Special Agent Selection System
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW TO APPLY

UPDATED: 08/24/21
MISSION.
PRIORITIES.
VALUES.

THE MISSION of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

THE PRIORITIES of the FBI are to:
★ Protect the United States from terrorist attacks.
★ Protect the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage.
★ Protect the United States against cyberattacks and high-tech crimes.
★ Combat public corruption at all levels.
★ Protect civil rights.
★ Combat transnational/national criminal organizations and enterprises.
★ Combat major white-collar crime.
★ Combat significant violent crime.

THE CORE VALUES of the FBI are:
★ Rigorous obedience to the Constitution of the United States.
★ Respect for the dignity of all those we protect.
★ Compassion
★ Fairness
★ Uncompromising personal and institutional integrity.
★ Accountability by accepting responsibility for our actions and decisions, and the consequences of our actions and decisions.
★ Leadership, both personal and professional.
★ Diversity
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GENERAL INFORMATION
OVERVIEW

At the FBI, our mission is constantly evolving and expanding to respond to the nation’s biggest challenges imposed by rapid advances in technology, terrorism and intelligence threats. This means our Special Agents must share their expertise in a variety of specialty areas in order to help us stay ahead of the next threat.

Many of our Special Agents excelled in a broad range of fields; some as educators or athletes or had careers in technology or science. Some Special Agents are eligible to join specific, mission-centric teams, including the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), the nation’s only full-time tactical, domestic, counterterrorism response force.

While the demands vary, each role must be performed competently and reliably. Every day could bring something new and offer a chance for you to prove yourself all over again. In fact, the two things that all Special Agents share are a drive to help keep our nation safe and pride in making a difference in the communities they serve.

FBI Special Agents are responsible for conducting sensitive national security investigations and enforcing more than 300 federal statutes. As a Special Agent, you may work on cases involving terrorism, counterintelligence, cybercrime, organized crime, white-collar crime, public corruption, civil rights violations, financial crime, bribery, bank robbery, extortion, kidnapping, air piracy, interstate criminal activity, fugitive and drug-trafficking matters and other violations of federal statutes.

FBI Special Agents must:

» Adhere to the highest standards of conduct, especially in maintaining honesty and integrity.

» Undergo a rigorous background investigation, credit checks and a polygraph test in order to obtain a Top Secret Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) Clearance.

» Maintain a high level of fitness necessary to complete Academy training and throughout their career.

» Pass a medical exam, which includes but is not limited to, meeting visual and hearing standards.

» Successfully complete approximately 20 weeks of employment as a Special Agent trainee while housed at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.

» Upon graduation from the FBI Academy and throughout their career, be available for worldwide assignment on either a temporary or long-term basis. Applicants should ensure that their families are prepared for and support this move.

» Work a minimum of 50 hours a week, which may include irregular hours, and be on call 24/7, including holidays and weekends.

» Carry a firearm and be willing to use deadly force, if necessary.

» Be willing and able to participate in arrests, execution of search warrants and other dangerous assignments.
SPECIAL AGENT SELECTION SYSTEM

The Special Agent Selection System (SASS) is a mentally and physically challenging process designed to identify the most capable applicants. Those who make it through the process become part of an elite team that keeps our country safe. The SASS typically takes one year to complete, often longer. An explanation of the steps in the process to become a Special Agent can be found on the next few pages.

**STEP 1**
APPLICATION & SCREENING

**STEP 2**
PHASE I TEST

**STEP 3**
MEET & GREET / REVIEW PROCESS

**STEP 4**
PHASE II TEST

**STEP 5**
CONDITIONAL APPOINTMENT OFFER (CAO)

**STEP 6**
BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

**STEP 7**
OFFICIAL PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (PFT)

**STEP 8**
BASIC FIELD TRAINING COURSE (BFTC)

FINISH
CAREER PLACEMENT
STEP 1
Application and Screening

You must attach to your application all necessary forms, including your official or unofficial transcripts, a DD-214 for former members of the armed forces or your military enlistment contract for current members of the armed forces. Applications are screened for eligibility and suitability.

Applicants who reside outside the United States should be aware that candidates must be available to travel here for testing at their expense. Travel is at the applicant’s expense. Candidates may choose whichever Processing Field Office (PFO) is most convenient for them. A list of all 56 Field Offices is on the FBI website at FBI.gov/contact-us/field-offices.

**Timeframe:** The initial screening process varies greatly and is dependent upon the completion of application materials, the overall application volume and the current needs of the FBI as a whole. Following the guidelines in the Special Agent job posting and on FBIJobs.gov will expedite processing.

STEP 2
Phase I Test

Applicants who pass preliminary screening will be invited to take the Phase I computerized test within a proctored environment. The Phase I test is a three-hour exam consisting of five assessments: Logic-Based Reasoning, Figural Reasoning, Personality Assessment, Preferences and Interests and Situational Judgment.

**Timeframe:** Once invited, candidates have 21 days to schedule their Phase I Test and will receive a pass/fail notification within one hour of completing the test.

