



THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS



CONSERVATION OFFICER SERVICE

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The recruitment process outlined below is dynamic and subject to amendment, without notification on this website, as a result of changes in policy and/or legislation. The following information is provided for summary purposes only.

Overview

Commencing with your application package for an advertised job posting and ending with notification of the successful candidate(s), competitions for the position of Conservation Officer will run between two and six months. Advancement through this process is dependent upon successful completion of each stage.

Underlying the process described below are several key principles and guidelines that originate in legislation and in policy. For more, complete information on preferred or best practices in staffing, refer to [Practice Guidelines - Recruitment, Selection and Appointment](#) on the B.C. Public Service Agency website.

Stages of the Recruitment Process

1. Application Package
2. Short-Listing on Qualifications
3. Written Assessment
4. Conservation Officer Service Willingness Statement
5. Standards of Personal Department Agreement
6. Panel Interview
7. Physical Abilities Test For Conservation Officers
8. Past Work Performance Checks
9. Fingerprinting and Criminal Records Check
10. Security Interview and Background Investigation
11. Pre-placement Medical Examination
12. Psychological Assessment

Note: the timing and specific requirements of each stage may vary slightly depending on the competition and the position to be filled.

Stage 1 – Application Package

Positions are advertised as vacancies arise and will be posted on the B.C. Public Service Agency web site under [Job Opportunities](#) or, for the Seasonal Employment Program, [Short Term \(Auxiliary\) Jobs](#). The job advertisement will instruct applicants where, when and how to submit their applications.

During this first stage, **applications are screened for completeness and eligibility**. To be eligible to work for the British Columbia Public Service, applicants must be:

- at least 15 years of age and less than 65, and
- a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.

Age criteria for the Conservation Officer Service varies slightly from the B.C. Public Service Agency, as applicants require a valid, Class 5 Driver's License.

Other eligibility criteria may apply depending on the nature and scope of the position. For instance, some positions are open to eligible B.C. Public Service employees only. These are labelled [In-Service](#) positions. Competitions labelled [Out-of-Service](#) are open to both B.C. Public Service employees and the public.

Note: all personal information received from applicants is treated with the utmost confidentiality and, for unsuccessful applicants, shall either be returned or destroyed at the end of the competition. Any personal records generated through the recruiting process (e.g. written test results, interview ratings, panel notes, reference checks, etc) are also treated as confidential.

Stage 2 – Short-Listing on Qualifications

Once applicants have been screened for eligibility, they are short-listed against the position's **education and work experience requirements** as listed under "Qualifications" and/or "Selection Criteria" in the job posting and/or job description.

Short-listing is the process of narrowing down an applicant pool to determine which individuals you will be assessing further. At this stage, an applicant's credentials are generally measured on a pass or fail basis. That is to say, either an applicant has the basic qualifications necessary to do the job or they do not.

Note: a selection panel has the option to short-list against a position's **preferred qualifications**, if clearly outlined in the job posting and/or applicant information package, when they anticipate that a large number of candidates will meet the position's minimum requirements.

In addition to education and work experience criteria, applications may also be short-listed against a number of **special and mandatory requirements**. For instance, to be considered for entry-level positions within the Conservation Officer Service, candidates must submit a valid copy of the following:

- Class 5 BC Driver's License without restrictions or contraventions
- Occupational First Aid (OFA) Level 1 or equivalent
- Canada Firearms Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) or Possession-Only License (POL)
- Pleasure Craft Operator Card

Stage 3 – Written Assessment

If the selection panel anticipates that a large number of candidates will meet the position's education and work experience requirements, a written assessment may be used to further assess qualifications and narrow the applicant pool.

In most instances, the written assessment will be a behavioural-competency based exercise. Please refer to **Stage 6 – Panel Interview** for more information on behavioural competencies and the 2006/07 [Seasonal Conservation Officer Supplementary Application](#) for a sample written assessment.

Stage 4 – Conservation Officer Willingness Statement

It is important that applicants understand and acknowledge the various job requirements of a Conservation Officer. In particular, applicants must appreciate the public trust which is invested in the position and recognize those aspects of the job that may cause significant physical and/or emotional stress. For instance, as a Conservation Officer you will be placed in situations that will severely test your judgment, including the possible use of physical or deadly force. Consequently, applicants should give strong consideration to her or his personal beliefs and values before they apply. To assist in this process, applicants who have been invited to an interview must agree to and, in the event they are successful, meet the terms and conditions of the [Conservation Officer Willingness Statement](#).

Stage 5 – Standards of Personal Department Agreement

Applicants who are invited to an interview must agree to and, in the event they are successful, meet the terms and conditions of the [Standards of Personal Department Agreement](#). According to these standards, Conservation Officers will conduct themselves and their affairs in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for a position of public trust.

