



# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW TO APPLY

## Special Agent Selection System

The FBI is an equal opportunity employer.  
Last revised February 2025.



# MISSION. PRIORITIES. VALUES.

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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.

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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.

Our special agents have a range of backgrounds, education, and skillsets that collectively allows us to stay ahead of threats. Special agents are individuals with leadership abilities who are motivated to take on new challenges and set moral standards for their colleagues and teams.

While the demands vary, each role must be performed competently and reliably. Special agents share a drive to help keep our nation safe and take 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, and other violations of federal statutes.

## FBI special agents must:

- Adhere to standards of conduct and maintain honesty and integrity.
- Undergo a background investigation, credit checks and a polygraph test in order to obtain a Top Secret Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) Clearance.
- Achieve and maintain required fitness levels.
- Pass a medical exam, which includes but is not limited to, meeting visual and hearing standards.
- Complete and graduate from the 18-week Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.
- Be prepared for worldwide assignments throughout your career which may require temporary or long-term relocation.
- Work a schedule that may include irregular hours, nights, weekends, 24/7 on-call availability, and a minimum 50 hours per week.
- 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 multi-step process designed to hire individuals who can help to make a difference in this job. The SASS typically takes one year to complete, often longer. An explanation of the SASS steps can be found on the next few pages.

## The SASS Process

- **STEP 1**  
Application & Screening
- **STEP 2**  
Phase I Test
- **STEP 3**  
Meet & Greet  
Information Session
- **STEP 4**  
Physical Fitness Test (PFT)
- **STEP 5**  
Phase II Test
- **STEP 6**  
Conditional Appointment  
Offer (CAO)
- **STEP 7**  
Background Investigation (BI)
- **STEP 8**  
Fitness-For-Duty Medical Exam
- **STEP 9**  
Pre-Quantico Physical  
Fitness Test (PFT)
- **STEP 10**  
Basic Field Training Course  
(BFTC)
- **FINISH**  
Begin Your Special Agent Career

## Step 1: Application and Screening

You must attach all necessary forms to your application. These include 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.

If you currently reside abroad, you will have to travel to the United States for all testing at your own expense. You may choose whichever Processing Field Office is most convenient. A list of all 55 field Offices is on the FBI website at [FBI.gov/contact-us/field-offices](https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices).

**What to Expect:** The screening process is dependent upon the submission of all application materials, overall application volume, and current needs of the FBI. Follow the guidelines in the special agent job posting and on [FBIJobs.gov](https://www.fbi.gov/jobs) to expedite your application processing.

## Step 2: Phase I Test

The Phase I test is a computerized test within a proctored environment. This is a three-hour exam consisting of five assessments: Logic-Based Reasoning, Figural Reasoning, Personality Assessment, Preferences and Interests, and Situational Judgment.

**What to Expect:** Once invited, you will have 21 days to schedule and complete your Phase I Test. You will receive a notification if you passed within one hour after completing the test.

## Step 3: Meet and Greet

The Meet and Greet is an information session typically conducted by your processing field office (PFO). During this session, you learn about the special agent position and what to expect throughout the hiring process.

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

## Step 4: Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

You must pass the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) with:

- A minimum score of 9 points
- At least one point in 3 of the events
- No less than a zero in any event. (A negative score in any of the four events is considered a PFT failure.)

Training doesn't stop there. You may be required to take the PFT again and achieve a minimum score within 120 days before you report to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC).

**What to Expect:** If you pass an official PFT with a score of 12 or higher (with at least 1 point in each of the four events), you will not have to retake the PFT before BFTC if that PFT was completed within one year of your scheduled BFTC start date.

**! IMPORTANT**

You 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. You 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.

## Step 5: 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.)

**What to Expect:** You will receive your cumulative Phase II results within two weeks of completing both portions of the test.

## Step 6: Conditional Appointment Offer

Once you successfully complete and pass the Phase II Test and the PFT, you will be issued a Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO).

Hiring is contingent upon your successful completion of the remaining SASS components, including the polygraph examination test, medical evaluation, and background investigation.

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

## Step 7: Background Investigation

Once you receive a CAO, you 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 and references, and verification of educational achievements.

**What to Expect:** 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 8: Fitness-For-Duty Medical Exam

Next is a fitness-for-duty examination. The purpose of this medical exam is to determine whether the applicant is physically and mentally capable of performing the job functions of a special agent.

