



Minimum Standards

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Minimum Standards

Reference Number: MTAS-394

Minimum Standards for Police Officers

T.C.A. §§ 38-8-101–106 establish the Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission, assisted by the director and staff of the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy. The commission is empowered to develop, plan, and implement training programs for all local law enforcement officers and to administer and enforce this law's provisions.

The following statutory minimum qualifications apply to any person who is employed as a full-time, part-time, temporary, reserve, or auxiliary police officer. The officer must:

- be at least 18 years old;
- be a U.S. citizen or a permanent legal resident of the U.S. and an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. armed forces; provided that citizenship is obtained or applied for within six years of the employment start date with the law enforcement agency;
- have a high school or equivalent education
- not have a conviction or nolo contendere plea on any felony charge or law violation involving force, violence, theft, dishonesty, gambling, liquor, or controlled substances;
- not have any discharge from the U.S. armed forces other than honorable;
- have fingerprints on file at the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation;
- pass a physical exam by a licensed physician;
- have good moral character, as determined by a thorough investigation by the employing agency; and
- Have been certified by a Tennessee licensed health care provider qualified in the psychiatric or psychological field as being free from any impairment, as set forth in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association at the time of the examination, that would, in the professional judgment of the examiner, affect the applicants ability to perform an essential function of the job, with or without a reasonable accommodation.

Any person knowingly hiring or paying the salary of a person who fails to meet these qualifications is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000. The commission is directed to establish criteria for exceptions to or waiver of these qualifications based on a person's previous law enforcement experience and training. Waivers are prohibited for specified deficiencies. Appeals from denied waivers may be taken to the chancery court.

The commission shall issue a certificate of compliance to any person who meets the qualifications for employment and satisfactorily completes an approved recruit training program. All officers employed after July 1, 1983, must successfully complete recruit training within one year of their date of employment and thereafter must successfully complete an annual in-service training session appropriate for their rank and responsibilities.

Auxiliary Officers

Part-time, temporary, reserve, and auxiliary police officers must meet the same qualifications of age, education, citizenship, criminal record, and physical and mental fitness as full-time officers. T.C.A. § 38-8-106. They may work no more than 20 hours a week for a total of 100 hours per month. T.C.A. § 38-8-101(2).

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