Stage 6 – Panel Interview

The panel interview will be a **structured**, **behavioural** and **competency**-based interview.

A **structured interview** asks the same series of questions of all applicants and applies the same, pre-determined assessment criteria.

In a **behavioural interview**, you will be asked to provide detailed examples of your demonstrated ability and behaviour. For example, you will be asked “When did you *demonstrate...*” rather than, “What would you do *if...*”. General answers are not what the employer is looking for. You must describe in detail a particular event, project, or experience, how you dealt with the situation, and what the outcome was. The underlying assumption is that the best predictor of future work performance is past work performance.

Typically, a behavioural-based question can be characterized by the following:

- It is an assessment of demonstrated ability and behaviour(s), not hypothetical actions.
- Wherever possible, answer questions using the first person (e.g. “I did” or “I thought”). Your answers will be evaluated based on what you have done, not what your partner or team-members have done.
- While you will be encouraged to provide relevant, work-related examples, you may also draw from education, volunteer, or other general experience.
- Provide the best, and wherever possible, most recent example.
- Since responses must be verifiable, you will be required to provide the name and contact information of a person who can confirm the events/actions described.
- The selection panel will begin with an open-ended, lead question and, depending on your response, follow with a series of probing questions to gather detailed information on the what, who, when, where, why and how.
- The behaviours you describe (i.e. what you did, how and why) must relate to the behavioural competencies of a Conservation Officer.

Using the behavioural-based format described above, candidates will be asked to describe how they have demonstrated the **behavioural competencies** required of a Conservation Officer. Briefly, behavioural competencies describe personal attributes or characteristics that are essential to superior performance in a given job or role. In other words, they describe what superior performers think and how they behave, in more situations and with better results, compared to average performers.

Behavioural competencies like *flexibility*, *integrity*, *self-confidence* and *teamwork* are a few of the personal attributes or characteristics that are essential for superior performance as a Conservation Officer. It is important to stress that these personal characteristics, as demonstrated through specific, on-the-job behaviours, are transferable. Because behavioural competencies can be applied in various situations and for various occupations, they describe HOW one can and will carry out a job or task as opposed to the particulars of that job or task.

Behavioural competencies are not entirely new to our recruiting strategy. For instance, concepts such as leadership, teamwork, initiative, conflict management and problem solving have been used to assess a prospective employee's suitability for quite some time. However, while the concept is not new, a more complete and detailed list of competencies related to the job requirements of Conservation Officer has been developed. See [Behavioural Competencies, Conservation Officer](#), for further information.

Note: behavioural, competency-based interviews have become a widely used tool in human resources, both inside and outside of government. They are also referred to as *behavioural-event*, *behavioural-based*, or *behavioural-descriptive* interviews. While you are encouraged to do further research in preparation for your interview, avoid the temptation to provide a textbook response based on the information that you have found either on-line or elsewhere.

Preparation

Before your interview, carefully review the position's behavioural competencies. Reflect on your experience and the times when you have demonstrated these characteristics. Then prepare to discuss these situations in detail, outlining the role you played, the actions you took and the results of your actions.

In describing an experience to the panel, you may wish to use the **STAR technique** to guide your response. STAR is an acronym for: **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction and **R**esult.

Situation – summarize the situation you were in or the problem that you had to address. For instance, when did the situation happen (month/year), where did it take place and who was involved?

Task - briefly describe the task(s) you had to accomplish. For instance, what was your specific role in the situation you have described?

A description of the situation and task should comprise approximately 10-20% of your response.

Action - outline key and specific actions that you took to address the situation. For instance, how did you prepare? What did you do or say? What did you think or feel? Why did you take this approach?

The description of the actions you took should comprise approximately 60-80% of your response.

Result - describe the result or outcome of your actions and the event. For instance, what happened? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

A description of your results and the event's outcome should comprise approximately 10-20% of your response.

Other Assessment Methods

While the greater part of a panel interview will focus on the assessment of behavioural competencies, in most instances an applicant's **technical competencies** will also be evaluated. **Technical Competencies** refer to the specific technical knowledge and skill required to perform a job or task. They describe WHAT you need to know and what you must be able to do and are essential to effective and safe job performance.

A range of assessment tools may be used to assess technical competencies, including [situational questions](#) and [simulations](#). For further, general information on these subjects, refer to the B.C. Public Service Agency website using the links provided.

