

**GEORGIA PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COUNCIL**  
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Dear Colleague,

Beginning January 1, 2021, POST Council has instituted a requirement that all candidates selected to attend the Peace Officer Basic Mandate program must undergo a psychological examination or screening. I am aware this new program has created considerable confusion and concern among many agency leaders in our state. It is my intent to offer clarification and further explanation of this program and its requirements. Many agencies already have strong policies in place regarding psychological screening requirements utilized in their current hiring process. It is not the intent of POST to circumvent this process or to add additional requirements to your existing programs. However, it is apparent that the more detailed the examination process, the more accurate and detailed the information pertaining to the candidate's mental stability and suitability to serve successfully as a law enforcement officer will likely be. Therefore, it is the purpose of this POST Rule to establish some protocols to ensure that a reasonable and justifiable screening process is implemented. Again, our intent is not to replace or change the current systems many agencies are using, but to provide structure and guidance to those agencies who need to create and implement psychological testing.

As previously stated, the purpose of this Rule change is to establish the requirement for some psychological testing or screening process to determine with some degree of accuracy the applicant's suitability and mental stability to serve as a peace officer. We all know and agree that the position of peace officer is a sacred trust and those individuals entrusted with this position must meet certain criteria. Chief among those qualifications has to be the ability to exercise sound judgement in very stressful situations. As such, selecting the very best, most emotionally and mentally stable candidates is all of our responsibilities.

It is the position of POST Council to provide each agency as much autonomy and control as possible. With this idea in mind, it is the intent by POST Council that the test may be conducted in person by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. The test may be administered through standardized tests offered by a contracted company of your choice either in person, online, or via mail-in testing instruments. The standardized tests may be graded by either a psychologist, psychiatrist or a licensed behavioral therapist, thereby rendering the most detailed screening possible. POST again feels that the agency should have great latitude when making the decision regarding which testing instrument works best for their agency based on their unique circumstances and issues. Such agency considerations could be cost, department size, and proximity to testing locations. Some agencies will seek to conduct more probative tests than perhaps other agencies may choose. It is the opinion of POST Council that the best test the agency can afford and conduct is the appropriate test for that agency.

Many questions have been asked concerning how long tests will be good for and in what time frame does an agency need to retest a potential applicant. POST currently considers an application "current" for 18 months. Therefore, any psychological examination taken during that 18-month period will be accepted.

For those agencies who hire their officers as jail staff or communications officers before allowing them to transition to serving as a police officer, this may pose additional concerns. It is and will be my recommendation to the POST Council that we accept any psychological testing administered to a candidate by their current agency for a period of 4 years. For this consideration to apply, the candidate must have been previously screened through the agency's psychological process and received a certification as either a jailor or communications officer. Testing conducted by other employing agencies cannot be transferred. A break in service of more than 30 days will require a new psychological screening test. Finally, if the agency head has any reason to question the candidate's mental or emotional stability a new test must be taken.

I would like to thank you all for your support in this matter. While any change has challenges that must be overcome, I feel strongly that we can all agree that this is a useful first step in protecting our officers, our agencies and the public. While I am also certain that this has not answered all concerns, it is my hope that it has addressed what appears to be the most common questions. As is always the case, I am happy to speak with you individually. Please feel free to call me at 706-421-8217 or email me at [Mike.ayers@gapost.org](mailto:Mike.ayers@gapost.org).

Very Respectfully.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Ayers", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Mike Ayers