

City of Virginia Beach Police Department

Career Development Field Guide



A Guide for Department Members

- A voluntary program designed to enhance the proficiency, performance and professional status of members of the Virginia Beach Police Department.

*This Field Guide is Prepared and Updated by the Virginia Beach
Police Department Professional Development and Training,
Under the Approval of the Chief of Police*

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Career Paths

The Career Development has two major components. The first is the system of career Paths, in which an officer selects the area of interest of the police profession he/she wishes to pursue. The Paths shall consist of Patrol (uniform assigned to precinct, community policing, etc.), Investigation (Detective Bureau, Special Investigations, Crime Analyst) and Technical (Special Operations such as boats, K-9, SWAT, etc.), each of which allows for participation in the promotional process.

The second component is the system of Career Development Levels, in which the officer progressively increases his/her overall level of job performance, education and professionalism.

Career Development Levels

The following criteria apply to all three levels of the Career Development Program.

Firearms Proficiency

Applicants for each level must successfully complete all required department qualification courses each year.

Recommendation

The supervisor's recommendation should be based on the applicant's overall job performance and how well the applicant meets the goals of the Career Development Program. Recommendations should only be given to those officers who do, in fact, provide the highest level of service to the community and to the department.

Endorsements

Applicants for advancement must receive a positive endorsement from the Precinct/Bureau Career Counselor and from the Precinct/Bureau Commander. The Career Counselor will conduct a review of each applicant's file and prepare a written summary of any disciplinary action.

Career Advancement Board

All applications will be reviewed by the Career Advancement Board and must receive a positive recommendation.

Approval of Chief of Police

The Chief of Police or his designee must approve all applications.

Educational Criteria

The goal of the Career Development Program in terms of education is to develop well-educated police officers. A general education may be just as valuable as a job-specific curriculum (i.e. Criminal Justice degree). It is the position of the department that the institutions of higher learning are the most capable of establishing educational standards, and the department will recognize course work leading to any bona fide degree program. Supervisors, in scheduling personnel who are attending college, may consider participation in Career Development.

The minimum credit hours listed for each level means credit hours that are directly applicable to a degree program. Documentation will be required to show that the credit hours earned will all apply towards a degree. Only passing grades (as determined by the institution attended) will be accepted for Career Development credit.

While a Bachelor's Degree is not mandatory for participants in the Career Development Program, officers at the Police Officer III level are strongly encouraged to continue their education toward a Bachelor's Degree. The Career Advancement Board will consider the participant's progress toward a degree during the annual re-qualification. Failure to pursue the goal of a Bachelor's Degree will not by itself result in reduction in career level, but may be a factor in borderline cases.

Prior Service Credit

Officers with approved prior service credit (two years prior service equating one year of service with the Virginia Beach Police Department), will be allowed to apply that time towards entry into Level I of the Career Development Program. Additional advancement past Level I will require the appropriate amount of time "in grade", but could list any specialty assignments from previous departments on their applications towards meeting the investigative or specialty assignment requirement.

Investigative Experience

Advancement into level II or level III requires investigative and specialty experience. These can be demonstrated through assignments in one or more of the following:

Investigative Units

- Property Crimes
- Robbery
- Homicide
- Special Victims
- Autos Theft
- Economic Crimes
- Domestic Violence
- Missing Person
- Warrants
- Cold Case Unit
- Special Investigation
- Fatal Crash Team
- Hit and Run
- Pawn Unit

Specialty Units

- Any full time duty assignment in which the officer engages in police activities beyond working a zone and responding to calls for service. Any assignment in Special Operations would qualify (G.O. 3.05 with the exception of PTO).

OR:

An assignment to a position, in which, significant investigative functions above and beyond the patrol level are conducted. To be eligible for consideration under this section, proper and thorough documentation must be provided. The Career Development Board shall consider each application on case-by-case bases.

IT IS THE OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE HIS EDUCATIONAL RECORDS ARE COMPLETE AND UPDATED AND ARE ON FILE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING.

