**Managing Risk in Law Enforcement**

Accessible Word Document

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# **Hiring in Law Enforcement**

A police department can reduce potential liability exposures by being responsible during the hiring process. The hiring process should include an interview, extensive testing, and a thorough background check of the candidate to ensure qualified individuals are hired.

## Interview

The interview should help department leadership determine if the personality of the candidate is a good fit to enforce the law and serve the community.



## Testing

Testing should include aptitude examination to ensure that the individual can comprehend policies and procedures involved in public policing. Next, physical ability testing will show that the candidate is physically able to carry out the responsibilities of an officer, such as chasing a suspect on foot or being able to render aid to an injured subject, if needed. Psychological testing will address the mental stability of the candidate to ensure the individual’s mental health is adequate for the role.

## Background Check

Before a police department makes an offer to a candidate, it should complete thorough background checks to include prior employment and prior driving record. The required testing is summarized in Table 1. If a department hires a police officer that has previous instances of misconduct or has been reprimanded by the state credentialing agency, then the department could be negligent in their hiring practices, especially if the officer uses excessive force and it is not warranted or if they make inappropriate choices in how they handle individuals.

| **Hiring Activity** | **Benefit** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview | Helps leadership staff get to know candidate to determine if personality and character will be a good fit for the department and community |
| Employment background | Helps department identify prior instances of negative performances or violation of department policy |
| State law enforcement credentialing agency | Helps police department identify misconduct, which requires report to the state agency |
| Driving background | Helps police department identify a negative driving record |
| Aptitude testing | Helps ensure candidate is able to read and comprehend policies |
| Physical ability testing | Helps ensure candidate is physically able to carry out responsibilities |
| Psychological testing | Helps to ensure candidate meets mental health criteria for public service |

Table 1-Suggested hiring activities and benefits for police departments.

For additional information on negligent hiring visit [this Youtube video related to negligent hiring](https://youtu.be/j6u6hC3t1TI)

# **Training in Law Enforcement**

Another way to reduce potential liability exposure is to ensure all police officers are properly trained as a newly hired employee, as well as periodically throughout their tenure.

## New Hire Training

Police officers should be trained on all policies and procedures. This training should involve cognitive testing of officers to ensure understanding in procedures addressing critical policies, including response to resistance and vehicle pursuits. In addition to cognitive testing, officers should also be trained in communication, negotiation, and de-escalation skills. Training should include theory and practical delivery.

## Continued Training

During employment, if an officer violates policy and handles a situation inappropriately, the department will want to be able to show that the officer was property trained in the activity. If an officer negligently injures an individual by taking inappropriate action and the department is not able to show proof of training, such as documented curriculum and documented attendance sign in sheets, then the department could be negligent in not properly training officers to carry out required responsibilities.