Stage 7 – Physical Abilities Testing For Conservation Officers

Applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to complete the [Pre-employment Physical Abilities Test for Conservation Officers \(PATCO\)](#). PATCO tests the minimum level of aerobic/anaerobic fitness, whole body muscular strength, and balance, agility, and flexibility that are required to perform many of a Conservation Officer's duties safely and effectively. For instance, COs must be capable of:

- lifting, carrying and moving awkward objects weighing between 2 and 50 kilograms;
- individually operating, controlling, loading and unloading an ATV, motorcycle, snowmobile, and car-top boat;
- conducting patrols, investigations, and possibly chases over varied terrain and topography while carrying the required personal safety equipment; and
- physically confronting, restraining and arresting a suspect.

The Physical Abilities Test for Conservation Officers is comprised of the following components:

- Obstacle Course
- Strength Tasks
- modified Pack Test

An applicant's performance will be assessed on a pass/fail basis only.

Candidates **must** acquire medical clearance before they can participate in the PATCO. As part of a larger information package, a medical clearance form will be mailed to those applicants invited to an interview.

Stage 8 – Past Work Performance Checks

Since one of the most accurate predictors of future performance is past performance, past work performance (PWP) checks play a critical role in the assessment process.

Following the interview, and using the references that you have provided, past work performance is assessed for the top ranked applicant(s), including those placed on an eligibility list. A PWP check can serve several purposes, including but not limited to:

- validation of the information you have provided during the behavioural interview and other assessments;
- gathering evidence of past achievements as an indication of probable, future performance;
- confirming employment history, including the dates of previous jobs and the reason(s) for leaving; and
- testing assumptions or clarifying concerns that may have arisen during a previous stage of the selection process.

Reference checking involves seeking factual, job-related evidence from third parties who have observed the applicant at work and then evaluating that information to assess its quality.

If you remain one of the top-ranked applicants following past work performance checks, you will be required to complete Stages 9 through 12 before an offer of employment will be made.

Stage 9 – Fingerprinting and Criminal Records Check

Fingerprinting and a criminal records check must be completed by every individual moving into a position of trust within the Conservation Officer Service. A position of trust within the COS is characterized by duties associated with the work of law enforcement.

The objective of a criminal records check is to confirm, insofar as possible, a candidate's suitability to perform as a Conservation Officer. For instance, the presence of any recorded incident indicating a behaviour or pattern of behaviour that may put at risk the safety and well being of vulnerable people is deemed an appropriate disqualification.

Fingerprinting and a criminal records search should be undertaken by the police agency in the community where the applicant lives.

Stage 10 – Security Interview and Background Investigation

Where the selection panel reviews the summary report of the criminal records check and determines that the recruitment process may continue, it will instruct the Deputy Chief Conservation Officer, or the Deputy Chief's designate, to conduct a security interview and background investigation.

This part of the process is intended to explore, in greater depth, the suitability of a candidate to uphold the public trust invested in the position of Conservation Officer and to protect the interests of the Conservation Officer Service. Specifically, the security interview and background investigation will be administered for the purpose of exploring and giving consideration to the following factors:

- character (e.g. honesty, stability, etc);
- criminal record (if any);
- financial situation; and
- personal beliefs and association.

Stage 11 – Pre-placement Medical Examination

The pre-placement medical exam sets a minimum, medical standard with respect to a candidate's ability to perform, to a satisfactory level, those working requirements which might reasonably be expected of a Conservation Officer. Consideration is given to the safety of the individual, fellow workers, the public and, where applicable, the integrity and security of the organization.

An applicant's health is tested in the following areas (this list is not exhaustive):

- vision;
- hearing;
- cardiovascular;
- respiratory;
- endocrine (e.g. diabetes);
- psychiatric;
- cerebrovascular; and
- musculo-skeletal.

The Conservation Officer Service will be advised, in writing, as to whether an individual is deemed medically fit or unfit for hire according to the adopted medical guidelines. No other details of the examination will be divulged to the agency. However, the employer must be informed of any condition(s) that might pose a safety risk in the workplace should the applicant be hired.

Stage 12 – Psychological Assessment

Before an offer of employment can be made, and at the employer's expense, candidates must undergo a psychological assessment performed by a qualified psychologist. The psychologist will assess the candidate to determine if the individual is suitable to assume the responsibilities of a Conservation Officer, giving specific consideration to the stresses imposed by law enforcement. These stresses include hostile, armed encounters and the carrying and use of firearms.

The psychologist will recommend acceptance or rejection of the candidate or a period of careful supervision and will specify reasons for the recommendations. The recommendations of the psychologist will be communicated in a letter to the Chief Conservation Officer.

All reports submitted by the psychologist remain the property of the COS.

For Further Information

If you require further information on careers/recruiting, please contact Conservation Officer Service, HQ, at (250) 387-6041 or Conservation.Officer.Service@gov.bc.ca.