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THIS CIRCULAR IS ABOUT: **EYESIGHT STANDARDS FOR POLICE RECRUITMENT**

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THIS CIRCULAR IS ADDRESSED TO: **CHIEF OFFICERS OF POLICE FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

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DIRECTORS OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
DIRECTORS GENERAL NCS/NCIS  
POLICE STAFF ASSOCIATIONS**

Dear Chief Officer

This circular is about the Secretary of State's determination in respect of eyesight standards for police recruitment which will come into force on 1 April 2003. A copy of the determination is attached.

Regulation 10(1)(e) of the Police Regulations 2003 specifies that a candidate for appointment must meet the standard of eyesight determined by the Secretary of State.

The standards determined by the Secretary of State have been agreed by the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales. Your attention is drawn particularly to the change to the standard in respect of

colour defective vision which excludes only those who are monochromats. Forces are asked to monitor any adverse effects arising from the change, such as evidential issues, and report these to the Home Office.

It was agreed also by the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales that candidates' eyesight should be tested only after they have been assessed successfully and not at the start of the recruitment process. Furthermore, it was agreed, in principle, that forces should meet the cost of eyesight testing as part of their recruitment costs.

The new common standards take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003. Candidates will have access to the standards on the website at [www.policecouldyou.co.uk](http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk) from 1<sup>st</sup> April. The Police Regulations 2003 can be viewed at [www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2002/20023162.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2002/20023162.htm).

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## EYESIGHT STANDARDS: POLICE RECRUITMENT

The standard of eyesight which must be met by a candidate for appointment to a police force in respect of each of the matters specified in the first column of the following table is that specified in the second column of the table.

Eyesight	Mandatory standard
Static Visual Acuity <sup>1</sup>	<p>Corrected distance visual acuity must be 6/12 in either eye and 6/6 or better, binocularly.</p> <p>Corrected near static visual acuity must be 6/9 or better, binocularly. [Applicants who do not reach the standard should not be rejected but should be invited for a further test after obtaining a stronger prescription].</p> <p>Uncorrected visual acuity must be 6/36 or better, binocularly.</p> <p>Corrected low contrast distance visual acuity must be 6/12 or better for a 10% contrast target, binocularly.</p>
Visual Field <sup>2</sup>	<p>A field-of-view of at least 120 degrees horizontally by 100 degrees vertically is required. The field-of-view should be free of any large defective areas, particularly in the fovea. Single defects smaller than the physiological blind spot, and multiple defects that add to an area smaller than the physiological blind spot, should be acceptable.</p>
Colour Vision <sup>3</sup>	<p>Monochromats should be rejected.</p> <p>Mild anomalous trichromats are acceptable and should be treated as normals.</p> <p>Severe anomalous trichromats and dichromats are also acceptable but should be instructed in coping strategies.</p> <p>[Applicants who show a lowered discrimination for blue colours should be referred to an ophthalmologist for further assessment. This should include a measure of their dark adaptation performance].</p>
Spectacles and contact lenses	<p>Correction should be worn where necessary to achieve 6/6 binocularly. Corrective spectacles and contact lenses are acceptable for the tasks of an Operational Police Constable.</p>
Eye Surgery	<p>PRK, LASIK, LASEK, ICRS, cataract surgery: There is no significant weakening of the cornea and applicants should not be rejected. A period of at least 6 weeks after surgery should be allowed before applications are accepted. There may be a reduction in low light level visual performance: Test visual performance under low illuminance conditions.</p> <p>Radial Keratotomy (RK), Arcuate Keratotomy (AK), corneal grafts. Any other surgical procedures that result in a significant weakening of the cornea. There is a measurable risk of corneal rupture if the eye is struck. Applicants should be rejected.</p>

- <sup>1</sup> Acuity should be measured using a Snellen eye chart, or equivalent.
- <sup>2</sup> The field of view may be tested using a confrontation test. However, it is recommended that forces use more sophisticated testing equipment, where possible. If the results of the confrontation test suggest that there is a reduced visual field, or if the results of the medical questionnaire suggest an increased risk of reduced visual field, applicants should be referred to an ophthalmologist for a thorough examination of their visual field.
- <sup>3</sup> Colour vision should be tested using the Farnsworth D-15 test. Applicants should not wear 'colour correcting' lenses during the colour vision tests.