STEP 3
Meet and Greet Session / Review Process

Next, applicants will be scheduled to attend a Meet and Greet session conducted by their PFO. During the Meet and Greet, one or more evaluators will conduct an in-person review of your application and validate the information you submitted. Your information will then be evaluated to assess your competitiveness for Phase II.

**Timeframe:** The average timeframe for a candidate to move from Phase I to Phase II is 16 weeks.

STEP 4
Phase II Test

Phase II consists of a writing assessment and a structured interview conducted by a panel of three Special Agents. (See Testing Overview Guide for more information.)

**Timeframe:** Candidates receive their Phase II results within approximately two weeks of completing the test.
**STEP 5**

**Conditional Appointment Offer**

Candidates who complete and pass the Phase II Writing Assessment and Interview will be issued a Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO). Hiring is contingent upon the successful completion of the remaining SASS components, including the polygraph test, medical evaluation and background investigation.

**Timeframe:** Candidates will receive their CAO shortly after passing the Phase II Writing Assessment and Interview.

**STEP 6**

**Background Investigation**

Candidates who receive a CAO will need to complete a background investigation to obtain a Top Secret SCI Clearance. The background investigation includes a Personnel Security Interview (PSI), polygraph examination, drug test, fingerprinting and medical examination. It also includes credit and arrest checks, interviews with associates, references and verification of educational achievements.

**Timeframe:** The average background investigation takes approximately six months, but can take up to 18 months or more depending on where an applicant has lived, worked and traveled.

**STEP 7**

**Official Physical Fitness Test**

After accepting a CAO and passing the polygraph examination, applicants may begin taking official Physical Fitness Tests (PFTs). Candidates must score a minimum of 5 total points with at least 1 point in each of the four events (baseline score). Applicants have an unlimited number of attempts to achieve the baseline score up to one year after successfully passing the background investigation. After the one-year period expires, applicants will be permanently discontinued from the Special Agent hiring process. Candidates must achieve the Baseline Score within 120 days of reporting to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC).

**BONUS:** Applicants who score a minimum of 21 points with at least 1 point in each PFT event are not required to take another pre-Quantico PFT within one year of the PFT administration date. In this case, an applicant would not be required to take another PFT within 120 days of reporting to the BFTC (subject to the one-year rule). Pre-Quantico PFT scores are valid for one year. As a reminder, New Agent Trainees (NATs) at the BFTC are required to take a PFT upon arrival at the Academy and must pass a PFT to graduate from the BFTC.
STEP 8
Basic Field Training Course

Assignment to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) is based on the needs of the FBI. NATs must demonstrate physical readiness to perform law enforcement duties by successfully completing at least one PFT at the Academy. PFTs will be administered on or about Week 1 and Week 11; a third PFT will be administered during Week 17 (approximately). All NATs must pass at least one official PFT in order to graduate from the FBI Academy. NATs who do not pass at least one official PFT will be dismissed from the BFTC. A passing PFT score at the FBI Academy requires a minimum of 12 total points with at least 1 point earned in each event.

**Timeframe:** The BFTC lasts 20 weeks (including orientation) and candidates are typically notified two to four weeks in advance of their class date. Applicants are allowed to request a different BFTC only once, with sufficient cause, after an initial BFTC date is provided.

FINISH
Career Placement

Upon successful completion of the background investigation and BFTC, candidates officially join the FBI as Special Agents.

IMPORTANT

Applicants must not post information about the application process on social media, message boards, chat rooms, blogs, internet forums or any other public forum. Use discretion when discussing the process with family and friends.

Applicants must not solicit help, tips, advice or assistance of ANY kind on social media, message boards, blogs, internet forums or from current or former FBI employees.
Physical Requirements

Special Agents are often placed in situations that challenge their physical endurance. Heightened levels of strength, flexibility and endurance are necessary for personal safety in an arrest situation, as well as to help ensure the safety of fellow Agents, other law enforcement officers and civilians. To ensure Special Agents possess the necessary levels of fitness to best complete any duty required of them, the FBI requires that applicants be in excellent physical shape.

Applicants who pass the official PFT are considered sufficiently fit to safely and successfully complete the physical training and defensive tactics portion of training at the FBI Academy and are prepared to effectively respond to life-threatening situations on the job.

All Special Agent applicants must be able to pass several physical tests to be medically cleared to attend the FBI Academy. These include:

» Vision test.
» Hearing test.
» Medical/health review.

Note: Applicants for the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) have additional requirements. (Visit the TRP section on page 22.)

Vision Requirements

» Applicants’ distant visual acuity, corrected or uncorrected, must meet FBI standards, which are 20/20 in one eye and no worse than 20/40 in the other eye.

» Applicants with distant visual acuity greater than or equal to 20/100 require medical documentation of successful soft contact lens use for at least one year without significant problems or adverse effects.

» Applicants with recent refractive surgery involving the creation of a corneal flap must wait six months following surgery and complete an ophthalmology evaluation to document complete healing prior to applying for employment.

