



THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

# COMMISSION COMMENTS

## Tips from an Anonymous Application Reviewer

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As an analyst at the Civil Service Commission, one of my job duties is to review applications. The number one thing I want to say to applicants is: ***look at the minimum qualifications of the job for which you are applying.*** Then, as you fill out the Work Experience section of the application, explain what you have done at previous jobs to show me how you meet those minimum qualifications.

When I review an application, I am comparing the exact minimum qualifications to what you listed as your education and experience. I approve applications that meet or exceed the stated qualifications. For example, recently I reviewed applications for a job where the minimum qualifications stated, *"Two years of experience in general maintenance and/or construction, which includes experience in laying and finishing concrete."* I had to reject many applications because there was no mention of concrete anywhere in the job duties.

### Other things I want you to know:

◆ **I am basing my decision to approve or deny you on what YOU write on the application.** I cannot assume anything when I am reviewing your application. Just because you include the job title of *Office Assistant*, I cannot automatically approve you for a job whose minimum qualifications require "experience answering a multi-line phone

system" unless you clearly state that you answer multi-line phones on your application.

◆ **Don't apply for jobs for which you clearly do not meet the minimum qualifications.** If you do not meet the minimum qualifications, your application will not be approved. There is no wiggle room in Commission policy that allows me to approve an application because I think

you are great, or have some really incredible experience of a different type.

◆ **Don't lie on your application.**

I look up company websites and job

titles. I call companies and city contacts to ask about job duties for certain positions. I Google to learn more about things that seem inconsistent. On top of that, the exams are created based on a complete job analysis, including observing people who do the job on a daily basis and talking to their supervisors. If you don't have the background we ask for on the minimum qualifications, you should expect to do poorly on the exam and not score well enough to be interviewed. It will likely turn out to be a waste of your time, not to mention the serious consequences if you get caught.

◆ **Do not use acronyms or abbreviations, especially for a job title.** Many acronyms have more than one meaning; it is your responsibility to make sure I know

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**"Be so  
good they  
can't  
ignore  
you."**

- Steve Martin

## Applications

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which one you intended. I cannot approve experience that I do not understand. Make sure you use full titles and words.

◆ **Create separate entries in your work history for each job you've had.** If you worked at one company and held multiple titles, make sure to list each title and the amount of time in each position separately. If you only include the one job title, at most, I can only give you credit for one type of job. Sometimes, applicants combine entries so much that I cannot give any credit at all.

◆ **Part-time experience is counted differently than full-time experience.** When the minimum qualifications require "two years of experience," it means "two years of *full-time* experience." Part-time experience is credited proportionally based upon the number of hours worked per week.

◆ **It is worth the time to fill out a Request for Review form.** If you are rejected based on "lack of required work experience" and you believe you really should have been approved, make the effort to fill out this form. A second analyst and the Commission Director will review the request and either approve your application based on the additional information, or write you a detailed explanation of why you were rejected.

When I am reviewing applications, *I want to approve people*—the more qualified people we can add to the eligible list, the happier I make my counterparts in the departments I serve. So next time you apply with us, remember to check the minimum qualifications-- if you meet them, make sure your work history includes enough detail to make it easy for me to move you on to the next step. Good luck in your job search!

## Classification Spotlight: Police Records Technician

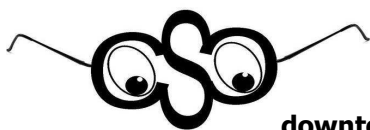
When the average person thinks about jobs at the Columbus Division of Police, uniformed officers are often the first people that come to mind. However, there is a massive amount of support that each one of those officers can tap into at any moment in time with a click of the mouse or a call on the radio. One such unsung support hero is the Police Records Technician. Officers who are out on the street call in to the Police Records Office to get answers to real-time questions. The technicians swiftly provide accurate data that keep the officers safe and prevent criminals from walking away.

Police Records Technicians also assist other jurisdictions, court officials, and the general public. If you have ever needed a copy of an accident or incident report, you have met a technician at the Records Counter. If you have ever had your car towed and called the police to find it, you have spoken to a technician on the phone. If you have looked at a police report online, the Records Office has reviewed, redacted, verified, and/or updated it. The Police Records Office is a 24/7 operation with three shifts of personnel. Police Records Technicians rotate on a scheduled basis between a variety of positions, including: Bulletin, Cashier, Report, Arrest Records, LEADS, Public Services, and Accident Records. Each technician must be familiar with all areas so personnel are available to staff each position as needed. Many times, technicians stay overtime to ensure police officers on the street have sufficient support at any given moment.