## Step 9: Pre-Quantico Physical Fitness Test

You must demonstrate physical readiness to perform law enforcement duties by passing the PFT, which requires scoring a minimum total of nine



points, with at least one point earned in each event. To qualify for the BFTC, you must pass another PFT within 120 days before your scheduled arrival date.

## Step 10: Basic Field Training Course

Each BFTC has a limited number of spots and is based on the needs of the FBI. Your BFTC may be scheduled for three to six months before reporting to Quantico.

The BFTC prepares you with the foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job of a special agent. The curriculum includes lessons in a variety of areas, such as firearms, defensive tactics, interview and interrogation, and human intelligence. The BFTC also consists of multiple practical exercises that center around a simulated investigation in which you will demonstrate skills you acquired throughout the program.

You must also demonstrate physical readiness to perform duties; therefore, you must complete at least one PFT during your time at the BFTC. To pass this PFT, you must score a minimum total of 12 points, with at least one point earned in each event. If you are unable to pass at least one PFT, you will be dismissed.

**What to Expect:** BFTC lasts 18 weeks (including orientation). You typically receive a reminder of your scheduled class date two to four weeks in advance of reporting to Quantico. You have one opportunity to decline a BFTC class date without penalty when offered. You may request another BFTC class date through the Applicant Coordinator (AC) in the processing office.

## Finish: Begin Your Special Agent Career

Upon graduation from the BFTC, you will officially join the FBI as a special agent. You will be assigned a location at one of the 55 field offices located across the country.

## Physical Requirements

Special agents are often placed in situations that challenge their physical endurance. 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 become a special agent, you must possess the necessary fitness levels to complete the duties assigned to you.

Once you've passed the official PFT, you will be considered ready to complete the physical training and defensive tactics portion of training at the FBI Academy. You will also be prepared to effectively respond to life-threatening situations on the job.

You 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](#).)

## Vision Requirements

- Your 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.
- If you have distant visual acuity greater than or equal to 20/100, you must provide 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.

- If you are Color-Vision deficient, you must successfully complete a Farnsworth D-15 color vision test administered at the field office to be considered.

## Hearing Requirements

Hearing is 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. If you have an average hearing loss greater than 25 decibels (ANSI standards) at 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 Hertz, then you 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.

If you fail the initial pure-tone audiometry screening, you will be asked to complete additional audiometry testing (at your own expense and conducted by an audiologist of your choosing) to more accurately assess the candidate's hearing ability. If you fail testing with your audiologist, using the above standards, you 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. If you are an applicant who wears 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

The following factors will automatically disqualify job candidates from employment with the FBI:

- Non-U.S. citizenship
- A felony conviction
- A domestic violence conviction
- Violating the FBI Employment Drug Policy
- Defaulting on a student loan insured by the U.S. government
- Failing an FBI-administered urinalysis drug test
- Failing to register with the Selective Service System (for male applicants only, exceptions apply – please click [here](#) to find out more)
- Knowingly or willfully engaging in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. government by force
- Failing to pay court ordered child support
- Failing to file federal, state, or local income tax returns

**Please note that if any of the above factors apply to you, you don't qualify for FBI employment. Please make sure you can meet FBI employment requirements and pass all disqualifiers before you submit an application.**

## Employment Drug Policy

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

The FBI balances the needs of the organization and the importance of maintaining the public integrity necessary to accomplish its law enforcement and intelligence missions by hiring the most qualified candidates. The guidelines are used by all entities in the hiring process to help determine whether an applicant's prior drug use makes them eligible and/or suitable for FBI employment.

A candidate will be found unsuitable for employment and automatically disqualified if they deliberately misrepresent their drug history in connection with their application for employment. Additionally, candidates are automatically disqualified under the following criteria:

### Marijuana Usage

- Candidates cannot have used marijuana or cannabis in any form (natural or synthetic) and in any location (domestic or foreign) within the one (1) year preceding the date of their application for employment.
- Cannabidiol (CBD) or hemp-derived products which consist of more than 0.3 percent

tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) meet the legal definition of marijuana.

- Dronabinol (sold as Marinol, Syndros, or generic equivalents) is the only pharmaceutical drug containing THC that the Food and Drug Administration has approved for lawful use with a medical prescription.

