



Applicant Hiring Process FAQs (1/5)

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The Structured & Pre-Security Interview

Q: What is the purpose of the Pre-Security Interview and who administers it?

A: To provide law enforcement candidates with an opportunity to **disclose, explain, or clarify any potentially disqualifying past conduct** or actions which they may have failed to disclose prior to taking the polygraph. The Pre-Security Interview will be **conducted by uniformed law enforcement officers** from OFO or USBP.

Q: What is a Structured Interview?

A: An interview where the applicant will be provided with **hypothetical situations** and asked to describe how they would react. It will be administered by two or more interviewers who will ask them a series of questions that are designed to measure specific competencies including **Judgment and Decision-Making, Emotional Maturity, Interpersonal Skills, and Cooperativeness and Sensitivity to the Needs of Others.**

Q: How will I be notified about when my interviews are scheduled?

A: After the applicant receives their tentative selection, **the Hiring Center** will send an email of the date, time, and location of their scheduled pre-security interview. If they require both a **Structured Interview and Pre-Security Interview**, their Pre-Security Interview will be scheduled for the same date, time, and location as their Structured Interview.

Provide this link for additional Structured Interview context: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oohfrByv8gY>



The e-QIP & Background Investigation

Q: How long does it take to complete the background investigation?

A: All CBP positions **require completion of a full background investigation.** The timeline for completion of a background investigation **varies depending on the history of the applicant** and other available prior background information.

Q: Should I be worried about passing my background investigation?

A: Each person will receive a full investigation which **considers all aspects of their life.** For information on what CBP considers some **common reasons why applicants are found unsuitable**, tell them to visit the CBP Careers website and review the Suitability Overview located at: <https://www.cbp.gov/careers/car/suitability>.

Q: Can I use the results from a background investigation with a different agency?

A: Not all agencies **conduct the same level of background investigations** for their employees causing investigations or clearances to not be carried over from a previous position. Therefore, CBP will administer a background investigation that is required for the position **regardless of previous experiences.**

Provide this link for additional e-QIP context: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGKqTLSK4FQ>



The Polygraph Exam

Q: What type of questions will I be asked on the polygraph exam?

A: The exam will include questions **related to the applicant's suitability for employment and any national security concerns.** All questions will be explained and reviewed with them prior to the actual examination. They will be given an opportunity to discuss any concerns or issues they may have with any question prior to the actual examination.

Q: How long does the polygraph take?

A: CBP polygraph examination time is **approximately 4 hours.** Very little time is spent collecting data via the polygraph equipment; typically, this involves intermittent periods of **10 to 15 minutes at a time.** Short breaks are given throughout the process.

Q: Who needs to take the polygraph?

A: Almost every Border Patrol Agent, CBP Officer, and AMO Agent who has joined CBP **has taken, and passed, a Polygraph Exam.** Some positions **may not require** a polygraph based on their sensitivity level.

Provide this link for additional Polygraph context: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjOzc5GHO8g>



Applicant Hiring Process FAQs (2/5)

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The Medical Exam

Q: Where do you complete the medical exam?

A: The exam will be conducted at **the nearest available CBP contracted facility** according to the mailing address the Minneapolis Hiring Center has on file. Every effort is made to identify a clinic within a reasonable driving distance of the applicant's residence. Travel to and from the facility is **at their own expense**.

Q: What does the medical exam include?

A: The medical exam itself includes a **physician exam** (with history review); **vision testing** including visual acuity (uncorrected and corrected vision), **color vision**, **depth perception and peripheral vision**, and a **hearing test/audiogram**.

Q: How do I schedule my medical exam?

A: CBP's scheduling contractor will contact the applicant by email and/or phone to provide access to their **online scheduling system**. The online system will allow them to provide their preferred appointment times. Once they access the online scheduling system and provide their availability, they will receive **an email confirmation** of their scheduled appointment **date, time, location, and a list of items to bring** with them to their exam.

Provide this link for additional Medical Exam context: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2vvggKHx0-o>



The Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

Q: What does the physical fitness test include?

