

THE NEBRASKA STATE PATROL APPLICANT HANDBOOK



SWORN OFFICER SELECTION PROCESS

The Nebraska State Patrol is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

NEBRASKA STATE PATROL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Nebraska State Patrol is to exemplify our values by providing the highest quality of law enforcement and service to the citizens.

Through innovation and cooperation, we strive to promote and maintain the spirit of teamwork that is the tradition of the Nebraska State Patrol.

Nebraska State Troopers are sworn state deputy sheriffs and are authorized to perform police services in all of Nebraska's 93 counties. The Nebraska State Patrol is committed to professional public service reflecting recognition of the inherent value of each individual in society. Officers strive to earn and maintain trust, respect, and confidence by exemplifying the belief that the freedoms, rights, and dignity of all citizens must be protected and preserved, and the highest standards of morality, fairness, honesty, dedication, professionalism, and courage are expected from an officer.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for considering a career with the Nebraska State Patrol. This handbook will provide important information regarding the Sworn Officer Selection Process, for those who desire a rewarding and challenging career as a Nebraska State Patrol Trooper. **Even if you have applied in a previous selection process, it is important that you read this handbook carefully, as the process may change from year to year.**

It is also vital that you have a valid and working e-mail account in order to participate in the selection process, as communications are strictly via e-mail.

The Nebraska State Patrol is an Equal Opportunity Employer!

A Comprehensive Recruitment Plan is the guideline for this process and is used to hire individuals for the position of Trooper. Each applicant must participate in the agency's selection process in order to be eligible for employment.

All individuals expressing interest in employment with the Nebraska State Patrol need to meet the qualifications and requirements outlined in this handbook.



QUALIFICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

- You must be 21 years of age on or before the oath of office is taken
- Must be a U.S. Citizen prior to the oath of office being taken.
- High school education or GED and the ability to read, write, speak and understand the English language at the eleventh grade level. (A copy of documented proof of a high school education or GED will be required with your application!)
- Must be in good physical condition and be able to complete and pass a physical abilities test administered by the Patrol. You must also pass a medical and mental examination administered by a qualified physician, retained by the Patrol.
- Must possess sufficient vision and hearing to perform the essential functions of a sworn officer.
- Good character - very high moral standards.
- Must have a valid motor vehicle operator's license.
- Driving record and traffic convictions involving serious and/or frequent offenses may be cause for rejection. (Applicants convicted of DWI/DUI within two years immediately preceding the commencement of training will be rejected.)
- The Nebraska State Patrol's Tattoo Policy is currently being revised; applicants with non-offensive* tattoos/brands that can be covered by the prescribed long sleeve uniform or with a tattoo cover in the short sleeved uniforms may submit application.
 - *TATTOOS/BRANDS THAT ARE SEXIST (EXPRESS NUDITY), RACIST, ECCENTRIC OR OFFENSIVE IN NATURE, EXPRESS AN ASSOCIATION WITH CONDUCT OR SUBSTANCES PROHIBITED BY THE NEBRASKA STATE PATROL POLICIES, TO INCLUDE TATTOOS ASSOCIATED WITH ILLEGAL DRUGS, DRUG USAGE, OR PARAPHERNALIA, ARE PROHIBITED.
 - TATTOOS/BRANDS THAT DEPICT VULGAR OR ANTI-AMERICAN CONTENT, BRING POSSIBLE DISCREDIT TO THE NEBRASKA STATE PATROL, OR ASSOCIATE THE APPLICANT WITH ANY EXTREMIST GROUP OR GANG OR ORGANIZATION ARE PROHIBITED.
 - TATTOOS/BRANDS ON THE HEAD AND NECK AND FINGERS ARE PROHIBITED; WEDDING BAND TATTOOS ARE ALLOWED.
- Involvement in the following criminal activity may be cause for rejection:
 - Conviction of a felony offense.
 - Conviction of misdemeanor offenses involving aggressive or violent behavior, disregard for the safety of others, or the misuse of deadly weapons, as well as conviction of misdemeanor domestic violence.
 - Use of marijuana within the last two years from date of application.
 - Use of illicit drugs within the last five years from date of application.
 - This includes taking prescription medicines not prescribed to you.
 - Sold, produced, cultivated or transported marijuana or other controlled substance.