## Other Illegal Drugs

- Candidates cannot have used any illegal drug, other than marijuana, within the ten (10) years preceding the date of the application for appointment.

## Prescription Drugs/Legally Obtainable Substances

- Candidates who have misused any prescription drug within one (1) year preceding the date of application for employment may be found unsuitable and disqualified.
- Candidates who have abused any prescription drug or over-the-counter substance within three (3) years preceding the date of application for employment may be found unsuitable and disqualified.
- Candidates who have abused any legally obtained substance (e.g., inhalants, solvents, etc.) within three (3) years preceding the date of application for employment may be found unsuitable and disqualified.
- Candidates cannot have used anabolic steroids without a prescription from a licensed practicing physician within ten (10) years preceding the date of the 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
- Fingerprints
- 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

As a new special agent, you are encouraged to relay your preference of assignment for consideration during selections; however, assignments are made based upon career path and FBI 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.

### Top ranked Field Office Choices

Percentage of New Agent Placement, FY2016- FY2019

**55.5%**

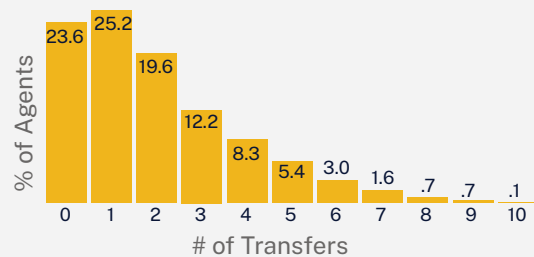
of SAs Placed in Top 3 Preferred Locations

**83.9%**

of SAs Placed in Top 10 Preferred Locations

### Typical Number of Transfers

During a 20-year Special Agent Career



**! 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.



# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following 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, you must enter on duty no later than the day before your 37th birthday. You must apply for the special agent position prior to your 36th birthday to allow adequate time to complete the SASS. **The FBI may disqualify you at any time during the process if it is determined that you 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 O-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 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 (O-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, you must provide a foreign equivalency certification at the time of application. No processing will take place without that documentation.

Potential exceptions: If your 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

Current or former federal employees **must** meet the specialized experience required for **all applicants** as outlined below at the GS-8 level or higher.

**All applicants must either:**

- Demonstrate two years of specialized work experience with a bachelor's degree

**OR**

- Demonstrate one year of specialized experience with at least a master's degree

**Specialized experience is defined as:**

- Gathering and analyzing information and data to make proper conclusions or decisions.
- Establishing solutions to problems, assessing vulnerabilities, considering risks, and choosing the best outcome.
- Organizing, planning, and prioritizing various and competing work assignments.
- Consistently navigating complex and/or evolving environments.
- Communicating orally and in writing to prepare and present reports, briefings, and/or exchange information.

# 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 work toward a common goal while leveraging others' expertise and perspectives; establish rapport with the community and internal FBI 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

# 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, you must pass the PFT, scoring a minimum of nine total points with at least one point in three events and no less than zero in any event. A negative score in any of the four events is considered a failure. You will have an **unlimited** number of attempts up to one year after attending the Meet and Greet to pass the PFT.

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

The official BFTC PFT consists of four scored events. Tactical Recruitment Program (TRP) candidates have different requirements.

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 sit-ups in one minute
2. Timed 300-meter sprint
3. Maximum number of continuous push-ups (untimed)
4. Timed 1.5-mile run

A fifth event, pull-ups, is now required of all new agent trainees (NATs) but is not scored as pass/fail (the event is tracked for Academy fitness award recognition).

Each event must be performed according to the strictly defined protocol in order to be scored. To pass the official PFT, you 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 you to receive a score of 12 (or more) and still fail the official PFT by failing one of the individual events. If you are a TRP applicant, you 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.

## Tactical Recruitment Program Candidate PFT Requirements

If you are a TRP applicant, you 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.

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 sit-ups in one minute
2. Timed 300-meter sprint
3. Maximum number of continuous push-ups (untimed)
4. Timed 1.5-mile run
5. Maximum number of pull-ups (untimed)

If you are a TRP applicant, you 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.