Participants in the Career Development Plan are also eligible for Tuition Reimbursement contingent upon funding availability.

Tenure

The anniversary date of the applicant qualifying him for advancement to the next level must fall prior to or within thirty days of the convening of the Career Advancement Board. No exceptions will be made to this rule. (For example, the applicant is applying for Police Officer I; the Career Advancement Board meets on October 12 - the applicant must have three years service prior to November 12.)

Performance Appraisals

Any applicant whose last performance appraisal at least meets the basic job requirements, but the date of which is four or more months prior to the convening of the Career Advancement Board must have a separate memorandum attached from his current supervisor attesting to the fact that the applicant's performance has not fallen below that level since the date of the appraisal. Any applicant whose last performance appraisal is less than "meets minimum standards" but is dated four or more months prior to the convening of the board, may request a new appraisal if he/she feels that his performance may now be above that mark.

Supporting Documentation

The role of the Career Advancement Board is to judge the candidate's overall performance and professionalism. Candidates may provide supporting documentation to the Board that they believe may offer evidence of their professionalism, performance or contribution to the department or the community.

Such documentation may include self-initiated police projects, letters of commendation or recommendation, community service, participation in police related functions or organizations that contribute to the law enforcement function, self-acquired skills that are of benefit to the department or the community (such as foreign language skills) and educational achievements above the level required for each level. All such documentation will be considered by the board and judged on its merits. Documentation of college credit will require either an official or unofficial copy of a college transcript.

Disciplinary Action

The career advancement board will consider any disciplinary action received by an applicant in its decision to advance, retain or reduce a participant.

POLICE OFFICER I

In addition to the criteria established for all three levels, applicants for Police Officer I must meet the following requirements:

Tenure

Applicants must have three years service or approved service credit as a Police Officer with the Virginia Beach Police Department, immediately prior to or within thirty days of the convening of the Career Advancement Board. (Time spent in the academy, as a Police Recruit will count toward the three years.)

Education

Applicants must have successfully completed thirty (30) semester hours or forty-five (45) quarter hours in an accredited college or university in a program leading to a Bachelor's or an Associate's Degree. Only passing grades (as determined by the institution attended) will be accepted for Career Development credit. For Level I only, 450 hours of job related training would be accepted in lieu of college hours. Recruit training hours are excluded and all training must be on file with Professional Development and Training.

Performance Appraisal

Applicant must have met the basic job requirements on the last performance appraisal received prior to the meeting of the Career Advancement Board. The most recent performance appraisal must be included in the application.

Training

Must have successfully completed all mandated departmental and Career Development Program training.

POLICE OFFICER II

In addition to the criteria established for all three levels, applicants for Police Officer II must meet the following requirements:

Tenure

Applicants must have three years continuous service as a Police Officer I with the Virginia Beach Police Department, immediately prior to or within thirty days of the convening of the Career Advancement Board.

Education

Applicants must have earned an Associates Degree or successfully completed sixty (60) semester hours or ninety (90) quarter hours in an accredited college or university in a program leading to a Bachelor's Degree. Only passing grades (as determined by the institution attended) will be accepted for Career Development credit.

Performance Appraisal

Applicants must have met the basic job requirements on the last three performance appraisals. The last three performance appraisals must be included in the application for advancement.

Training

Applicants must have successfully completed all mandated departmental and Career Development Program training.

Experience

Must have a minimum of six months satisfactory experience ("Meets Expectations" rating on performance appraisal) in a specialty assignment, of which a minimum of 90 days must be in an investigative assignment.

Must have a minimum of two satisfactory years in uniform patrol.

POLICE OFFICER III

In addition to the criteria established for all three levels, these applicants must meet the following requirements:

Tenure

Applicants must have three years continuous service as a Police Officer II with the Virginia Beach Police Department, immediately prior to or within thirty days of the convening of the Career Advancement Board.