SELECTION PROCESS SCHEDULE

- ▶ APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE & PROCESSED = 8 WEEKS
 - ▶ ORIENTATION & TABE TESTING
 - ▶ PERSONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRES
 - ▶ PHYSICAL ABILITIES TESTING
- ▶ BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS = 10 WEEKS
- ▶ EMPLOYMENT REVIEW BOARD = 1 WEEK
- ▶ POLYGRAPH & PSYCHOLOGICALS = 4 WEEKS
- ▶ ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW BOARD = 1 WEEK
- ▶ MEDICAL EXAMS = 1 WEEK
- ▶ FINAL INTERVIEWS = 1 WEEK

The application is the *initial step* in the selection process for an applicant.

**Attention to detail and completeness of the application are vital!
Applications that are considered grossly incomplete will not be accepted
by the State Patrol.**

The on-line application and supplemental questionnaire will be available on the State of Nebraska's Career Center website when the process begins.

[APPLICANT HELP CENTER - STATE OF NEBRASKA](#)

The on-line application will take a considerable amount of time to complete. Therefore, it is important to know that it should be saved often when completing, and you may return to finish it at another time if you cannot complete it all in one sitting.

If you are unable to apply on-line at home or other personal location, you may visit any of the Nebraska Department of Labor Career Centers across the State to use their computers to apply on-line. Those locations are listed here: [Career Center Locations](#). Each Career Center has qualified staff to answer your inquiries regarding employment and training.

Applicants who need accommodation in the selection process should request this in advance. You may also visit Administrative Services, State Personnel Division, at 1526 K Street, Lincoln, phone 402-471-6500.

ORIENTATION MEETING & TABE TESTING

Applications that are approved by the Initial Review Board will be eligible and invited to attend an orientation meeting and TABE testing.

Applicants will be contacted to schedule a date. Check-in at orientation will require a photo id.

The Orientation Meeting includes information on the basic training camp and the duties of a trooper, as well as a review of the tattoo policy. After the orientation, the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) will be administered.

TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE)

The TABE evaluates an individual's reading comprehension and math skills. Each applicant must pass the TABE, indicating they have an 11th grade education level. Applicants will be notified of their TABE results as soon as the test is completed and graded. *Study guides for the TABE may be found at bookstores, libraries or by searching on the internet.*

Previous applicants, who have taken and passed the TABE, with the Nebraska State Patrol, should verify that information if they are contacted and invited to attend the Orientation.

PERSONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Applicants selected to continue in the process must complete a detailed Personal History Questionnaire (PHQ) on-line. The PHQ is a tool for investigators to use during the background investigations. The Nebraska State Patrol pays for the cost of the test, but the applicant must complete the PHQ through the internet in the allotted timeframe. Instructions for completing the PHQ will be e-mailed to successful applicants during this step in the process.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

Background investigations are conducted by Nebraska State Patrol sworn officers. Information from the application and the PHQ are used by officers in gathering information regarding an applicant's background. Contact will be made with references listed on the application, current and past employers, relatives, landlords, financial institutions, references not listed on the application, and any other sources deemed necessary. Any information not available on the application or PHQ that a background investigator determines is necessary will be requested from the applicant. In-home interviews will be conducted with each applicant and their spouse. Applicants will be contacted by the background investigator assigned to them to schedule the interview which will take place in the applicant's residence. Topics relative to employment with the State Patrol will be covered by the background investigator during the interview such as benefits, duties and responsibilities, and work conditions. In-home interviews for out of state applicants will be done by the State Patrol in their state, at the request of the Nebraska State Patrol.

Completed background investigations will be reviewed by the Employment Review Board, along with all applicant information. This board is not affiliated with the Human Resources Division. It is a separate and distinct group of Nebraska State Patrol officers who will review applications and make decisions regarding the qualifications and suitability of persons making application for employment. The Employment Review Board will make a recommendation to the Superintendent of the agency regarding each applicant.