» Color-vision deficient applicants may be considered if they successfully complete a Farnsworth D-15 color vision test administered at the Field Office. Please note that the use of color-corrective lenses is not allowed.

Hearing Requirements

Hearing has long been considered a critical and essential job function for the Special Agent position. Special Agents must be able to detect, localize and locate the source of sounds that may indicate danger or risk while entering locations tactically, while pursuing, confronting and arresting subjects and while transporting subjects to custody. Additionally, Special Agents must be able to hear and understand the speech of subjects and witnesses during interviews and interrogations, which are sometimes conducted in noisy, hectic situations, as well as communicate with team members during raids, arrests and searches when accurate communication without repetition is necessary. Applicants who have an average hearing loss greater than 25 decibels (ANSI standards) at 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 Hertz should have no single value at 35 decibels. Additionally, no single reading may exceed 35 decibels at 500 Hertz or 45 decibels at 4,000 Hertz.

Candidates who fail the initial pure-tone audiometry screening will be asked to complete additional audiometry testing (at their own expense and conducted by an audiologist of their choosing) to more accurately assess the candidate’s hearing ability. Those who fail testing with their audiologist, using the above standards, will be offered the FBI Hearing in Noise Test (HINT). Only the FBI HINT will be accepted. This test was developed to evaluate one’s ability to functionally hear human communication in a noisy environment and is specifically designed to assess the hearing requirements for law enforcement duties.
The HINT uses short sentences instead of pure tones to establish a functional level of hearing using both ears. Passing criteria include the Speech Reception Threshold (SRT) in quiet (27.0 decibels) and Composite SRT in noise (71 decibels) measured in noise at 75 decibels. For those candidates who wear hearing aids, open field testing is available.

**Immunization/Vaccinations**

Candidates must provide documentation showing the following required immunizations:

- Polio (four childhood doses) and/or a recent booster.
- Meningitis (Menactra, Menveo or Menomune) within the past five years.
- Tetanus Diphtheria (TD) or Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap) within the past 10 years.
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) (two doses).
- Hepatitis A and B completed by one of the following means:*
  - Twinrix (A Hepatitis A and B combination, three doses).
  - Hepatitis A (two doses) and HEPISLAV-B (two doses).
- Varicella (two doses) or proof of history of having had chicken pox. This can be completed with a personal statement that includes the approximate year of disease or by providing proof of a positive titer (blood test).
- Influenza (current season).

The FBI accepts the following documents as proof of vaccination history:

- CDC 731 “International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis” or Yellow Card.
- Physician’s or licensed health care provider’s records.
- Proof of positive titer (blood test) will only be accepted for MMR, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Varicella.
- Military records.
- Travel health clinic records.
- Local or state health department records.
- School records.

*Note: Hepatitis immunizations may take up to six months to complete if you have not already started the series with the exception of HEPISLAV-B (newly approved by the FDA), which can be completed in four weeks.*

**Reasonable Accommodations**

The FBI provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. If you believe you have a disability that will require special arrangements during the hiring process, you may request a reasonable accommodation at any time by notifying your Applicant Coordinator.

Every test in the hiring process is evaluated differently. Therefore, you must submit a reasonable accommodation request for each test, if needed. Reasonable accommodations are granted on a case-by-case basis. Your request will receive an individualized assessment; requests will be processed in the order they were received.

According to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, applicants may demonstrate proficiency on essential job tasks with or without reasonable accommodations. To ensure that the PFT is consistent with this legislation, a section is included on the FD-876 Special Agent Applicant Liability Waiver form that asks applicants to indicate whether or not they require reasonable accommodations to complete the PFT.
FBI EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

The mission of the FBI is vital to the safety and security of our nation and its citizens. Often, our work is very sensitive in nature. Therefore, all FBI positions require at least a Top Secret Clearance; Special Agents must be able to obtain a Top Secret SCI Clearance.

Employment Disqualifiers

There are also certain employment requirements that all candidates must meet in order to be eligible for consideration for employment with the FBI. Before applying for any FBI position, check to ensure the FBI Special Agent Employment Disqualifiers do not apply to you. The FBI Special Agent Employment Disqualifiers are:

- Non U.S. citizenship.
- Conviction of a felony, sex crime and/or a domestic violence misdemeanor.
- Having knowingly or willfully engaged in acts designed to overthrow the U.S. government.
- Failure to pay court-ordered child support or alimony payments.
- Currently having a federally funded student loan in default.
- Failure to file income tax returns.
- Once holding a security clearance that was revoked.
- Previously failed the FBI polygraph examination or was disqualified for employment with the FBI during a background investigation.
- Being found in violation of the FBI Employment Drug Policy.
- Failure to register with the Selective Service System (for males only, exceptions apply). (See www.sss.gov for more information.)

You are not eligible for employment as a Special Agent with the FBI if you meet any of the disqualifiers listed above.

Employment Drug Policy

The FBI is firmly committed to a drug-free society and workplace. Applicants for employment with the FBI who are currently using illegal drugs, misusing or abusing legal drugs or other substances at the time of the application process will be found unsuitable for employment.