Education

Applicants must have successfully completed ninety (90) semester hours or one hundred thirty-five (135) quarter hours in an accredited college or university in a program leading to a Bachelor's Degree, or hold an Associate's degree plus thirty (30) semester hours or forty-five (45) quarter hours in a program leading toward a bachelor's degree. Only passing grades (as determined by the institution attended) will be accepted for Career Development credit.

(Note: participant's who have earned an Associate's degree and who take additional courses at a junior college must ensure that those additional courses are acceptable toward a Bachelor's degree at an accredited four year college for them to count toward the level III requirement.)

Performance Appraisal

Applicants must have met the basic job requirements on the last three performance appraisals. The last three performance appraisals must be included in the application for advancement.

Training

Applicants must have successfully completed all mandated departmental and Career Development Program training as well as specialized training in the participant's chosen career path.

Experience

Must have a minimum of two years satisfactory experience ("Meets Expectations" rating on performance appraisal) in a specialty assignment, of which a minimum of one year must be in an investigative assignment. Must have a minimum of three satisfactory years in uniform patrol.

Other

Applicants for Police Officer III will be judged by the Career Advancement Board on their level of achievement and their contribution toward the department and the community. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that their work has been significantly above what is required of a police officer. The board will require evidence of this.

Career Advancement Board

The Career Advancement Board is a panel of department members who will evaluate all applications for advancement to career levels and recommend to the Chief of Police whether to advance the applicant or not. The board will examine all of the criteria for advancement to ensure that only those fully qualified be advanced to the next level. Where there is a question as to whether the applicant meets the criteria or not, the board may request additional documentation or statements from the applicant or the applicant's command.

The Career Advancement Board shall consist of the following seven members:

- The Commanding Officer of PD&T (Chairman)
- 1 Lieutenant
- 1 Sergeant
- 2 Police Officer III's
- 2 Police Officer II's

The Career Development Program Coordinator shall attend all meetings of the Career Advancement Board and will act as an advisor to the board.

Each Career Advancement Board will have a two-year term that begins on January 1 and terminates on December 31 of the following year unless extended by the Chief of Police.

The Career Advancement Board will meet in October and April to consider each officer's request for advancement in the Career Development Program.

The Board will schedule and conduct meetings to consider appeals from those members who were not advanced in the Career Development Program status.

A majority of the members of the Board must vote in favor of advancement or reduction.

Application Process

It is the responsibility of each officer to review the Criteria that must be met and maintained for each level in the Career Development Program. Each officer who wishes to be considered for entrance/progression in the Career Development Program must submit a written request to the Career Advancement Board by March 1st for the April board and September 1st for the October board.

To apply for advancement in each level in Career Development, an officer must

- Submit an application for advancement and complete a Career Development Program – Application for Acceptance (PD-52B and PD-52C). The officer will then forward the form to his or her immediate supervisor. In addition to the application, the officer may submit any additional documentation he or she feels may provide evidence of professional achievement, including, but not limited to letters of recommendation from other supervisors, letters of commendation or awards received or evidence of public service work outside the department.
- The immediate supervisor will complete the submitted Career Development Program- Application for Acceptance (PD-52B and PD 52-C), and forward the form to the Precinct/Bureau Career Counselor and thereafter through the chain of command to the Precinct/Bureau Commander.

- Upon completion, the Precinct/Bureau commander will forward the application to the Career Development Program Coordinator in Professional Development and Training who will complete section E, and either retain the application for the next board meeting, or return it through the chain of command for additional requirements.

Career Advancement Board Review

The Career Advancement Board will review each application package, including the application form, performance appraisals, supervisory recommendations, endorsements and any supporting documentation provided by the applicant.

The Career Advancement Board may require that the applicant appear before the board if additional information is required or if clarification is needed on any portion of the application package. In addition, the Career Advancement Board may request additional information from the applicant's supervisor, Career Counselor or Commanding Officer.