*What are the requirements to apply for this job?* The minimum qualifications include completion of the twelfth school grade and one year of general office experience. Technicians must obtain and maintain LEADS/BCI certification by the end of their probationary period. This job is competitive, which means applicants take a test and are put in score bands on an eligible list. The current Police Records Technician test is a multiple-choice exam covering Time Sharing, Problem Sensitivity, Reading Comprehension, Information Ordering, and Public Relations; and a job simulation/computer skills exam covering Audio Data Entry, Customer Service, Alpha and Numeric Filing, Records Locating and Outlook.

The City of Columbus has many jobs covering a variety of skills and knowledge. If you are interested in the Police Records Technician job class or any other positions, visit our website at [Columbus.gov/civilservice](http://Columbus.gov/civilservice).





## ???Ask Eyestein???

**Dear Eyestein:**  
**When I come to the downtown test center, why are the monitors so insistent that I shut off my phone and hang up my coat? I am an honest person—I'm not going to cheat just because I put the phone on vibrate and the coat on the back of my chair!**

**Signed, Most People Don't Cheat**

Dear Most People:

We know that most people don't cheat, and that is exactly why it is even more important to catch or prevent the people who do: we do not want someone who is being dishonest to score higher than someone who is being honest. We have proven precautions in place, such as multiple security cameras and limiting access to phones, to make it more difficult for someone to obtain answers to exam questions. So, in order to insure we have created the most level competitive playing field, we ask that all devices be turned completely off. As to why we ask candidates to hang up their coats, it is a matter of both safety and security.

**Safety:** The chairs were not designed for this use. Through trial and error, we've found the type of wheels on the chairs very easily tangle with anything near them, potentially damaging your belongings and tipping the chair. **Security:** We don't want to allow access to items in pockets that might provide an unfair advantage. So, we ask that all coats be hung on one of the coat hooks provided in the test center.

**Dear Eyestein:**  
**The testing software didn't work right during my Excel test, so I don't think it is my fault that I didn't get a good score. Every slight click of the mouse wasted one of my tries.**

**Signed, Go Buy Some New Software**

Dear New Software:

I am sorry to hear something went wrong with your test. Since you did not share exactly what happened, I will tell you about the current software and possible things to do if something like this would ever happen again.

- Before we started using this software in 2013, we did a LOT of research on what kind of computer skills testing packages were out there. We are confident that we purchased the best choice. That said, as with any software, it has features that do not please every single person who uses it. Know that every person taking the exam is using the exact same software, making it a fair assessment of skills.

- If you think the software is malfunctioning, get a monitor's attention as quickly as possible. Most tests are on a timer. If you raise your hand and a monitor does

not come to you at once, get up and go to the check-in area. They can help you determine if it is a software problem or if you are misunderstanding what you are supposed to do.

- Most tests in OPAC (including the Excel test you took) allow the candidate *at least* three chances to answer each question before it is marked wrong. Be sure to read the instructions for your specific exam to know how many tries you get.

- When answering questions, some people waste a try by doing the same action twice, thinking that the software did not pick up what they clicked. There is no such thing as a "slight click" — if you click on the wrong thing, the software tells you it is incorrect.

- If you get an incorrect attempt, the first thing you should do is read the question again, very thoroughly. Many times the question wants you to perform an action by a specific method to get it right.

- Use the "skip the question" option before you run out of attempts. You can come back later; something in the remainder of the test might remind you how to respond to that question.

- If for any reason you have an unresolved problem, make sure to fill out the pink comments sheet and include your computer number and name. We can look at what happened with your test afterwards and calculate how it might affect your score.

**Dear Eyestein:**  
**I received a notice that my name was certified for a test I took, but haven't heard anything else. What does that mean? Is anyone going to contact me?**

**Signed, Certifiably Confused**

Dear Certified:

When you pass a test, your name is placed on an eligible list. Typically this list is valid for two years. During that two years, when a department is ready to hire someone, they ask us for a certification list. The certification list is the portion of the full eligible list that can be hired at that specific time. For banded lists, this means that the top scores (i.e. the 90 band) are sent to the department first. When your name is sent to a department, we send you a "notice of certification" like you recently received.

