best personnel.
- Because of this philosophical shift, the department has proposed and adopted several civil service rule and internal policy changes as they relate to sworn hiring.

Proposed Changes (Civil Service)

- Current: Be at least nineteen and one-half years of age at the time of taking the written examination
- Proposed Change: Be at least nineteen and one-half years of age and not have reached forty-five years of age on the date the Civil Service written examination is given.

Proposed Changes (Civil Service)

- Current: Have at least forty-five semester hours college credit with a C average or better from an accredited college or university or Honorably discharged from the military after four years of active service.
- Proposed Changes: Have at least forty-five semester hours of college credit with a C average or better from an accredited college or university.

Or

Proposed Changes (Civil Service)

- A minimum of thirty-six months active service in the Armed Forces of the United States with an Honorable Discharge (Allowance for no more than ten calendar days less than thirty-six months; more than ten days requires approval from the Assistant Chief of Police over the Personnel and Development Division).

Or

Proposed Changes (Civil Service)

- Thirty-six months of fulltime certified law enforcement experience (from date of receipt of license) with a city, county or state law enforcement agency and be currently employed or separated from the agency for no more than four months prior to the date of application.

Proposed Changes, Con't

DPD Policy

- Current: “All felony drug offenses will be considered after the fifteenth birthday.”
- Proposed Change: “All felony drug offenses will be considered after the twenty-first birthday. Any applicant who has used any illegal drug other than marijuana prior to their twenty-first birthday and the drug usage was within the last ten years; or the number of uses was five or more times in one’s life will be found unsuitable for employment.”
- Drugs that are injected intravenously is cause for disqualification.

Example 1

- A 38-year old applicant comes in and admits that at age 16, and a junior in high school, he snorted a line of cocaine at an after-prom party. He didn't like it and never did it again. At 18, after graduating high school, he enlists in the military. He does two tours in the Middle East, earns several good conduct awards, a bronze star, stays 20 years and retires as a master sergeant. He saw the ad for DPD's military exemption and wants to apply to be a police officer.

Example 2

- A 25-year old comes in to apply. He admits that on his 17th birthday, he remembers the exact day, because it was his birthday, he tried cocaine one time with a friend. He was still in high school and never tried it again. He wasn't sure at that time what he wanted to be. He graduated college with honors and has been working for a telecom company for 4 years. He was laid off and wants to apply to be a police officer.

Conclusion

- The Dallas Police Department's proposed drug policy mirrors that of the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
- Using time and distance as a disqualifying factor for drug usage allows the department to consider applicants who have admitted to youthful misconduct and have proven to be productive citizens as documented in their work history, college performance and/or military experiences.
- Applicants who are allowed to “apply” under this policy will have to meet all other requirements to become sworn members of the Dallas Police Department.

Questions?