

*Prince George's County
Department of Corrections*

**Entry-Level Correctional Officer
Correctional Officer Physical Ability Test
(COPAT)**

Orientation Guide

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Why You Should Read This Information

The Prince George's County Department of Corrections is hiring people to become successful Correctional Officers. Among the first things that you will have to do to continue in the process to become a Prince George's County Correctional Officer is to pass two tests: the Entry Level Correctional Officer Multiple-Choice Test (COTEST) and the Entry-Level Correctional Officer Physical Ability Test (COPAT).

The Prince George's County Department of Corrections conducted studies that show that people who do well on these tests also do well during the Academy training and once on the job. Therefore, if you want to become a Prince George's County Correctional Officer it's in your best interest and in the best interest of Prince George's County that you do your very best on these tests.

This packet of information is focused on the COPAT and has been put together to help you prepare to take this test. In this packet there are descriptions of each part of the test and what you must do to pass each part and tips to help you do your best. ***The information provided here describes just one approach.*** It is not intended to suggest that other methods do not work equally as well. You should decide, based on your own skill and experience, what information in this orientation packet is useful to you.

Correctional Officer Physical Ability Test (COPAT)

The COPAT is designed to reflect critical tasks performed in the course of the Correctional Officer's duties. These tasks are related to successful performance in the job. For example, a Correctional Officer must frequently walk the unit from cell to cell and be prepared to quickly respond to emergencies in their unit as well as elsewhere. Further, a Correctional Officer must be prepared to search for contraband within a cell including looking under beds and to be ready to pull another Officer or an inmate to safety as required. The criteria for success is based on time and is based on a study of incumbents. The events are completed in the order presented below. There is little to no down time between events so do not expect an opportunity to take a break. Should a test administrator believe there is a safety concern the test administrator may stop the test. Otherwise, the COPAT will be administered continuously through the 8 Events. This test is pass/fail. If you fail one component you will not proceed in the test.

The timing for these Events ranges from 7 seconds to 107 seconds. It is important therefore, that you perform each Event as fast as you can within the instructions provided. You will be timed by a test administrator who will indicate if you have successfully completed this event before moving to the next event.

The critical job areas directly assessed through the COPAT include the following:

Event 1 – Walk (384 feet)

Event 1 requires walking as fast as you can, a distance of 384 feet within the specified time.

Event 2 – Stair Step

Event 2 requires stepping up and down (36 times) on the below stair step simulating walking up and down stairs. One step is defined as stepping up and then down from the step. This must be completed within the specified time.



Event 3 – Walk (384 feet)

Event 3 requires walking as fast as you can, a distance of 384 feet within the specified time.

Event 4 – Jog (480 feet)

Event 4 requires jogging as fast as you can, for a distance of 480 feet within the specified time.

Event 5 – Walk (406 feet)

Event 5 requires walking as fast as you can, a distance of 406 feet within the specified time.

Event 6 – Bed Search

The bed search is a timed event and requires bending over/kneeling or otherwise being able to see under the bed without tilting or lifting the bed, in order to identify 3 photographs. The candidate must name the object in each of the 3 photographs taped to the bottom of the bed within the specified time.

Event 7 - Dummy Drag

The Dummy Drag is a timed event that requires dragging a 165 pound dummy a distance of 12 ½ feet within the time specified. The dummy can be dragged from either end and you may use the attached straps. No part of the dummy can be across the start line prior to time being started. You must pull the dummy from the far end of the first line until the dummy completely and entirely crosses the second line.

Event 8 – Walk (464 feet)

Event 8 requires walking as fast as you can 464 feet within the specified time. This is the last event in the COPAT.

General Issues

- If possible, get a good night's sleep before the exam and arrive early.
- Monitor the amount of beverages you consume before the exam. You do not want to get distracted by having to go to the bathroom.
- You may have a water bottle with you but you cannot drink from it during an Event.
- Listen carefully to the test proctor. Do not take any directions for granted.
- Ensure that you are in your best shape. Practice (to the extent that you can) each type of exercise. One key to this test is continuing through each Event as fast as you can and without stopping. Have someone time your efforts.
- Be sure to wear appropriate, comfortable clothes and shoes to take the COPAT.
- You will be required to have a medical waiver signed and presented before you will be allowed to take the COPAT.

GOOD LUCK!