While the FBI does not condone any prior unlawful drug use by applicants, the FBI realizes some otherwise qualified applicants may have used illegal drugs at some point in their past. For a complete list of disqualifying criteria, please see: FBIJobs.gov/working-at-FBI/eligibility.

A candidate will be found unsuitable for employment and automatically disqualified if he or she deliberately misrepresents his or her drug history in connection with his or her application for employment.
Background Investigation Process
After you receive a conditional FBI offer of employment, you must complete the necessary documentation to launch your background investigation. The background investigation process is very thorough; it can take several months or more to complete. Once you are cleared, you will receive your Top Secret SCI Clearance. You must be approved for an SCI Clearance before beginning employment with the FBI. The investigation includes:

- A polygraph examination.
- Urinalysis test.
- Fingerprint examination.
- Credit and records checks.
- Extensive interviews with former and current colleagues, neighbors, friends, etc.

You will be contacted by the FBI Field Office processing your background investigation to schedule your interview, urinalysis test and polygraph examination. The polygraph is used as an investigative tool to verify the truthfulness of your responses on the FBI background investigation forms. In the next phase of the process, the FBI will perform extensive records checks (credit checks, police records checks, etc.) and FBI investigators will interview past and present associates.

Things to Consider

Scheduling
If you are currently employed, please be aware that you may be scheduled for testing during your regular working hours (midday/midweek) and sometimes within a short timeframe.

If you are on active duty with the military, you must be within 15 months of completing your service before applying.

You may receive no more than a two-week notice to report to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) and must successfully complete approximately 20 weeks of employment as a NAT while housed at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.

Assignment and the Transfer Process
The Bureau encourages new Special Agents to relay their preference of assignment to ensure consideration is given when making selections; however, assignments are based on designated career paths and Bureau staffing needs.

While Field Office position vacancies take priority over all transfer-request decisions, the FBI bases transfers on Special Agent office preferences, seniority, budget considerations and mission needs. If your top choice is New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco or San Juan, Puerto Rico, you will have an excellent chance of getting that preferred office assignment. It’s also worth noting that, on average, a Special Agent transfers just twice during a 20-year career.

TYPICAL NUMBER OF TRANSFERS
(DURING A 20-YEAR SPECIAL AGENT CAREER)

- 23.6% 0x
- 25.2% 1x
- 19.6% 2x
- 12.2% 3x
- 8.3% 4x
- 5.4% 5x
- 3.0% 6x
- 1.6% 7x
- .7% 8x
- .3% 9x
- .1% 10x

% of Agents # of Transfers

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*Includes transfers between Field Offices, Legats or Headquarters locations; not within a division or Field Office.

IMPORTANT

All Special Agents must sign and adhere to a mobility agreement, which states that you accept the possibility of a transfer as a condition of employment.
APPLICATION
PROCESS
APPLICATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

DO:

» Fill out the Education, Work Experience and Profile Information sections on the application. Include ALL prior work experience.

» Attach your resume and official or unofficial college transcript(s) in the Attachments section.

• Current or former federal employees should also attach your SF-50.

» Military veterans applying for Veterans’ Preference should attach your DD-214 (Member 4 or Service 2 copy), Statement of Service (required if not yet separated from the military) and VA Letter dated within one year and/or SF-15 (optional).

Note: When scanning and uploading document(s), make sure that all pages are readable and facing upright in the same direction.

If you are missing any of the items listed above, please attach them to your profile as they become available. Please apply when you have obtained the required documentation. Your application will not be processed until you have provided all required documentation.

DON’T:

» Attach a cover letter in the Attachments section. Instead, fill out the Education, Work Experience and Profile Information sections on the application.

» Upload any picture files (JPEG, TIFF, PNG, BMP). All uploaded documents to your application should be in PDF format.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The following minimum qualifications are required at the time of application:

» Be a U.S. citizen.

» Be between 23 and 36 years of age.

» Have a bachelor’s degree or higher from a U.S.-accredited college or university.

» Have at least two years of full-time professional work experience.

» Have a valid driver’s license and six months of driving experience.

» Meet the physical requirements.

» Must be able to obtain a Top Secret SCI Clearance.

Technical Explanations and Exceptions

Age Requirement

FBI Special Agents have a mandatory retirement age of 57. In order to achieve the required 20 years of service for retirement, Special Agents must enter on duty no later than the day before their 37th birthday. Applicants must apply for the Special Agent position prior to their 36th birthday to allow adequate time to complete the SASS. The FBI may disqualify applicants at any time during the process if it is determined that they will reach age 37 before appointment.

Potential Exceptions: Applicants with certain prior federal law enforcement service, applicants who are current FBI employees or preference eligible veterans may qualify for an age waiver.
» **Nonpreference Eligible Candidates** — Applicants with prior/current service as a federal law enforcement officer (LEO) and other federal positions (must be supported by an SF-50) do not require an age waiver as long as they will have amassed 20 years of service by age 57.