A: The Border Patrol Agent, CBP Officer, and AMO Agent test all include a **sit-up, push-up, and step test** but the number of required repetitions **differ depending on position**. For **Border Patrol**, 25 sit-ups, 20 push-ups, and a 120 step beat per minute for 5 minutes is required. For **CBPO and AMO**, 20 sit-ups, 12 push-ups, and a 120 step beat per minute for 5 minutes is required.

Q: What happens if I fail the physical fitness test?

A: Applicants are **provided one opportunity to retest**. CBP has created a **pre-employment PFT Physical Readiness Program** to help them prepare for the PFT. The program provides them with a six-week standardized training program designed to help them successfully pass the PFT.

Q: Is the medical exam and the physical fitness test the same?

A: No, while the tests **can be administered on the same day**, at the same location, they are **two separate** pre-employment activities.

Provide this link for additional Physical Fitness Test context: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gNOn1pgUX8>



The Drug Test

Q: When can I schedule the drug test and where will I take it?

A: The applicant cannot schedule the drug test in advance. Our scheduling contractor will reach out to them **at a random time** during the pre-employment process to schedule this appointment. The drug test will be conducted at the **nearest available CBP-contracted** facility according to the mailing address the Hiring Center has on file.

Q: What drugs will be tested for and how will the test be administered?

A: At a minimum, the applicant's sample will be tested for **marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates** (including heroin and morphine), and PCP. The test will be a urinalysis and can be **requested by CBP in the future** at any time.

Q: With the legalization of marijuana in several states, does CBP still consider an applicant's marijuana use when making a determination for employment?

A: Yes, marijuana is still an illegal drug **under federal law**. **CBP abides by federal law**, so regardless of individual state laws, use of marijuana can affect their eligibility for employment.

Provide this link for additional Drug Test context: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1VEEg/AgIA>



Applicant Hiring Process FAQs (3/5)

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General

Q: *What are the overall benefits of working at CBP?*

A: Individuals can gain critical skills as a member of a high-energy, synergized team supporting CBP's critical mission.

Q: *What is the application process for law enforcement opportunities?*

A: Applicants must create a resume with skills, education, and experience and submit an application through USAJOBS.

Q: *Where will I complete my pre-employment activities?*

A: CBP pre-employment activities including the medical exam, physical fitness test, and polygraph will be completed at the **closest CBP-contracted facility to the applicant's location**. CBP does not pay for travel to these locations.

Q: *What are the pay and benefits for law enforcement personnel?*

A: The CBP careers page breaks this down in full. Please see the following links for more information

Border Patrol Agent: <https://careers.cbp.gov/usbp/pay-benefits>

CBP Officer: <https://careers.cbp.gov/fofo/pay-benefits/cbpo>

Air Interdiction Agent: <https://careers.cbp.gov/amo/pay-benefits/aia>

Marine Interdiction Agent: <https://careers.cbp.gov/amo/pay-benefits/mia>

Criminal Investigator: <https://careers.cbp.gov/opr/pay-benefits/criminal-investigator>

Q: *How long does the hiring process last, from the point of selection to onboarding?*

A: The time to hire varies **depending on the type of position**, the background investigation required for the position, and the time it takes for the selectee and investigator to complete all required investigation materials.

Q: *If you are a veteran and qualify under the Veteran Recruitment Appointment, can you negotiate your stationed duty location?*

A: No, **the applicant will not be able to negotiate** their stationed location.

Q: *Is it permissible to travel abroad during the hiring process?*

A: Yes. The applicant should **keep their Hiring Center representative and recruiter informed** to ensure they don't miss important milestones which may require them to reapply.

Q: *Does CBP take in consideration if your spouse is on orders at a specific duty station?*

A: Yes, the applicant should alert their Hiring Center representative if they have a spouse on orders at a specific duty station and CBP will **work with them as much as possible** to keep their family relatively collocated.

Q: *Where will I be stationed once I am hired?*

A: CBP offers new employees the opportunity to **provide location preferences**. However, location assignments will be determined by **operational needs and openings available** at the time they receive your offer.