# PROTOCOL AND SCORING GUIDE



## Sit-ups

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 Sit-ups

Score	Female Range	Male Range
-2	29 and below	31 and below
0	30-34	32-37
1	35-36	38
2	37-40	39-42
3	41-42	43-44
4	43-46	45-47
5	47-48	48-49
6	49-50	50-51
7	51-52	52-53
8	53-54	54-55
9	55-56	56-57
10	57 and over	58 and over



## 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).

### Scoring Scale for Timed 300-Meter Sprint (in seconds)

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



## Push-ups

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.

### Scoring Scale for Push-ups (untimed)

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





## 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.

**Scoring Scale for Timed 1.5-Mile Run (in minutes: seconds)**

Score	Female Range	Male Range
-2	15:00 and over	13:30 and over
0	14:59–14:00	13:29–12:25
1	13:59–13:35	12:24–12:15
2	13:34–13:00	12:14–11:35
3	12:59–12:30	11:34–11:10
4	12:29–11:57	11:09–10:35
5	11:56–11:35	10:34–10:15
6	11:34–11:15	10:14–9:55
7	11:14–11:06	9:54–9:35
8	11:05–10:45	9:34–9:20
9	10:44–10:35	9:19–9:00
10	10:34 and below	8:59 and below



## Pull-ups\*

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.**

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

### Scoring Scale for Pull-ups (untimed)

Score	Female Range	Male Range
0	0	0-1
1	1	2-3
2	2	4-5
3	3	6-7
4	4	8-9
5	5	10-11
6	6	12-13
7	7	14-15
8	8	16-17
9	9	18-19
10	10 and over	20 and over

# 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).

You may qualify for the TRP if you:

- Have at least three years of tactical experience gained through positions in military combat arms, law enforcement SWAT or other government tactical teams.
- Pass an interview with Hostage Rescue Team (HRT personnel).
- Pass the Special Agent PFT with 12 points or better.

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 sit-ups in one minute
2. Timed 300-meter sprint
3. Maximum number of continuous push-ups (untimed)
4. Timed 1.5-mile run
5. Maximum number of pull-ups (untimed – when pull-up bars are available)

Applicants not passing the special agent applicant PFT with 12 or more points on the regular PFT and 20 or more points with pull-ups (pull-ups calculated as one point for every two pull ups performed) would be encouraged (not required) to increase PFT scores prior to being considered for the TRP.

You 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 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.

**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.

**Example:** A candidate hurts his wrist during the push-ups 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 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.

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

<b>Overload</b>	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).
<b>Progression</b>	For continued fitness improvements, the overload must be gradually increased.
<b>Specificity</b>	To best prepare for the Physical Fitness Test, applicants should devote most of their training time to sprints and sustained runs, as well as sit-ups, push-ups and pull-ups* performed to protocol. Applicants should also avoid training for each event in isolation.
<b>Reversibility</b>	If physical training ceases, fitness levels will return to pretraining levels. Use it or lose it.

## 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 warm-up should include moderate-intensity aerobic activities (cycling, jogging) and limited amounts of the specific movements to be trained that day (push-ups, sit-ups). 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
- Aerobic Power
- Anaerobic 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 push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups 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 sit-ups in 30 seconds

3. Run for 90 seconds
4. Maximum continuous push-ups
5. Run for 90 seconds
6. Maximum continuous pull-ups\*\*
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.

#### ⚠ IMPORTANT

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

### 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.

	Muscular Strength and Endurance	Anaerobic Power	Aerobic Power
Frequency	2–3 days per week; nonconsecutive days.	1–2 days per week.	3–5 days per week.
Intensity	3–5 sets of max repetitions. Add resistance for sit-ups, push-ups.	3–10 repetitions of 30–90 second sprints; maximum exertion.	Heavy exertion: too difficult to carry on a conversation.
Time	30–60 seconds of rest between sets.	Rest twice as long as exertion.	20–30 minutes

## 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.

## 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.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Warm-up	Warm-up	Warm-up	Rest Day	Warm-up	Warm-up	Rest Day
Muscular Strength and Endurance	Aerobic Exercise (30 min)	Circuit Workout		Muscular Strength and Endurance	Aerobic Exercise (30 min)	
Aerobic Exercise (20 min)		Anaerobic Exercise (Sprints)				
Cool Down	Cool Down	Cool Down		Cool Down	Cool Down	