» **Current FBI Employees** — Special Agent candidates who are current FBI employees must submit an application prior to their 39th birthday and be appointed to the FBI Academy no later than one day preceding their 40th birthday. They must successfully complete and pass all phases of the SASS and pass the background investigation to be considered for an age waiver.

» **Preference Eligible Candidates** — Applicants who are members of the Armed Forces (rank 0-3 or below) and are over the age of 36 at the time of application may apply no sooner than 15 months prior to their separation from the military. During initial processing, the applicant will be required to submit a Statement of Service from his or her Armed Services branch, with an expected discharge/release date and an honorable or general Character of Discharge. Preference eligible applicants must successfully complete all phases of the SASS, pass the background investigation and submit a qualifying DD-214 before requesting an age waiver. Without a qualifying DD-214, an age waiver will not be considered.

Please Note: Veterans who retired at the rank of Major, Lieutenant Commander or higher (0-4 or higher), are not eligible for preference in appointment unless they are disabled veterans. Applicants in this category must submit a DD-214 at the time of application, along with the SF-15 and Veterans Affairs disability rating letter. This does not apply to reservists who will not begin drawing military retirement pay until age 60. For more information visit: [www.fedshirevets.gov/job-seekers/veterans/veterans-preference/](http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job-seekers/veterans/veterans-preference/).

**Education Requirement**
For ANY degree from an overseas institution, applicants must provide a foreign equivalency certification at the time of application. No processing will take place without that documentation.

Potential exceptions: If a bachelor’s degree is not from a U.S.-accredited college, but your advanced degree is from a U.S.-accredited college, the FBI will accept the accreditation of your advanced degree and no other documentation is required.

**Work Experience Requirement**
For Special Agents, professional work experience is defined as employment in:

» Any occupation that requires a college degree and may include specialized training.

» Any position requiring a bachelor’s degree that includes managerial, supervisory or leadership responsibilities.

Applicants with a master’s and/or advanced degree(s) require one year of full-time work experience at the time of application.

Applicants with a bachelor’s degree(s) require two years of full-time work experience at the time of application.

Summer jobs, internships, seasonal positions, temporary employment and/or volunteer work are generally not considered in the professional work experience category. In addition to the definition above, the FBI will determine if an applicant meets the professional work experience requirement based on the general requirements needed to perform Special Agent duties.

**Potential Exceptions:**

» Professional athletics, such as a full-time career participating in Major and Minor League sports (NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, WNBA, etc.) or International Competitions (Olympics).

» For preference eligible veterans, part-time work, internships (paid or unpaid), Peace Corps and Army Reserve/National Guard duty count toward total work experience. Volunteer work may be considered.

» For all applicants, volunteer work (such as Peace Corps) that requires full-time participation, paid full-time graduate work programs and full-time fellowships may be considered as professional work experience. All exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
CORE COMPETENCIES EVALUATION

The FBI uses a category rating system and does not evaluate applicants against other applicants. You will be independently evaluated on the competencies listed below. Please ensure that these competencies are evident in your application and provide details on how each competency was demonstrated.

**COLLABORATION**

Work together to develop ideas, solve problems and word toward a common goal while leveraging others’ expertise and perspectives; establish rapport with the community and internal Bureau partners; maintain composure and display professionalism at all times; and share information with others you deem appropriate when needed.

**COMMUNICATION**

Express thoughts and ideas clearly, concisely, persuasively and effectively both orally and in writing; interpret and understand verbal or written communications; tailor communication to recipient experience, exposure or expertise; and proactively share information when appropriate.

**FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY**

Adapt rapidly to changing circumstances; anticipate problems and work proactively to solve them; accept new direction eagerly; and positively consider new points of view when offered.

**INTERPERSONAL ABILITY**

Deal effectively with others; establish and maintain rapport with management, colleagues and subordinates; recognize and show sensitivity to differences in the needs and concerns of others; and mediate concerns between individuals and groups, as well as settle disputes.

**LEADERSHIP**

Motivate and inspire; develop and mentor; gain the respect, confidence and loyalty of others; and articulate a vision, give guidance and provide direction in accomplishing goals.

**ORGANIZING AND PLANNING**

Establish priorities, timetables and goals/objectives; structure a plan of action for self and others; and develop both strategic and tactical plans.

**PROBLEM SOLVING AND JUDGMENT**

Critically evaluate conditions, events and alternatives; identify problems, causes and relationships; base decisions or recommendations on data or sound reasoning; and formulate objective opinions.

**INITIATIVE**

Display a willingness to begin or participate in new projects; anticipate and plan for additional workloads; show interest and positivity despite setbacks; and eagerly accept or respond to problems or subsequent tasks.
PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (PFT)
PREPARING FOR YOUR OFFICIAL PFT

The FBI Special Agent position requires a commitment to physical fitness as part of daily life. Applicants will take an official PFT during the application period and at the FBI Academy.

