





POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

	PROMOTION	
	POLICY NUMBER: 34-1	ISSUING AUTHORITY 
	EFFECTIVE DATE: June 12, 2025	Christine A. Elow Police Commissioner

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Promotion denotes vertical movement in an organization's hierarchy from one rank classification or position to another, usually accompanied by increases in duties and responsibilities as well as compensation. The accreditation standards related to promotion are designed to improve the validity of the process and to support the department's vision for future development. The evaluation and selection of personnel for promotion begins with the identification of employees who may have the potential for assuming greater responsibility. These employees will possess the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform at a higher level, and will display the personal characteristics important to achieving the department's mission and vision.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to:

- A. administer its promotional process in a fair and transparent manner consistent with the policies and procedures of the City and Civil Service rules and regulations;
- B. provide equal opportunity for promotion throughout the department;
- C. conduct all elements of the promotional process in a manner that meets legal, professional, and administrative standards.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *HRD*: Human Resources Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. 34.1.1 (M) Agency Role, Authority and Responsibility

1. The department's role, authority, and responsibility for the promotional processes and procedures are as follows.
 - a. The Police Commissioner, in consult with the City Manager and the City's Personnel Department, is responsible for all promotions to positions of rank for sworn personnel in the department and may appoint a designee to administer the processes and procedures.
 - b. For the positions of sergeant and lieutenant, the department must adhere to the rules prescribed by Civil Service and administered by HRD to:
 - (1) announce exams;
 - (2) identify study materials;
 - (3) conduct and score exams; and
 - (4) publish eligibility lists according to established criteria including the score on the exam and education/experience.
 - c. The Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel of the Cambridge Police Department is the designee responsible for administering promotions. The responsibilities of the Director include calling for a Civil Service exam in conjunction with the City's Personnel Department, receiving eligibility lists, and presenting the results to the Commissioner for consideration. The number of appointments is based on the number of positions available at the time.
 - d. Appointments to the positions of Deputy Superintendent and Superintendent are at the discretion of the Commissioner in consultation with the City Manager. These positions are not subject to Civil Service.
- B. 34.1.2 (M) Promotional Process Described
 1. The procedures used for each element of the promotion process for sworn personnel include the following.
 - a. The promotional potential of candidates is based on self-selection. Officers in the department who believe in their potential and want to compete for promotion may enter the process and take the Civil Service exam, assuming each candidate meets minimum qualifications. A candidate's score on the Civil Service exam is typically comprised of the following three components: technical knowledge test, situational judgment test, and education and experience. Candidates are given an exam score and ranking by HRD. If the Department selects an individual for promotion who is ranked lower than another candidate(s), any bypassed candidates have the right to file an appeal with the Massachusetts Civil Service Commission
 - b. HRD is the sole provider and administrator of written tests for the department. The department typically participates in a promotional exam every three years, at which point interested and eligible candidates register for the exam with HRD. HRD provides candidates with a preparation guide and reading list for candidates to prepare for the

exam, which is held at a time and location determined by HRD. Upon the administration of the exam and the conclusion of any appeals period, HRD provides candidates with their scores on their exam as well as their ranking on promotional list. Massachusetts General Law C. 31. s. 22 governs the passing requirements for Civil Service promotional exams and Massachusetts General Law C. 31 s. 74 addresses the prohibit activities for Civil Service promotional exams, such as cheating.

- c. An oral interview is considered part of the selection process for all ranks. The oral interviews will be conducted in a fair, consistent, and respectful manner that allows the department to gauge a candidate's promotional potential. As part of the oral interview, candidates will be asked about a variety of topics, including but not limited to professional and personal background, career goals, problem solving, personnel management, conflict mediation, and communication skills. Oral board members will be expected to take notes regarding candidate responses. These notes shall be retained by the Office of Planning, Budget, and Personnel in the employee's personnel file.
 - d. After an exam and within a limited time, HRD allows candidates to submit appeals regarding specific questions. HRD may invalidate certain questions when it is determined that an appeal has validity. In such cases, all exam takers will be credited, not just the candidates who submitted the appeals. Massachusetts General Law C. 31. s. 22 governs appeal procedures for Civil Service promotional exams.
 - e. All candidates who either fail to score high enough on an exam to be considered for promotion or who are not high enough on the list to be promoted prior to the expiration of the list may take subsequent exams as many times as they wish as they become available by HRD.
 - f. The security of promotional materials, primarily test questions and personal information, is the sole responsibility of the Human Resources Division. Massachusetts General Law C. 31. s. 70 governs the security of Civil Service promotional materials.
 - g. The department does not allow lateral promotions. Lateral transfers enter the department as patrol officers.
- C. 34.1.3 (M) Job Relatedness
- 1. All elements of the promotional process will be job-related and non-discriminatory. The questions on promotional exams are constructed from information in pre-determined books that all candidates have access to.
 - 2. HRD writes the questions and ensures that they are job-related.
- D. 34.1.4 (M) Promotional Announcement
- 1. The department will send out an email to all personnel announcing its intention to call for an exam but does not notify the department when calling for a list. However, past practice is to call for an exam every three years. Officers who want to try for promotion rely on the

regularity of the department's practice to call for exams and should begin to prepare well ahead of time.

2. In addition to the department sending an announcement, the City also announces the intention to call for an exam.
3. HRD publishes the reading list but does not provide the material; candidates can purchase books on their own and participate in exam preparation courses, if desired.

E. 34.1.5 (M) Eligibility Lists

1. The Human Resources Division of the Commonwealth establishes the criteria for eligibility lists for promotion including:
 - a. the numerical weight assigned to each eligibility requirement;
 - b. the system of ranking eligible candidates on the lists;
 - c. time-in-rank as part of the education and experience portion of the application; and
 - d. the duration of the lists.
2. The Cambridge Police Department selects candidates for promotion based on their positions on the eligibility lists. In cases of a tie, HRD has established that candidates will be ranked alphabetically.

F. 34.1.6 (M) Promotional Probation

1. The department does not require a probationary period for officers selected for promotion. Unsatisfactory performance will be identified and corrected as early as possible through counseling, training, or other suitable personnel actions.