EMPLOYMENT REVIEW BOARD

The Employment Review Board shall consist of members appointed by the Superintendent. The membership of the Employment Review Board shall be representative of agency personnel as it relates to gender, race, and ethnic groups and should reflect the agency's attitude regarding equal employment opportunity for all applicants.

The Employment Review Board shall review all applications and background investigations of the applicants to ensure hiring standards for sworn officers are applied in a fair, impartial, and consistent manner. All recommendations by the Employment Review Board will be presented to the Superintendent for a final decision.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST

Applicants who are endorsed by the Employment Review Board will be required to take and pass the Physical Abilities Test before receiving a Conditional Offer of Employment. A completed Physician's Clearance Form will be required in order to participate. Six exercises will be conducted in the order shown below.

You must pass each of the exercises to be able to participate further in the process.

- Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Handle Weapons
- Scale Lift & Carry
- Run With Obstacle
- Dummy Drag
- 1.5 Mile Run



If you do not meet the standards set by the Nebraska State Patrol, you will not be allowed to continue in the selection process.

CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Any individual receiving and accepting a conditional offer of employment will sign a Conditional Offer of Employment Contract which states the applicant must successfully complete the following:

- 1) polygraph examination
- 2) written psychological test and interview
- 3) a complete medical examination

Applicants must understand this is not an offer of immediate employment and SHOULD NOT give notice, quit their present job, or relocate.

- **Polygraph Examination**

Applicants who accept a conditional offer of employment will be contacted by a Nebraska State Patrol polygraph examiner to schedule the examination. The examination will be conducted at one of the Nebraska State Patrol offices located throughout the state.

The background investigation information, application and attachments (drug/alcohol and criminal activity questionnaires), and the personal history questionnaire will be forwarded to the examiner to assist with conducting the polygraph examination. The examiner will question the applicant in the areas of honesty, integrity, character and loyalty.

The polygraph examiner will submit a report for review to the Polygraph Review Board. An applicant who is not endorsed by the board and with approval from the Superintendent will be removed from the selection process.

- **Psychological Testing and Interview**

Applicants who receive a conditional offer of employment will be required to take a series of written psychological tests. These tests will provide the necessary information required by the psychologist, who is contracted by the Nebraska State Patrol, to do a follow up interview.

- **Medical Examination**

Medical examinations will be scheduled with the applicant by the Recruitment Coordinator. The examinations will be in Lincoln at Concentra Urgent Care which is contracted by the Nebraska State Patrol. The examination will include such items as a blood draw, and complete physical to include vision and hearing tests. The exam cost is paid for by the Nebraska State Patrol.

FINAL FORMAL INTERVIEW

Applicants who are endorsed by the Employment Review Board will receive a final interview. The interview board will consist of the Nebraska State Patrol's Commanders, which may include the Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Majors, Captain of the Carrier Enforcement Division, and Captain of the Training Academy. It is a formal interview and is held at State Headquarters in Lincoln. Prior to this interview, each applicant will be required to get fingerprinted at a Nebraska State Patrol location.

FINAL OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT

Once all the results have been collected, the Superintendent will give final approval for offers. The list of applicants eligible to receive a final offer will be sent to the Commander of the Training Academy. The Training Academy commander and their staff will notify the successful applicants.



TRAINING

Each recruit that attends training will be a paid employee of the Nebraska State Patrol. Basic Recruit Training is provided and consists of twenty-four weeks of intense instruction in a paramilitary setting. The training will be held at the Nebraska State Patrol Training Academy at 3600 North Academy Road, Grand Island, NE 68801-9200. The Nebraska State Patrol Training Academy is housed with the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center.

Each recruit is required to stay at the Academy from Sunday evening until Friday afternoon. Each day begins at 6:30 a.m. with physical fitness training. Classes run from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appropriate breaks are given during the day for meals and study.

Instructors are primarily State Patrol personnel who have been certified as law enforcement instructors by the Police Standards Advisory Council. In addition, guest speakers from outside the agency provide instruction.