During the application process, candidates must achieve a PFT baseline score within 120 days of reporting to the Academy. Candidates will have an unlimited number of attempts to achieve the baseline score up to one year after successfully passing the background investigation. As a reminder, the PFT baseline score is a minimum of 5 total points with at least 1 point in each of the four events.

BFTC candidates must pass a PFT scoring a minimum of 12 total points with at least 1 point in each of the four events once while at the Academy.

The standard PFT consists of four main events. A fifth event, pullups, is now required of all NATs, but is not scored as pass/fail. The event is tracked for Academy fitness award recognition. However, all Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) candidates must complete and pass the pullup event. These events were chosen because they accurately measure an individual’s overall fitness level relative to the essential tasks performed by FBI Special Agents. The events are administered in the following order with no more than five minutes of rest in between each event:

1. Maximum number of continuous situps in one minute.
2. Timed 300-meter sprint.
3. Maximum number of continuous pushups (untimed).
4. Timed 1.5-mile run.
5. Maximum number of pullups (untimed).*

Each event must be performed precisely according to the strictly defined protocol in order to be scored. In order to pass the standard PFT, applicants must achieve a minimum cumulative score of 12 points in the first four events, with at least one point in each of the first four events; therefore, it is possible for an applicant to receive a score of 12 (or more) and still fail the standard PFT by failing one of the individual events. TRP applicants must achieve a minimum score of 20 points and must score at least one point in each of the five events to pass the TRP PFT.

Note: Only TRP candidates are scored on this event.
PROTOCOL AND SCORING GUIDE

Situps

The candidate lies on back with tops of shoulder blades touching the floor; arms crossed over chest with fingers in contact with the top of the shoulder (trapezius muscle or seam on some T-shirts). Knees are bent at a 90-degree angle with the feet placed flat on the floor (feet are held in place by a partner with the partner’s hands at the tongue of the trainee’s shoes and knees on the trainee’s toes).

Candidate raises upper body until the elbows touch mid-thigh, then returns to the starting position (the tops of the shoulder blades must touch the floor) to complete the repetition. Hips must remain in contact with the ground throughout the repetition. This is a timed one-minute continuous motion exercise; if a candidate pauses before the minute is up, he or she forfeits the rest of the minute.

### SCORING SCALE FOR ONE-MINUTE SITUPS

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<td>-2</td>
<td>29 and below</td>
<td>31 and below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>32-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35-36</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37-40</td>
<td>39-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41-42</td>
<td>43-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>43-46</td>
<td>45-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47-48</td>
<td>48-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>49-50</td>
<td>50-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>51-52</td>
<td>52-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-54</td>
<td>54-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>55-56</td>
<td>56-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>57 and over</td>
<td>58 and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
300-Meter Sprint
The 300-meter sprint event usually takes place on a quarter-mile oval track (although this may change based on individual circumstances). The candidate will start from a standing position and run 300 meters (3/4 of one lap).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Female Range</th>
<th>Male Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>67.5 and over</td>
<td>55.1 and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>67.4–65.0</td>
<td>55.0–52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>64.9–62.5</td>
<td>52.4–51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>62.4–60.0</td>
<td>51.0–49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59.9–57.5</td>
<td>49.4–48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.4–56.0</td>
<td>47.9–46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.9–54.0</td>
<td>46.0–45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>53.9–53.0</td>
<td>44.9–44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>52.9–52.0</td>
<td>43.9–43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>51.9–51.0</td>
<td>42.9–42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>50.9–50.0</td>
<td>41.9–41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>49.9 and below</td>
<td>40.9 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pushups

The candidate begins in the front leaning rest position (hands on the floor one to two hand widths beyond the shoulders and elbows must be away from the body, with arms fully extended, body held straight with the feet no more than three inches apart and the toes touching the floor). As the arms are flexed, the body is lowered toward the floor until the upper arms are parallel to the floor (straight line from center axis of elbow to center axis of shoulder). The candidate completes the exercise after returning to the starting position. This is a continuous-motion exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Female Range</th>
<th>Male Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>4 and below</td>
<td>19 and below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5–13</td>
<td>20–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14–18</td>
<td>30–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19–21</td>
<td>33–39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>22–26</td>
<td>40–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27–29</td>
<td>44–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30–32</td>
<td>50–53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>33–35</td>
<td>54–56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>36–38</td>
<td>57–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>39–41</td>
<td>61–64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>42–44</td>
<td>65–70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>45 and over</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5-Mile Run

The 1.5-mile run event usually takes place on a quarter-mile oval track (although this may change based on individual circumstances). The candidate will start from a standing position and run six laps around the track.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Female Range</th>
<th>Male Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>15:00 and over</td>
<td>13:30 and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>14:59–14:00</td>
<td>13:29–12:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13:34–13:00</td>
<td>12:14–11:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12:59–12:30</td>
<td>11:34–11:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11:56–11:35</td>
<td>10:34–10:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11:14–11:06</td>
<td>9:54–9:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11:05–10:45</td>
<td>9:34–9:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10:44–10:35</td>
<td>9:19–9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10:34 and below</td>
<td>8:59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pullups*