Notification of the Career Advancement Board Recommendation

The Board shall notify each candidate of its recommendation to the Chief no later than the fifth day following the Career Advancement Board meeting. The Board may recommend accepting or rejecting a candidate's request.

Officers shall have five days to appeal an unfavorable recommendation by the Board. An officer who wishes to appeal the decision of the board shall note his appeal with the Precinct/Bureau Career Counselor (PD-52D). The Career Counselor will review the reason for the board's decision with the officer, and if the officer still wishes to appeal, the Career Counselor will contact the Program Coordinator to schedule an appeal. The Program Coordinator will notify the officer of the date and time he is to appear before the board, at which time the officer shall bring any documentation he wishes for the board to consider. The officer will be notified of the board's decision within twenty-four hours.

Approval/Disapproval by Chief of Police; Notification

Upon expiration or completion of the appeals process, the Career Advancement Board will forward all recommendations concerning Career Development Program candidates to the Chief of Police.

The Chief of Police will make the final determination and notification and return all results to the Program Coordinator. The Program coordinator will prepare a list of all persons selected for advancement and distribute the list to the various Career Counselors for posting or individual notification. Those applications, which are disapproved, will be returned individually to the applicants via the Career Counselors with an explanation for the action.

If the candidate is rejected for entrance or advancement in the Career Development Program, that officer has five days to initiate an appeal to the Chief through the chain of command.

Reduction in Career Development Status

No appointment, at any level within the Career Development Program, should be considered permanent. An officer must meet the basic criteria of the each level in order to be advanced to that level. The officer must also maintain the stated minimum performance standards to be assured of holding that position. Reduction will only occur one level at a time separated by six-month intervals.

If the officer's immediate supervisor(s) determine that an individual is not maintaining the minimum standards prescribed for their respective level with the Career Development Program, the supervisor will draft a memorandum, which contains an outline of events and deficiencies, leading to this recommendation for reduction in Career Development Program status, and forward it to the Officer's Precinct/Bureau Career Counselor. The Career Counselor will forward the memorandum to the Chief of Police, via the Program Coordinator, with a copy to the Officer, for a determination.

The Chief of Police shall conduct a hearing with the officer and his Career Counselor to make the final determination on whether a reduction in Career Development Program status is in order. The Office of the Chief will make the necessary notifications concerning the officer's reduction in the Career Development Program. The decision of the Chief is final.

Procedure for reinstatement after reduction in career development:

- After a six-month period if the officer is performing at an acceptable level he or she shall submit an inter-office memorandum requesting to be advanced. The letter must proceed through the chain of command with a recommendation made at each level. The Chief of Police shall make the final decision for reinstatement.
- If after the six-month period the officer does not reapply, or his performance is not at an acceptable level, he must reapply by following the established procedures for requesting advancement established in this directive.
- If reduced in Career Development Program, an officer shall have to meet the current criteria to return to that level, except that any college hours previously awarded will continue to be recognized.

Administration of the Career Development Program

The commanding officer of Professional Development and Training shall have the overall authority and responsibility for administering the career development program. A Program Coordinator (PC) shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program, and will report to the Commanding Officer of Professional Development and Training.

Any proposed revisions to the program require the endorsement of the Chief of Police. If no changes are required, the Chief of Police shall affix his signature to the report, which will indicate his concurrence with the findings contained therein.

The commanding officer of Professional Development and Training is therefore responsible for the following:

- Devising, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of both the proficiency and career specialty in-service training programs;
- Documenting the knowledge, skills and abilities that will be enhanced by participating in either/both type(s) of training;
- Ensuring that both types of in-service training are linked to the present and anticipated training needs of the Department and that such training is in compliance with all applicable affirmative action/equal employment opportunity standards;

- Maintaining an annual inventory of resources, which may be used in order to develop proficiency and career specialty in-service training courses for career development purposes.

Career Development Insignia

POLICE OFFICER I



POLICE OFFICER II



POLICE OFFICER III