Academic requirements are strictly adhered to. Recruits must have at least a 70% score on most examinations, except certain exams that have a higher score requirement. Three failed examinations constitute grounds for dismissal. Remedial testing procedures are allowed. Some of the law enforcement subjects taught include Motor Vehicle Law, Criminal and Drug Statutes, Accident Investigation, DUI/DUID Enforcement, Court Procedures, Cultural Diversity, Firearms Instruction, First Responder/CPR, Patrolling, Weight and Dimension Laws, and many others. College credits are available for those who successfully complete the recruit training session.

Physical fitness training is highly emphasized during basic recruit camp. Recruits will participate in fitness testing to set a benchmark.



RESTITUTION UNDER TRAINING

In order to ensure the Nebraska State Patrol does not invest time and money training persons for sworn officer positions without receiving the benefit of the services of a fully-trained officer, recruits (Trooper Candidate) must sign an employment agreement on the second day of basic recruit camp (Nebraska State Patrol Training Agreement Form).

In the event that a Trooper Candidate resigns their employment with the Agency during training or within the first thirty-six (36) months subsequent to taking the oath of office, they will be required to reimburse the agency up to \$8,000.

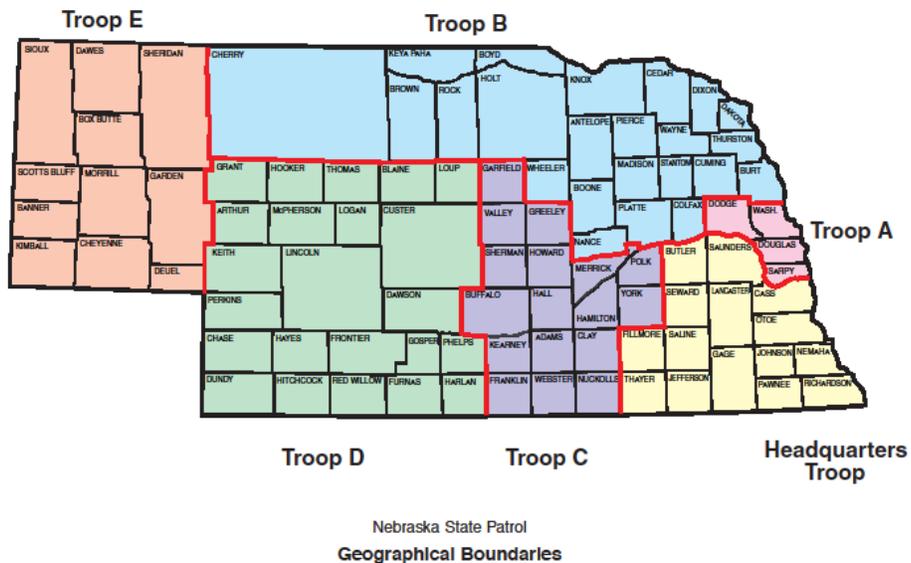
The Training Agreement also provides for agreement that the Trooper Candidate is no longer active in another law enforcement selection process.

No liquidated damages will be payable in the event that the Trooper Candidate fails to satisfactorily complete or is dismissed during the basic training camp, except in the event that there is substantial evidence that the Trooper Candidate has been dismissed as a result of misrepresenting his or her basic qualifications for employment, or has caused his or her dismissal, failure, illness or injury in an attempt to avoid paying liquidated damages under the terms of the Training Agreement.

DUTY STATIONS

Initial relocation to a duty station will be at the expense of the new officer. The officers will receive a minimum of two weeks off after camp graduation to relocate to their new duty assignments, if relocation is necessary.

Officers are expected to remain at their new duty station for a minimum of two years, unless waived for the benefit of the agency. Voluntary lateral transfers are offered after two years, based on existing vacancies and the willingness of the officer to pay for moving expenses.



PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Upon graduation from the State Patrol's Training Academy, all new officers will be required to complete a nine-month probationary period. An employee shall be removed from original probation status on the day following the end of the original probationary period.