What happens next is up to the hiring department. The department may send out letters to everyone on the list to gauge interest in the position, or they may just look at everyone's NEOGOV profiles and decide who to interview; the process is different for each department and each type of job. The notice you received included the name and contact information for the HR representative. It is in your best interest to be proactive and reach out to that person.



**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

**Main Office and Test Center**

77 North Front Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1895  
614-645-8300  
CivilService@columbus.gov  
Fax: 614-645-8379

**Piedmont Test Center**

750 Piedmont Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43224-3266  
614-645-0848  
PoliceFireTesting@columbus.gov  
Fax: 614-645-0866

[columbus.gov/civilservice](http://columbus.gov/civilservice)  
[cscfeedback@columbus.gov](mailto:cscfeedback@columbus.gov)

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courtesy of:*

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**POLICE  
OFFICER EXPO**

**Learn more about a  
rewarding career at  
this free event.**

***Mark your calendars:***

Saturday, May 14, 10 am - 2 pm

Thursday, June 16, 5 pm - 9 pm

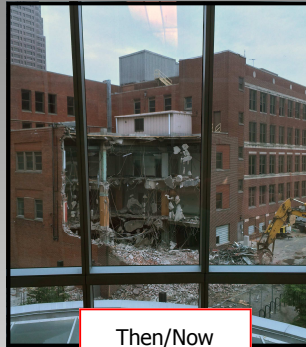
Thursday, July 14, 5 pm - 9 pm

James G. Jackson Training Academy  
1000 N Hague Ave  
Columbus, OH 43204  
[www.columbus.gov/police](http://www.columbus.gov/police)

**Then, Now, & Later**

**Watching downtown grow: the view from Civil Service**

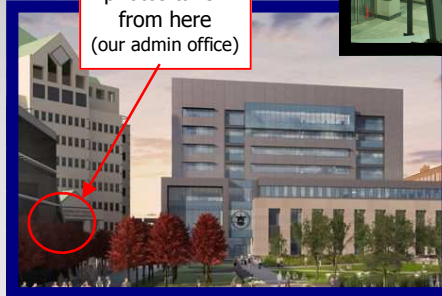
**THEN** (below left): May 2014: We watched from our administrative office as the demolition of the former 109 N Front Street building began.



**NOW** (below): February 2016: Construction is under way! This photo was taken from the same window.



Then/Now  
photos taken  
from here  
(our admin office)



**LATER** (left): Exterior rendering of 111 N Front Street (Civil Service / 77 N Front is building on the far left)

**Plan Ahead for a Career in Public Safety**

When stories air on the news about an upcoming Fire or Police Academy class, the Commission usually receives a number of calls from applicants wanting to apply to get in that class. However, academy classes scheduled for the current year will consist of people who have already tested. Because of the level of responsibility that comes along with these positions, the hiring process is extensive; therefore, you cannot apply and start work in a public safety position immediately. There are three parts to the Firefighter exam and four parts to the Police Officer exam. Those who pass are placed on an eligible list, and those who score the highest are contacted first. Next, there is a detailed background investigation. For applicants receiving conditional offers of employment, the final steps include a medical exam, a cardiovascular stress test, and a psychological exam. When the City's budget is announced with the number of academy classes for that year, most people going in these classes are already in the background or medical process at that point. **Our advice is to plan ahead!** If you are interested in becoming a police officer but are still in college, you can take the civil service exam the year before you graduate. Police Officer lists are currently good for one year, so anyone testing this year will be considered for classes hired next year. Firefighter lists are usually good for two to three years so, depending on your score, they may not reach you on the list right away. Police Officer will open for applications in July 2016 and Firefighter will open in 2017. The minimum age to take the Police Officer exam is 20 1/2, the Firefighter exam is 17 1/2, and there is no maximum age for either exam. To be notified when we are accepting applications, go to [www.columbus.gov/civilservice](http://www.columbus.gov/civilservice), search for the job title under Job Class Info, and click *I am interested!*