

# COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

## Office of the Sheriff

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Sheriff

## **Preparing for a Career in Law Enforcement**

Applying, testing, interviewing, and being selected to attend the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Justice Training Center academy as a Deputy Sheriff Cadet or a Sheriff's Correctional Deputy Cadet is a long and rigorous journey. The selection process is time consuming and involves an extensive amount of time and resources to find the right people to become Deputy Sheriffs. Applicants are first required to meet the minimum requirements for the position and complete a written examination. Upon the successful completion of the written examination, applicants are invited to the physical agility test at our Justice Training Center academy campus. Beyond the application and written and physical agility examinations, applicants will undergo an intense hiring process including but not limited to: oral interviews, thorough background investigations, polygraph examinations, psychological evaluations, medical evaluations, and hiring board reviews consisting of the Sheriff, Undersheriff, and Assistant Sheriffs.

If applicants are extended an offer of employment, they will attend a sponsored 26-week P.O.S.T. Basic academy for Deputy Sheriff Cadets or a 14-week S.T.C. Adult Corrections Officer Core academy for Sheriff's Correctional Deputy Cadets. Both hosted by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office at the Justice Training Center academy.

### **Education:**

The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office requires graduating Deputy Sheriff Cadets to possess 60 semester or 90 quarter college units upon completion of the academy. Deputy Sheriff Cadet applicants will obtain 22 semester or 33 quarter college units for completing the P.O.S.T. Basic academy; therefore, the Deputy Sheriff Cadet applicant must start the academy with a minimum of 38 semester or 57 quarter college units. College course studies and experience do not have to be geared toward Criminal Justice or Administration of Justice. By allowing applicants with all educational major backgrounds, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office expands the skillsets available to the agency. Sheriff's Correctional Deputy Cadets are not required to have any college units at this time.

Writing and comprehension of the English language are essential skills needed to be successful as a Deputy Sheriff or a Sheriff's Correctional Deputy. Applicants are expected to have an understanding of basic writing such as grammar, sentence structure, composition, etc. prior to entering the academy. The academy will instruct applicants on how to generate a proper law enforcement report; however, without the basic foundation in English composition, applicants will struggle to succeed in report writing.

### **Physical Conditioning:**

Physical preparation for a career in law enforcement begins long before applicants start the academy. The remaining physically fit requires dedication and drive. Applicants are required to complete a physical agility test prior to moving forward in the hiring process; however, the physical agility test should not be mistaken for the physical demands required of the applicants during the academy. The physical agility test is the bare minimum required to begin the academy physical training regimen. If applicants are struggling to complete the physical agility test, they will have difficulties in the academy. There are simple exercises applicants can do on their own that will help them improve their strength, stamina, and physical conditioning. Examples of these exercises are running, push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, jumping jacks, or any other form of cardiovascular calisthenics. Applicants can do these exercises with little to no equipment or gym memberships. Do not wait to get into academy shape; start preparing now.

### **Employment and Credit History:**

Applicants' conduct and work history at their current and previous employers are factors background investigators will take into consideration during the course of the investigation. While we completely understand that not everyone gets along with one another, staying professional and calm in the scope of dealing with conflict will help develop interpersonal skills with co-workers, supervisors, and the public. Deputy Sheriffs and Sheriff's Correctional Deputies communicate with people from all walks of life and maintaining a professional demeanor is crucial to effective communication and the resolution to potentially dangerous situations.

Checks of applicants' credit histories are conducted during the background investigation process. Continue to live within financial means and correct any excessive debts. Try to eliminate any delinquencies with creditors and bring all accounts to current status. For bad credit, take the appropriate steps to rectify the discrepancies as soon as possible. It is important to check credit on a regular basis to stay informed of the status.

### **Knowledge and Familiarization:**

Although a career in law enforcement is exciting, will get the heart pumping and the adrenaline flowing, Deputy Sheriffs' and Sheriff's Correctional Deputies' job responsibilities are not normally as portrayed in movies or in the media. Do not be afraid to talk to current Deputy Sheriff's or Sheriff's Correctional Deputies about their experiences and what their day to day duties and responsibilities are. Get involved with the ride-a-long programs with the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office to get a firsthand look at what Deputy Sheriffs do during the course of their shift. Applicants will get a better perspective and gain knowledge about what it is like to respond to a variety of calls for service and the mental preparation that is needed to put one's life on the line every day. For some applicants, this will motivate them to prepare for and achieve a goal that a small percentage of people are able to achieve. For others, they may find that this career path is not for them. No matter which avenue applicants choose, Deputy Sheriff or Sheriff's Correctional Deputy, it will be educational and an eye opening experience serve the public in the community which we live.