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SPECIFIC MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR VA POLICE OFFICER APPLICANTS AND INCUMBENTS

1. **Purpose.** To provide examining physicians and psychologists with guidelines for determining the physical qualifications and the emotional and mental stability of VA Police Officer position applicants and incumbents.

2. **Applicability.** These standards apply to all applicants for initial appointment in the GS-083 series, including in-service applicants not already in the GS-083 series. All VA police officers, detectives and supervisors, to include chiefs, will be reexamined annually to determine their continued physical and emotional suitability to perform the functional requirements of the position.

3. **Use.** A copy of the OPM Qualification Standard Manual for the GS-083 Police Series along with a copy of these instructions will be provided to the examining physician with the SF 78-110, Certificate of Medical Examination, with functional requirements and environmental factors annotated as illustrated in this appendix. Examinees must be medically certified on Part D of the SF 78- 110 by signature of the examining physician as eligible under these standards.

4. **Physical Requirement.** VA Police Officers must be capable of arduous physical exertion. This includes the ability to carry persons in emergency evacuations, to run to the assistance of offense victims, and intercede in physical disturbances. Any structural or functional limitation or defect which tends to interfere materially with a high degree of physical activity will disqualify. All applicants must:

a. Demonstrate to the physician's complete satisfaction the upper and lower body strength and movement coordination necessary to perform the functional requirements circled on the SF 78 associated with this standard.

b. Have good distant vision in each eye and ability to distinguish basic colors.

c. Be able to hear the conversational voice without the use of a hearing aid.

d. Possess complete and functional limbs.

e. Possess emotional and mental stability.

5. **Psychological Assessment.** The initial and annual medical examinations must include a psychological assessment of the applicant/officer's emotional and mental stability by a

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psychiatrist or psychologist. Police officer duties include personal encounters with patients, visitors, and other employees. Encounters are often with mentally ill, irrational, or disturbed persons who, although assaultive or destructive, must be handled with understanding, full control of force, and unimpeded judgment. Any emotional or mental condition which could cause the applicant/officer to be a hazard to others or self during stress situations and physical altercations will disqualify. The psychological assessment will be limited to an interview by a psychologist or psychiatrist covering only job related factors.

6. Psychological Testing. Standardized psychological testing may be used only after reason to question the applicant/officer's suitability has arisen. If, during the psychological assessment, the psychologist/psychiatrist has an articulable reason to doubt that the officer is capable of performing the duties of a police officer, the psychologist/psychiatrist should make a formal recommendation for psychological testing to the Employee Health physician. In such a situation the Employee Health physician may approve such a recommendation and direct appropriate psychological testing. The Office of Security and Law Enforcement (in consultation with the VHA Mental Health Strategic Health Care Group in Central Office) will provide and update guidance for both the psychological assessment and psychological testing.