

Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission Municipal Police Training Committee

Law Enforcement Officer Certification Standards

Effective Date: December 1, 2021

I. Introduction

In Section 30 of Chapter 253 of the Acts of 2020, “An Act relative to justice, equity and accountability in law enforcement in the Commonwealth” (“Act”), the Legislature instructed the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (“POST C” or “Commission”) and the Municipal Police Training Committee (“MPTC” or “Committee”) to jointly establish minimum certification standards for all Commonwealth law enforcement officers. G.L. c. 6E, §4(f)(1). The purpose is to create uniform training and professional standards for law enforcement officers¹ employed by every Commonwealth of Massachusetts law enforcement agency.² Appointment or employment as a law enforcement officer requires certification by the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission and requires that law enforcement officers remain in compliance with the requirements of chapter 6E and all rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission. G.L. c. 6E, §4 & §4(g).

¹ Law Enforcement Officer is defined in section 1 of chapter 6E of the General Laws as, “[a]ny officer of an agency, including the head of the agency; a special state police officer appointed pursuant to section 58 or section 63 of chapter 22C; a special sheriff appointed pursuant to section 4 of chapter 37 performing police duties and functions; a deputy sheriff appointed pursuant to section 3 of said chapter 37 performing police duties and functions; a constable executing an arrest for any reason; or any other special, reserve or intermittent police officer.”

² Law Enforcement Agency is defined in section 1 of chapter 6E of the General Laws as: “(i) a state, county, municipal or district law enforcement agency, including, but not limited to: a city, town or district police department, the office of environmental law enforcement, the University of Massachusetts police department, the department of the state police, the Massachusetts Port Authority police department, also known as the Port of Boston Authority police department, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority police department; (ii) a sheriff’s department in its performance of police duties and functions; or (iii) a public or private college, university or other educational institution or hospital police department.”

II. Minimum Law Enforcement Officer Certification Standards for New Officers³

All law enforcement officers graduating from an MPTC operated or authorized academy, including the RTT, shall satisfy the following standards prior to obtaining Certification from the Commission pursuant to G.L. c. 6E, §(4)(2):

1. Attain the age of 21

- a. A law enforcement officer shall be at least 21 years of age at the time of initial certification. Age will be verified and documented by the MPTC.

2. Successful completion of a high school education or equivalent, as determined by the Commission

- a. A law enforcement officer shall have a high school diploma, HiSET, or GED credential at a minimum. Education level will be verified and documented by the MPTC.

3. Successful completion of the basic training program approved by the MPTC

- a. A law enforcement officer shall have successfully completed an MPTC operated or authorized academy, which includes the Massachusetts State Police Recruit Trooper Training Program (“RTT”).

4. Successful completion of a physical and psychological fitness evaluation approved by the Commission

- a. All law enforcement officers shall successfully complete a baseline physical fitness test approved by the MPTC and administered during one of the MPTC operated or authorized academies, including the RTT.
- b. All law enforcement officers shall have had an individual psychological evaluation performed in person by an independent licensed professional or organization with experience conducting psychological evaluations that meet HRD’s standards for testing the physical and medical fitness of municipal public safety personnel. The Commission will record the name of the organization, name and license number of

³ These minimum standards apply to all law enforcement officers graduating MPTC operated or approved academies, including the RTT, after December 1, 2021.

the professional who conducted the evaluation and the date of such evaluation.

5. Successful completion of a state and national background check

- a. Police Chiefs or appointing authorities (or their designees) shall sign an attestation that a background check has been conducted and identifying the criteria and sources that were included in that background check utilizing the standard Background Attestation form developed by the Commission.

6. Passage of an examination approved by the Commission

- a. A law enforcement officer attending an MPTC operated or authorized academy, including the RTT, shall successfully pass an examination developed and administered by the MPTC, or the Massachusetts State police for the RTT, prior to graduating from an academy.

7. Possession of current first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificates or equivalent, as determined by the Commission

- a. All law enforcement officers shall comply with the requirements of G.L. c. 111, §201. Records of CPR training shall be maintained by the MPTC.

8. Successful completion of an oral interview administered by the Commission

- a. In the case of candidates already enrolled in academies, a Police Chief or appointing authority (or their designee) shall provide an attestation that they have conducted an interview to satisfy this requirement. If an oral interview has not been conducted by the Chief, the appointing authority, or its designee, the Commission will distribute the list of questions provided in the Applicant Questionnaire and suggest that those questions be used as the basis for an interview, and require that the interview be completed, and an attestation provided, before the academy graduation.

9. Being of good moral character and fit for employment in law enforcement, as determined by the Commission

- a. Good moral character and fit for employment shall be established by successful completion of: (i) a background check; (ii) the academy administered final examination; and (iii) the oral interview and psychological evaluation.

III. Automatic Disqualifications

The Commission will not provide certification or recertification to a person who: (i) does not meet the minimum standards contained section II or any Commission regulations; (ii) has been convicted of a felony or whose name is listed in the national decertification index or the database of decertified law enforcement officers maintained by the Commission pursuant to clause (i) of subsection (a) of section 13 of the Act; (iii) while previously employed in law enforcement in any state or United States territory or by the federal government, would have had their certification revoked by the Commission if employed by an agency in the Commonwealth. G.L. c. 6E, §4(2).