Q: *Once the hiring process is complete, where is training held and how long does it occur?*

A: Most job opening announcements include information regarding formal training as training will vary depending on the position. In general, training for law enforcement positions occurs at either the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (**FLETC**) in **Glynco, GA**, or the **Border Patrol Academy** in **Artesia, NM**.

Q: *Does CBP require its candidates to surrender dual citizenship? If so, does this policy apply to interns?*

A: No. **Dual citizenship is a non-issue** from a suitability standpoint (provided that the candidate is a citizen of the United States). If a security clearance is required, under the National Security Adjudicative Guidelines, dual citizenship is not an automatic disqualifier, but it must be examined under **Guideline C "Foreign Preference."**

Q: *Is there a maximum age requirement to apply to positions at CBP?*

A: All front-line position candidates need to submit their application **prior to their 40th birthday**. Mission support positions do not have a maximum age requirement for applicants.

Q: *After completing all hiring steps, how long does it take to expect a final offer?*

A: Two weeks after completing all hiring steps. The Hiring Center can provide updates if any processes are delayed.

Provide this link for component specific application context: <https://careers.cbp.gov>



Applicant Hiring Process FAQs (4/5)

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Border Patrol Academy

Q: How soon are you called to the academy after your final offer? Can you request a later start date?

A: The Hiring Center will offer **one or more academy start dates** depending on what is open. If this doesn't work with the student's situation, they can work with their rep to push their training. Their background investigation is only good for a limited time, so they cannot exceed that period which may require you to complete any hiring steps again.

Q: What are the academy graduation standards?

A: The first 2 months of academy training is dedicated to general preparation for physical conditioning with rest periods built in. Students will take their final PT test 5 months in. They must run a **mile and a half in 13 minutes**, complete the **confidence course in 2 minutes 30 seconds**, and complete a **220 sprint in 40 seconds (or less)**.

Q: Is there a gear list that gets issued before the academy?

A: Yes, once applicants receive their final offer and they have scheduled their academy date, they will be sent a **packing list**. They will be issued four sets of uniforms, set of boots, body armor, duty belt with pouches, a holster, a hydration pack with 100 oz bladder, backpack, PT gear. They will want to bring running shoes, off duty clothes, sunglasses, boot socks, and anything additional they will need.

Q: Are you free to leave campus? Can we use personal vehicles or borrow academy vehicles to do so?

A: Yes, students can take off on non training days or after the training day ends at 4:30pm but are asked to **notify their Lead Operations Instructor** if they are going to be more than **100 miles away from campus**. We recommend returning to campus by 11 pm, but **there isn't a requirement** except to show up for training at the scheduled time each morning. After the first week, students are free to **leave the academy to pick up their car and bring it to campus**. academy vehicles are **not provided for off duty activity**, but the academy does run shuttles outside of training hours to downtown Artesia and to the Roswell airport.

Q: Are CBP employees required to learn a foreign language? What if we already know Spanish?

A: Students must be **proficient enough in Spanish to perform BPA duties**. Realistic, scenario-based Spanish language training is required at the academy. There will be some written tests, but the bulk of the curriculum focuses on **practical knowledge**. Students cannot test out of Spanish.

Q: What do the barracks quarters, living situation, and meals look like at the academy?

A: Academy residents will have their own **10' x 10' or 12' x 12' room** with a twin bed, TV, phone, free wi-fi access, a locker, and a lockable safe. They will share use of a bathroom with one other student, but the doors can be locked for privacy. **Meals at the cafeteria are also included** if they choose to eat at the academy facility. There are no refrigerators, but they are allowed to bring a cooler. They are also free to obtain meals off campus at their own expense. Students should alert their Border Patrol Recruiter with **dietary requirements/religious restrictions**.

Q: How do the incentives/bonuses offered to candidates work?