The candidate hangs from a horizontal bar, hands at least shoulder width apart (but no more than 23 inches apart as measured from the outsides of the hands) with palms turned away from the face and arms fully extended. The candidate flexes his or her arms and pulls the body upward until the chin is higher than the bar. There can be no swinging or jerking of the body or use of the legs in an effort to propel the body upward. The candidate then lowers the body back to the hanging position with arms fully extended. This is a continuous-motion exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Female Range</th>
<th>Male Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0–1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10–11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18–19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10 and over</td>
<td>20 and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Only TRP candidates are scored on this event.
**TACTICAL RECRUITMENT PROGRAM**

Special Agent applicants with tactical experience interested in pursuing a position with the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) are considered tactical applicants through the Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) and should be fully prepared to pass the TRP Physical Fitness Test (PFT). Special Agent applicants must spend at least three years as an Agent prior to applying for the TRP. Other candidates must:

- Have at least three years of law enforcement or military experience.
- Pass an interview with Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) personnel.
- Pass the TRP PFT.

The TRP PFT consists of five mandatory events that are administered in the following order, with no more than five minutes of rest between each event:

1. Maximum number of continuous situps in one minute.
2. Timed 300-meter sprint.
3. Maximum number of continuous pushups (untimed).
4. Timed 1.5-mile run.
5. Maximum number of pullups (untimed).

TRP applicants must achieve a minimum score of 20 points and must score at least one point in each of the five events to pass the TRP PFT. In addition, the scores on individual events achieved by TRP applicants must meet the minimum requirements of the four-event standard PFT. TRP applicants who fail the TRP PFT will not be processed under the TRP. However, TRP applicants who fail the TRP PFT but pass the standard PFT will continue processing under the SASS.

Applicants are reminded that minimum performance is just that — the minimum. Competitive performance at the HRT selection course will require physical fitness well in excess of these minimums.
MEDICAL EXCEPTIONS

Given the rigorous and demanding requirements associated with training for and taking the PFT, the FBI will excuse an applicant from his or her PFT with sufficient medical documentation.

Illness or injury that occurs before the PFT, which prohibits the applicant from showing up for the test, must be supported by medical documentation 72 hours before the scheduled PFT date/time.

Example: A candidate fractures her ankle two weeks before a scheduled PFT. The candidate must provide her Field Office with medical documentation clearly stating that she cannot physically complete the PFT. This document must be received within 72 hours prior to the PFT. The candidate will be deactivated if acceptable medical documentation is not provided.

If an applicant is injured or falls sick less than 72 hours before the scheduled PFT, the applicant must advise his or her Physical Fitness Advisor (PFA) as soon as possible and must provide supporting medical documentation within 72 hours.

Illness/injury that occurs during the PFT, which prevents the candidate from completing the test, must be supported by medical documentation obtained within 72 hours after the PFT. If the candidate sustains injuries or falls ill during the course of testing, he or she must stop taking the PFT immediately and seek medical attention. If the candidate continues to take the PFT and fails, no medical excuse will allow that failure to be rescinded.

Example: A candidate hurts his wrist during the pushups event and informs the PFT administrator that he cannot continue. The candidate is required to seek medical attention within 72 hours and provide supporting documentation. If the candidate does not submit acceptable documentation to the Field Office, the PFT will be recorded as a failure.

If an applicant arrives at the PFT and is sick, the PFT will not be administered. The candidate will then have to provide documentation proving that he or she sought medical attention within 72 hours for that specific injury or illness. If acceptable documentation is not provided, the PFT will be recorded as a failure.

If a candidate completes the PFT, the score will stand whether or not the applicant obtains a passing score. No applicant will be granted a retest if he or she completes a PFT with a failing score and then claims that an injury or illness prevented him or her from passing the test.
TRAINING AND PREPARATION

TRAINING PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERLOAD</th>
<th>PROGRESSION</th>
<th>SPECIFICITY</th>
<th>REVERSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To increase physical fitness, one must exercise at a level that challenges the body beyond its current capacity. Overload is often expressed in terms of training frequency (how often), training intensity (how demanding) and training duration (how long).</td>
<td>For continued fitness improvements, the overload must be gradually increased.</td>
<td>To best prepare for the Physical Fitness Test, applicants should devote most of their training time to sprints and sustained runs, as well as situps, pushups and pullups* performed to protocol. Applicants should also avoid training for each event in isolation.</td>
<td>If physical training ceases, fitness levels will return to pretraining levels. Use it or lose it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Only TRP candidates are scored on this event.

Warm-up and Cool-down

Each workout should begin with a dynamic warm-up period of at least five to 10 minutes. This will increase core body temperature, lubricate the joints and prime the nervous system for the workout that follows. The warmup should include moderate-intensity aerobic activities (cycling, jogging) and limited amounts of the specific movements to be trained that day (pushups, situps). You should already be sweating before the workout begins! Once the workout is completed, perform five to 10 minutes of moderate physical activity as a cool down and transition back to rest.