The Training Academy's Basic Training shall prepare the probationary officer to take the second step -- the Field Training Program. The ultimate goal of all training is to produce a desired result. The goal of the Academy and the Field Training and Evaluation Program is to produce a qualified State Trooper capable of performing with confidence and ability. It is highly improbable that any citizen would possess the ability to step from their civilian employment directly to the duties of a State Trooper and perform in an acceptable fashion. The goal of the Academy is to prepare the probationary officer to take this step confidently and competently. The goal of the Field Training and Evaluation Program is to guide the probationary officer through the subsequent steps of development until they are ready to function as a solo officer.



Camp #56

FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

The Field Training Officer Program shall be a continuation of the training process required to ensure that all newly sworn officers receive thorough, consistent, and legally defensible field training. The program is designed to explain and demonstrate the proper techniques and procedures for performing law enforcement duties. In turn, the new officer is required to exhibit an acceptable level of competency in such law enforcement skills prior to the completion of the probationary period. The program shall consist of 800 hours of training under the direct supervision of an experienced field officer. This program is considered an extension of the training process. During this time, they will be supervised and trained on a daily basis by a Field Training Officer and must demonstrate competency to perform job tasks. New officers are exposed to the multiple responsibilities required of them as uniformed officers of the Patrol. The probationary period should also provide a period of time for new officers to make the transition from a regimented training environment to working amongst peers. Detailed information relative to the Field Training Program will be provided to candidates during basic recruit training.

The completion of basic recruit training and field training does not indicate an end to an officer's learning experience during his career. On going in-service training is provided to officers in an effort to enhance career development, address changes in law enforcement techniques, and to improve service to the community. Specialized training is provided to officers to develop very specific or technical enforcement ability.

WORK SCHEDULE

Following basic recruit camp and the field training program, an officer's career as a law enforcement officer truly begins. Typical work schedules for Troopers may consist of either five eight-hour days or four ten-hour days per week. Each troop area differs slightly on how work schedules are set. In some areas, officers may have permanently assigned shifts, others rotate. Probationary officers will have the same days off as the Field Training Officer. Troopers are required to work holidays if they fall on their regular scheduled day, which may include Christmas and Thanksgiving. This will be influenced by seniority and work area.

An officer's work shift begins by stepping into the State Patrol vehicle parked at their residence and contacting dispatch that they are ready for duty.

DUTIES

Trooper duties begin in the Traffic Services or Carrier Enforcement Divisions and include taking appropriate enforcement action of any violation of the law committed in their presence. Traffic (Patrol) Services Division duties include working with communities to improve public safety, enforcing traffic and drug laws, and investigating crimes. Carrier Enforcement Division duties primarily focus on the laws and regulations pertaining to the operation of commercial motor vehicles (trucks & buses), by weighing and conducting roadside inspections of such vehicles.

After two years of service, Troopers may apply for work in other areas such as:

- Bomb Technician
- Drug Interdiction
- Training Academy
- Police Service Dogs
- Executive Protection
- Air Wing Enforcement
- Accident Reconstruction
- Alcohol/Tobacco Enforcement
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Drug and Criminal Investigation
- Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT)

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The starting salary for basic recruit candidates is \$2,778 per month as of July 1, 2015; which begins when a recruit enters camp (Class Title – State Patrol Officer Candidate). Upon graduation (State Patrol Trooper), the salary as of July 1, 2016, is \$44,574 annually. Salaries are increased by Legislative authority, promotional status, or through the collective bargaining process.

The State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council (SLEBC) is currently the collective bargaining unit for troopers. Collective bargaining will have an influence on wages, benefits, and working conditions.

2015-2017 SLEBC Contract

UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Any individual who competes in a selection process and is unsuccessful in achieving hiring status is eligible to make application again at the beginning of the next selection process. Under no circumstances will an applicant be allowed to reapply during the same selection process from which they were disqualified.

CONTACT - RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR

For any questions regarding the selection process, contact the Recruitment Coordinator at 1-866-JOIN-NSP (564-6677) or nsp.recruiter@nebraska.gov.