

# Background Investigations

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Spokane County Sheriff's Office

# Overview

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- Minimum WA State Requirements for Background Investigations
- Other Background tools that we use
  - Timelines – how long does a BI take?
- Trends We're Seeing with Applicants
  - Top reasons for rejection this year

# Minimum Background Requirements per WAC

- WAC 139-07 adopted January 2013
- The applicant SHALL provide:
  - Applicant must complete a PHS before B.I.
  - Provide proof of citizenship
  - Provide proof of education (certified copy)
  - Certified copy of Military Service Record
    - DD-214 can be obtained via SF-180
  - Provide at least 3 personal references
    - We ask for 5 references

# Minimum Requirements of the Agency

- Query all LE agency records for every place the applicant has lived, worked or gone to school
- Query all DOL records for every place the applicant has lived, worked or gone to school
- Query NCIC/III and WACIC/WASIS (or the equivalent for each state) for every place lived, worked or gone to school

# Agency Requirements

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- Previous employers for last 10 years
  - We ask for all employment
- Previous schools attended last 10 years
  - We ask for all education
- Residence history for past 10 years
  - We ask for 10 years or back to age 15

# Agency Requirements

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- Complete and submit applicant's fingerprints to the FBI and WSP
  - We also photograph the applicants
- Contact a minimum of 3 references
  - We try to develop 2 secondary references
- Contact a "reasonable number" of past employers
- A report must be completed attesting to the completion of these requirements

# Agency Requirements

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- At this point a Conditional Offer of Employment may be given because the Background Investigation is “substantially complete”
- Per ADA/EEOC rules, all non-medical aspects of an applicant’s background and suitability for the position must be considered before the COE

# Agency Requirements

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- Psychological Examination
  - Psychiatrist must be licensed in WA
  - Must be trained and experienced
  - Must administer a minimum of 2 written psych tests
  - A comprehensive, face-to-face, clinical interview must be conducted
  - A report must be completed with findings
    - Reports older than 6 months are not valid



# Agency Requirements

- Polygraph “or other truth verification assessments”
- Equipment used must be deemed reliable by independent research studies
- Examiners/Analysts must comply with state and federal laws, to include EPPA, EEOC, ADA and WA law against discrimination

# Agency Requirements

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- Polygraph examiner must be:
  - Experienced
  - Graduate of a polygraph school accredited by the American Polygraph Association
  - Examiner must complete a minimum of 30 hours of APA approved continuing education every 2 years
  - Numerous technical requirements
  - Test results must be retained a minimum of 3 years

# Are We There Yet?

- That concludes the requirements of WAC
- But, there's so much more to be done:
  - How about a Physical Examination?
  - Drug Screening
  - Credit check
  - Verification of employment/unemployment
  - Query IRS for tax verification (4506-T)
  - National Decertification Index (39 states, over 19,522 decertified officers)

# Let's Be Very Thorough

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- We have them complete a Background Questionnaire and Personnel Evaluation Profile prior to our Integrity Interview
- Selective Service Registration for males
- SF-180 allows you to obtain full service and medical records
- Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER)

# Due Diligence!

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- Cybervetting the applicant
  - RCW 49.44.200 prevents employers from asking for access to private social media accounts; however...
  - Google their name(s), nicknames, email addresses and see where it takes you
  - Is their Facebook set to private? What about their friends, family, references, etc.?

# Past Performance Predicts Future Performance

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- Ride-along with the applicant
  - Observe them in their work environment
- County Assessor's Office for tax records
- Verify dissolution of marriages
- Surprise home visit
- Neighbor contacts
- Obtain copies of work evaluations, letters of discipline and commendation

# How Long Does it Take?

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- Depends on a number of factors:
  - The workload of the Background Investigator
  - Is there travel involved?
  - Is the applicant local or nomadic?
  - Typically, it takes 4 to 6 weeks to get returns from the IRS and Military, sometimes longer

# Trends We're Seeing

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- Social Media is HUGE!
- Virtually everyone has a presence on FB
- Sexting (photos/video) – VERY common!
- Sex via Skype or Facetime - common
- Sex in the workplace – quite common!
- Unemployment Fraud
- Addictions to pornography and gaming



# Why Are So Many Failing?

- Of the 59 applicants we've vetted so far this year:
  - 12 were considered "Acceptable"
    - Some of these failed later in the B.I. or failed in Training
  - 14 were considered "Questionable"
    - Some of these were still hired and are doing well
  - 33 were Rejected (disqualified)

# Reasons for Rejection

- 9 for Dishonesty during application or BI
- 7 for extremely poor work history
- 6 for Felony drug use/activity w/in 7 yrs
- 3 for Fraud
- 2 for MJ use within 1 year of application
- 2 LE officers admitted committing crimes
- 2 for crimes against children – admission
- 1 caught cheating during test
- 1 for severe emotional instability

# Success Rates

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- Only about 5% of applicants make it to the point of commissioning
- In the last three years:
  - 100% success rate with Laterals in FT
  - 75% success rate with entry-level in FT

# Questions?

## Thank You!

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## Deputy Darrell Rohde

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Darrell Rohde was born and raised in northern California and served in the United States Navy from 1980-1989. He earned an Associate's Degree in English in 1985 and became a Reserve Police Officer in his hometown of Pleasant Hill, California in 1986. Having caught the law enforcement "bug" he left PHPD for a paid Reserve position with East Bay Regional Park Police in 1988.

After his Honorable discharge from the Navy in 1989 he was hired by Hayward Police Department, California, and graduated top in his class at the Alameda County Sheriff's Academy. Darrell migrated to the Inland Northwest in the late 1990's and took a position as a Police Officer with the Spokane Airports Police Department.

Seeking greater challenges, Darrell left the airport in 2003 for a position as a Deputy Sheriff for Spokane County, Washington, where he currently serves as Personnel Coordinator and Background Investigator.

Darrell's specialty assignments have included: Problem-Oriented Policing Unit (Vice); Field Training Officer; Marine Enforcement/Boating Safety Officer; Helicopter Unit Observer; and Off-Road Vehicle Enforcement Officer.

Darrell is a graduate of the Glacken and Associates Background Investigator's Course, is a member of the California Background Investigators Association and has completed several Interview and Interrogation courses, including the Reid technique. He has conducted hundreds of background investigations from 2004 to present, and he still enjoys the unique challenges presented by these investigations.