A: All new Border Patrol Academy graduates who agree to work for two or more years qualify for a **\$10,000 bonus upon graduation**. First time BPAs who choose to serve in a subset of locations qualify for an **additional \$10,000 bonus** (designed to offset relocation and/or education expenses but may be used for any purpose). **Current Federal employees do not qualify** for recruitment incentives because they already have access to employment benefits.

Q: Are we required to bring ourselves to the academy?

A: Students are **responsible for initial travel** to their new duty location. The trip from their sector to the El Paso International Airport and from the El Paso International Airport to the academy will be handled by the Border Patrol.

Q: Are there any accommodations for trainees with families at the academy?

A: **There is no policy restricting** students from bringing their family to Artesia, but it is not **encouraged**. Nine hours of the student's day will be committed to the Border Patrol academy plus studying and working out and housing in Artesia, NM is **scarce and expensive**. CBP does not offer a stipend for families housing.

Q: If I received similar certifications at other law enforcement agency, do I need to be recertified?

A: Yes, recertification will be required to validate achievements at the CBP standard.

Provide this link for additional Border Patrol Academy context: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ovjN_v6Haw



Applicant Hiring Process FAQs (5/5)

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Field Operations Academy (FOA)

Q: How long is the Field Operations Academy (FOA) and where does it take place?

A: The FOA is **89 days long** and takes place at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (**FLETC**) in **Glynco, GA**. It hosts training for all CBP Officer positions including Agriculture Specialists, Import Specialists, Entry Specialists, and Seized Property Specialists.

Q: What can one expect to learn while at the FOA?

A: Trainees will learn the **technical and legal requirements of the job** and participate in a vigorous **physical fitness and conditioning program**. Trainees will learn the proper methods for handling firearms, how to safely operate a law enforcement vehicle, and how to comprehensively employ these skills in more than 200 interactive scenarios.

Q: What are the basic requirements to graduate FOA?

A: In order to graduate, trainees must successfully pass a total of **eight written exams and 25 practical exercises** specifically designed to demonstrate skills necessary for success in the field.

Q: Are there different training activities for agricultural specialists trainees?

A: Yes, these trainees receive over **6 weeks of CBP-specific training and 7 weeks of training with the U.S. Department of Agriculture**. The training gives trainees the skills to determine the admissibility of agriculture commodities while preventing the introduction of harmful pests, diseases, and potential agro-terrorism into the United States. CBPASBT basic trainees must pass **3 CBP written exams, 10 PDC/Agriculture Quarantine Inspection written exams, and 2 graded practical exams**.

Q: Are CBP Officer Trainees required to learn a foreign language?

A: Trainees who lack sufficient Spanish skills and **who are assigned to the southern border, Miami, and Puerto Rico** must attend a 6-week Basic Spanish Training Program.



Air and Marine Basic Training Program (AMBTP)

Q: How long is the basic training program and where does it take place?

A: The AMBTP is **103 days long** and takes place at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (**FLETC**) in **Glynco, GA**. Trainees entering a career with Air and Marine Operations (AMO) already have the specialized skills required to operate in advanced aviation or maritime platforms, making this training geared towards **honing the AMO new hires into CBP law enforcement agents**.

Q: What does a typical day look like at FLETC?

A: A typical day is a **mixture of classroom instruction and practical experience** which begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. Training days are **Monday through Friday except for federal holidays**. The entire course schedule is provided when trainees arrive at FLETC.

Q: What are the physical demands of the basic training program?

A: The physical demands depend on your level of fitness before arrival. Most of the physically demanding training occurs in **Officer Response Tactics (ORT) training**. This training includes combative techniques, arrest techniques, and officer safety. **Swimming** is also a large part of the course. There are **nine different blocks of training at the pool** including swimming laps, treading water, survival float, and underwater aircraft egress.

Q: Is there a language requirement for the basic training program?

A: Trainees will take a Spanish comprehension test through an **automated telephone program**. The test is conducted over the phone and will test listening, comprehension, and speaking ability. If trainees pass the test, they are **exempt from Spanish training**. If they do not pass the test, you will be enrolled in the Rosetta Stone Spanish Language Training Program.