



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

Reserve Police Officers – Frequently Asked Questions

What training requirements apply to Reserve Officers?

Reserve Officers are subject to the same hiring requirements, background checks, and receive similar training as regular police officers.

Does the Civil Service Commission have control over Reserve Officers?

No. Reserve Officers are exempt from the civil service system because they are not permanent city employees. Reserve Officers function similar to other temporary or on-call employees.

What kind of standards are used to select Police Officers, including Reserve Officers?

The following background items disqualify applicants for police officers, including reserve officers:

- Any conviction of a felony offense, or
- Any misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or domestic violence.

Was the Reserve Officer who was recently dismissed a disqualified applicant?

Contrary to some allegations, our research indicates this reserve officer did not have any disqualifying convictions. When directly asked about convictions – under a polygraph – he appears to have answered truthfully. Many allegations now being made are simply untrue, including a widely circulated anonymous writer’s description the reserve officer’s criminal history, which is simply not accurate.

Of course, whether or not a person’s background automatically disqualifies him or her from employment, we still want the very best candidates for these positions and can subject them to higher standards and closer scrutiny. When concerns were brought to the city’s attention, the background of the Reserve Officer candidate was given additional scrutiny, and following those discussions, he resigned from the department.

How will you ensure future Reserve Officers meet the highest standards?

As a result of this inquiry, we are taking two actions. First, the Chief and the City Manager will be personally reviewing the detailed backgrounds of all our current reserve officers, gathering any new or additional information we feel is warranted, and deciding whether they should continue as reserves. Second, we have reviewed our internal process for background checks,

and to be certain that our hiring standards are being met, we have determined that future background checks will be conducted utilizing an outside review service.

What kind of training do Reserve Officers receive?

Reserve Officers attend the Police Academy and receive similar training to regular status police officers, including the essential training necessary to function as police officers. Additionally, Reserve Officers must complete the same field training as regular status officers. This training is completed on a self-paced schedule, because of their part-time status.

There are three levels Reserves can obtain. Level three Reserves have completed enough field training to be able to do jail and court transports by themselves. Level two Reserves are able to ride with another Reserve Officer and respond as the backup on calls for service. Level one Reserves are able to function solo in patrol and can be utilized as needed for special events. Currently, all Bainbridge Island Reserves are level one except for two new Reserves who are in training. Our experienced Reserves have been level ones for the past five years.

Was the Reserve officer involved in the recent shooting death appropriately trained?

The Reserve/Provisional Officer involved in the Ostling shooting only fired a taser. He has been through both the reserve and the regular academy training and has completed field training to level one. Since he attended both academy programs, this officer has received more hours of training than a regular status police officer.

What went wrong with the selection of recent Reserve Officer candidates?

The city is in the process of evaluating the recent Reserve Officer candidate review using an outside agency. We hope to determine where, in our procedures to review candidates, we failed to identify potential background issues so that we can ensure the city has the best possible candidates for these positions. Again, to be certain that our hiring standards are being met, future background checks will be conducted utilizing an outside review service, Public Safety Testing. This firm already performs some of the testing for our candidates and provides background checks as well for a number of agencies regionally.