



## Frequently asked Questions about Police Promotions

### Q. What are the steps to get a promotion at the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)?

1. Apply through the Department of Human Resources (DHR) website, following the directions provided on the exam announcement. The exam announcement is distributed by department bulletin. You can also sign up to receive exam announcements under “Job Opportunities” on the DHR website. Your application must be received by the deadline.
2. Receive a notice from DHR telling you whether you are qualified to take the exam.
3. If you are qualified to take the exam, receive a test preparation guide 30 days before the test.
4. You may have the opportunity to schedule yourself for the exam. If not, DHR will schedule you.
5. DHR will send you a confirmation of your test time 10 days before your test date.
6. Take the exam—typically the exam has more than one component.
7. DHR will send you a notice about whether you passed after the exam components are scored.
8. If you passed all exam components your total score will be ranked on an eligible list.
9. The names of eligible candidates will be sent to the SFPD for consideration. DHR will send you a notice if your name is sent to the SFPD.
10. You may be contacted by the SFPD for an interview. You also have an opportunity to give the SFPD your qualifications under the secondary criteria noted in the exam announcement.
11. The SFPD will conduct a pre-employment review, including a criminal background check, if you are identified as a finalist.
12. If you are selected, start your new job!

### Q. What are my protest rights?

A. If you believe there was a problem with the way the test was run you have five days to protest. For example, you can protest if you think someone else got more time or more information than you did. It is in your best interest to identify your concern about the exam component before you leave the test site. It is much easier to find a remedy for your concern at this time. Once you leave the test site, the options to resolve your issue become very limited.

### Q. Why can't candidates see their answers to the test?

A. Civil service rules preclude candidates from seeing their answers or the scoring key.

### Q. There are so many ways to handle different situations on the job. Are the raters looking for one specific answer to each question?

A. The raters are subject matter experts (SMEs). They are not looking for a word for word answer on a free response test. They are evaluating the strength of an answer. The majority of ratings are given based on a meter that starts at zero: an answer is given more or less credit based on a better or worse response when compared to the “keyed” responses. A major benefit of having SMEs as raters is that their experience enables them to give credit for answers that get at the same point, but do not exactly match the answer key.



### Q. How are candidates selected from an eligible list?

A. Civil service rules allow 10 scores to be considered on police promotional exams. This means all candidates whose scores are in the top ten ranks can be considered for a vacancy. When there is one vacancy, 10 scores are available; when there are two vacancies, 11 scores are available; when there are three vacancies, 12 scores are available; etc.

The Police Chief can also consider secondary criteria to select candidates from the eligible list. Secondary criteria are noted on the exam announcement and may include assignments, training, education, community involvement, special qualifications, commendations / awards, bilingual certification, and discipline history. The Chief considers these qualifications at his or her discretion.

**Q. Why are there different exam components?**

A. The exam is meant to simulate the job as much as possible. The more of the job you test, the more you can accurately predict future success. Exam components may include job simulations, work samples, and other measures of technical knowledge. Exam components are listed on the exam announcement.

**Q. How often do you give promotional exams?**

A. DHR's objective is to give promotional exams every three years, and to have a new eligible list in place shortly after a list expires.

**Q. How do I qualify for a promotion?**

The minimum qualifications for any police promotion are listed on the exam announcement and posted in a department bulletin. For example, the minimum qualifications for the Q-60 Lieutenant examination are:

- Two years of experience with the SFPD at the rank of Q-50 Sergeant after completing probation; AND
- Possession of a POST Supervisory Certification issued by the California Department of Justice, Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training; AND
- Possession of a valid Class C California driver's license.
- A candidate must meet the minimum qualifications to take an exam.

The minimum qualifications have been publicized in department bulletins numerous times since 2012.

**Q. If I earned my POST Supervisory Certificate 10 years ago, do I still need to provide it to qualify for an exam?**

A. Yes. DHR does not retain records of past POST certificates.

**Q. How are tests developed?**

A. DHR's Public Safety Team first conducts a detailed job analysis. The job analysis identifies the important and frequent tasks performed by those already in the job, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform those tasks. Using the job analysis results, the Public Safety Team works with a Test Development Committee to create test components.

**Q. Who develops the tests?**

A. The DHR Public Safety Team works with SMEs from within the SFPD and contractors to develop test components.

**Q. How are SMEs chosen?**

A. The DHR Public Safety Team requests SMEs who are representative of the class from the SFPD. The department selects the SMEs.

**Q. Why do I have to participate in job analysis?**

A. Job analysis is the basis for the test. If the job analysis does not reflect the job, the test will not either. As experts in the field, you are the most valuable source of information about your job. To develop a high quality test, it is important to involve a wide variety of experts. At least 60% of the rank participates in the job analysis.

**Q. How are exam raters selected?**

A. DHR surveys similar departments nationwide to identify a diverse pool of qualified individuals at or above the rank being tested, who are also experienced raters.