

BERGEN COUNTY LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE  
POLICE, FIRE, AND EMS ACADEMIES  
281 CAMPGAW ROAD MAHWAH, NJ 07430

**BECOMING A POLICE OFFICER IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

Becoming a Police Officer in New Jersey is an extremely difficult task to accomplish; however, the rewards are beneficial and worth the effort and sacrifice. This process begins when an applicant takes the NJ Department of Personnel (DOP) Civil Service test that is administered every other year and scores are kept on file for two years. The test is scored along with thousands of additional applicants' tests throughout the entire state of NJ. Your score, in addition to some other factors, will determine whether or not you will be contacted via writing from an agency in reference to filing paperwork for an application or interview process; this is called your certification.

Another type of testing process is called a Chiefs Test. This test is administered by each individual agency that is not a civil service department. A "Chiefs Test" agency can set the prerequisites on their application as they see fit. An example would be requiring a four year college degree or sixty college credits combined with military service. These agencies will require you to take a written exam, a physical fitness test and sit through several oral interviews in order to get hired.

Once hired the process becomes the same as every other agency. Once an applicant is certified by an agency, they will usually meet with an agency representative to fill out an employee application packet. If at that time, the agency is still interested in the applicant, a background check will be started on the applicant.

The third way of becoming a police officer is through the Alternate Route process. The Alternate Route Program is where the recruit pays their own way through the police academy. The process is similar to the Chiefs Test. There are a limited number of recruits allowed into each class so the testing process is extremely competitive. We tell individuals to expect to pay upwards of \$5000. This price includes tuition, medical testing, psychological testing, drug testing, uniforms, books and ammo. We will assist you with job placement after successfully completing the academy but there are no guarantees. You must be hired within 3 years of the graduation date.

The next step in the process will be for the applicant to produce original documentation in reference to birth certificates, academic records, driving records, residency records, etc. The background interview has now begun its more extensive search and a team of detectives will verify ALL information provided by the applicant to insure that the applicant is of good sound character.

If all is well with the applicant, he/she will undergo a series of physical, mental and psychological examinations ALL of which must be passed. The final step in this process is for the applicant to be officially hired by an agency and sent to the Bergen County Law & Public

Safety Institute (Police Academy). While at the Police Academy, the new recruit will undergo an extensive physical training program as well as an intense defensive tactics and academics program in which the recruit will be tested every day on their physical and mental capabilities. Some of the physical aspects include but are not limited to: warm-up exercises, running, push-ups, crunches, and weight lifting.

Academics that the recruit must learn include information on laws governing NJ, use of force, fire-arms laws, weapons techniques, First Responder, communication skills, report writing, how to use a ASP baton, and much more.

Defensive tactical skills are taught weekly to show the recruit the many different ways to defend one's self with limited injury to occur. These skills begin from basic kicking, punching, moving and simple exercises to help strengthen body muscle and then moving on to more complicated techniques. Eventually, all of these skills are put together as recruits learn to defend themselves in different situations. These are only some of the scenarios and skills that a Police Officer cadet will be taught and expected to become proficient in by graduation.

Some other classes that the police recruits of the Bergen County Law & Public Safety Institute (Police Academy) have to attend include: firearms laws and qualifications with a pistol

(handgun) as well as a shotgun, both during daylight and nighttime hours, proper documentation classes, use of force, title 2C (laws governing NJ), title 39 (laws governing the use of motor vehicles), how to use an ASP baton, handcuffing etc. Becoming a Police Officer is an exciting career. There is a great deal of room for advancement and opportunity in different divisions as well as good pay and benefits packages. If you are willing to work hard and have a career that will pay off, Police Officer is definitely a career worth aspiring for.

Job Announcements and information can be found on sources such as:

NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police [www.njsacop.org](http://www.njsacop.org) (under the Standards & Professional Services tab – police exam schedule)

NJ Civil Service Commission [www.nj.gov/csc](http://www.nj.gov/csc) Next exam should be in summer/fall 2019

Police App is a great place to review on a regular basis. [www.policeapp.com](http://www.policeapp.com)

Your local newspaper classified section

Bergen County Alternate Route process starts every February