Reasonable Accommodations

Applicants requesting a reasonable accommodation during the PFT must submit written medical documentation to their Applicant Coordinator from a certified medical provider describing the medical disability and the need for reasonable accommodation during the PFT. The applicant or the health care professional should propose the specific accommodation needed by the applicant to take the PFT. All reasonable accommodation requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Sample Training Program

The FBI recommends that all applicants follow a disciplined workout program in preparation for the PFT. To assist you with this, we have provided a sample Physical Training Planner.

The Physical Training Planner includes four different types of workout programs in addition to the warm-up/cool-down:

» Muscular Strength and Endurance
» Anaerobic Power
» Aerobic Power
» Circuit Training

Muscular Strength and Endurance

This type of workout will increase a muscle group’s ability to exert force and resist fatigue. Since strength and endurance are specific to certain muscle groups, we strongly recommend that you perform pushups, situps and pullups according to the criteria used to score the PFT as your primary strength and endurance exercises.
**Aerobic Power**

This type of workout will increase the capacity of the cardiovascular, respiratory and musculoskeletal systems to deliver and utilize oxygen for energy. Sustained running should be your primary mode of aerobic training. Exertion should be heavy throughout the workout (you should be working hard enough that it is impossible to carry on a conversation).

**Anaerobic Power**

This type of workout will increase the body’s capacity to perform high-intensity work and should consist of short bursts (30–90 seconds) of maximum exertion. We recommend sprint running because this will best prepare you for the 300-meter sprint on the PFT.

**Circuit Training***

Circuit training combines elements of aerobic and anaerobic, as well as muscular strength and endurance exercises with limited rest periods. Rather than always training for these fitness components in isolation, we recommend that applicants perform at least one circuit workout per week to prepare for the multi-stage PFT. Listed below is a sample circuit workout:

1. Run for 90 seconds.
2. Maximum situps in 30 seconds.
3. Run for 90 seconds.
4. Maximum continuous pushups.
5. Run for 90 seconds.
6. Maximum continuous pullups.**
7. Run for 90 seconds.
8. Maximum body weight squats or lunges in 30 seconds.

*Repeat entire circuit three to five times with one minute of rest in between repetitions.

**Note: Only TRP candidates are scored on this event.

### General Training Guidelines

The general guidelines for training to improve muscular strength and endurance, aerobic power and anaerobic power are provided in the table below. Applicants should use these guidelines to help structure their workouts appropriately. Special consideration should be given to circuit training as this type of workout best replicates the PFT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSCULAR STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE</th>
<th>ANAEROBIC POWER</th>
<th>AEROBIC POWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1–2 days per week.</td>
<td>3–5 days per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>3–10 repetitions of 30–90 second sprints; maximum exertion.</td>
<td>Heavy exertion: too difficult to carry on a conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Rest twice as long as exertion.</td>
<td>20–30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While a sample training program is provided for reference purposes, the FBI strongly recommends consulting with a physician to create a personalized fitness plan.
Physical Training Planner

The Physical Training Planner shown below provides applicants with a disciplined workout program in preparation for the PFT. As you increase in strength, endurance and power, you will be able to progressively increase your speed, repetitions or intensity for each workout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warmup</td>
<td>Warmup</td>
<td>Warmup</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Warmup</td>
<td>Warmup</td>
<td>Warmup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscular</td>
<td>Aerobic Exercise</td>
<td>Circuit</td>
<td>Muscular</td>
<td>Aerobic Exercise</td>
<td>Rest Day</td>
<td>Rest Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>(30 min)</td>
<td>Workout</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>(30 min)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anaerobic Exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Sprints)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoiding Injuries

It’s estimated that as many as 50% of people starting an exercise program will report an injury within the first six months. These injuries make it difficult, if not impossible, to continue physical fitness training without some period of inactivity. This section identifies the main risk factors that can lead to injury, as well as some risk-reduction strategies.

**Inflexibility and Muscle Imbalances** — Joint mechanics are disrupted when muscles on one side are excessively weak and/or lengthened while muscles on the other side are overdeveloped and/or tight. Train in a way that promotes muscular balance from front to back, side to side and top to bottom. Stretch the tight muscles and strengthen the weak muscles.

**Environmental Considerations** — Running on harsh surfaces (uneven terrain, banked surfaces, concrete) can magnify the stress placed on the musculoskeletal system. Opt for relatively flat, cushioned training surfaces when possible. Harsh climates can also lead to heat or cold illness, so acclimate yourself with 14 days of moderate training within an environment.

**Proper Footwear** — Choose footwear that is appropriate for your activities and allows for normal mechanics, especially during running. Replace your running shoes after 300 miles or every six months, whichever comes first.

**Overtraining** — Too much physical stress applied too quickly with insufficient recovery can lead to dysfunction. Follow the physical training guidelines addressed here and those set forth by leading fitness and sports medicine organizations. Having regular rest days is important for recovery.

**Improper Technique** — Faulty exercise techniques can place undue stress on joints and soft tissues. Never sacrifice form and technique for more repetitions or faster times.