



GL-1896-5/7/9, Border Patrol Agent

Are you interested in a job with wide-open spaces and opportunities to match?

As a Border Patrol Agent, your primary focus would be to work in tandem with your U.S. Customs and Border Protection partners to prevent terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States. Border Patrol Agents also detect and prevent the smuggling and unlawful entry of undocumented aliens into the United States, and apprehend those people found to be in violation of the immigration laws. Also, due to the increase in drug smuggling operations, the Border Patrol is the primary drug-interdicting agency along the land border between the ports of entry.

One of the most important duties performed by a Border Patrol Agent is known as "line-watch". This involves the detection and apprehension of undocumented aliens and their smugglers by maintaining surveillance from a covert position, pursuing leads, responding to electronic sensor alarms, utilizing infrared scopes during night operations, using low-light level television systems, sighting aircraft, and interpreting and following tracks, marks, and other physical evidence. In addition, Border Patrol Agents perform traffic checks, traffic observation, city patrol transportation checks, and other administrative, intelligence, and anti-smuggling activities.

Start your career as a **Border Patrol Agent** working on the U.S. southwest border — Arizona, California, New Mexico, South Texas, and West Texas.

- We are looking for physically fit men and women who want the ever-changing missions we offer and have the intelligence and courage to handle the responsibility. You will be a part of an organization with intense loyalty and *esprit de corps*.
- New hires must successfully complete approximately five months of paid training at the CBP Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, NM, on topics such as immigration and nationality laws, Spanish, physical training, and marksmanship. Border Patrol Agents must be willing to work overtime and shift work under arduous conditions, and be proficient in the use of and carry firearms. Border Patrol Agents are subject to random drug testing. They may also be sent on temporary assignments on short notice and on permanent reassignments to any duty location.

Benefits and Salary

Benefits: CBP offers a generous benefits package including personal leave days for vacation, illness, and family care, a wide choice of health insurance programs, life insurance, long-term care insurance, flexible spending accounts for out-of-pocket medical or dependent care expenses, a fully portable retirement program that includes a Thrift Savings Plan (similar to a 401k), and a uniform allowance. In addition, some locations have access to fitness facilities, related health and wellness programs, and on-site childcare facilities.

Career Progression: As a BPA, initial appointments are made at the GL-5, GL-7, and GL-9 grade levels with non-competitive promotion potential to GL-12. BPAs can earn up to an additional 25 percent of basic salary each year in overtime pay.

Salaries: See salaries for various locations at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/index.asp>.

Overtime: BPAs will be required to work overtime, but receive overtime pay at premium rates.

They are eligible for law enforcement retirement at age 50 or older with 20 years of service or after 25 years of service at any age.

Accelerated Promotion Plan – Entry level is at grades GL-5, GL-7 or GL-9, depending upon qualifications. The Border Patrol Agent position has an accelerated promotion plan, which means that upon successful completion of the 6½ month probationary examination, individuals hired at the GL-5 level are eligible for promotion to the GL-7, and individuals hired at the GL-7 level are eligible for promotion to the GL-9.

I. Position Requirements

Age Requirement: This position is covered under law enforcement retirement provisions. Therefore, candidates must be referred for selection prior to their 40th birthday unless they presently serve or have previously served in a position covered by federal civilian (not military) law enforcement position covered by Title 5 U.S.C 8336 © or Title 5 U.S.C 8412(d). The age restriction does not apply if you are a veterans' preference eligible. Applicants claiming veterans' preference will be required to provide proof of preference after they have been tentatively selected for the position of BPA. Applicants who are still on active duty and therefore cannot obtain a DD 214 can provide a statement of active service dates and a list of medals and award they have received in lieu of their DD 214. Under *Isabella v. Department of State and OPM*, preference eligible veterans may apply without any age restriction. All applicants must be able to meet and pass all other pre-employment requirements.

Residency Requirement: CBP also has a residency requirement that applies to all applicants other than current CBP employees. If you are not a current CBP employee, CBP requires that for the three (3) years prior to filing an application for employment, individuals must meet one or more of the following primary residence criteria:

- Applicant physically resided in the United States or its protectorates or territories (excluding short trips abroad, such as vacations); or
- Applicant worked for the U.S. Government as an employee overseas in a Federal or military capacity; or
- Applicant was a dependent of a U.S. Federal or military employee serving overseas.

Exceptions may be granted to applicants if they can provide complete stateside coverage information required to make a suitability/security determination. Examples of state-side coverage information include: the state-side address of the company headquarters where the applicant's personnel file is located, the state-side address of the Professor in charge of the applicant's "Study Abroad" program, the church records for the applicant's overseas church missions, and/or the state-side addresses of anyone who worked or studied with the applicant while overseas. If selected for a position, applicants must provide this information when filing their application for employment.

Applicants must possess a valid state driver's license at the time of appointment.

II. Pre-employment Requirements

The pre-employment process consists of a qualifications review, thorough background investigation that includes a polygraph examination, structured oral interview, medical examination, fitness test, drug test and a second fitness test prior to reporting to the Border Patrol Academy. If your background includes past or present arrests, convictions, dismissals from previous jobs, debts and financial issues, excessive use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, and/or the sale and distribution of illegal drugs, you most probably will be rated unsuitable for this position. ***The pre-employment process takes approximately 12 – 18 months to complete.***

Qualifications:

Experience to qualify for a GL-5 grade level, you must have a substantial work experience which demonstrates an ability to (1) take charge, make sound decisions, and maintain composure in stressful situations; (2) learn law enforcement regulations, methods, and techniques through classroom training and/or on-the-job instruction; and (3) gather factual information through questioning observing, and examining documents and records. Examples of qualifying experience include interviewing in a public/private service agency, working as a claims adjuster, journalist, building guard, jail guard, or certain customer relations positions, **or**

Earned a bachelor's or higher degree, **or**

A combination of education and experience.

To qualify for a GL-7 level position, you must meet the basic entry qualification requirements for the GL-5, plus have superior academic achievement, or one year of graduate level education, or one full year of specialized law enforcement experience equivalent to the GL-5 level.

It is extremely important for you to provide the documentation described below if you want to be considered for a grade GL-7. Your grade level will be determined based on the information you provide with your application. If you are offered a position as a GL-5 Border Patrol Agent (Trainee), and you accept, you cannot change your grade level once you enter on duty. Your application must completely and specifically describe your job duties that you want considered in the determination. All transcripts, calculations, and other documentation must be submitted to the CBP Minneapolis Hiring Center within 10 days of notification of selection. Failure to provide this documentation will result in you not being found eligible at the GL-7 grade level. If you have one (1) year of Law Enforcement Experience comparable in level of difficulty and responsibility to GL-5 you may qualify for GL-7. The CBP Minneapolis Hiring Center will

determine what meets the specialized experience requirement. Experience must have demonstrated the ability to:

1. Make arrests and exercise sound judgment in the use of firearms;
2. Deal effectively with individuals or groups of persons in a courteous, tactful manner in connection with law enforcement matters;
3. Analyze information rapidly and make prompt decisions or take prompt and appropriate law enforcement action in light of applicable laws, court decisions, and sound law enforcement matters;
4. Develop and maintain contact with a network of informants.

All four items listed must be met in order to qualify at the GL-7 grade level based on experience. You **MUST** address all four of these items in your application, **or**

If you have one (1) full year of Graduate education in law or a field related to law enforcement (e.g. Criminal Justice, Police Science), you can qualify for the GL-7, **or**

Superior Academic Achievement (SAA): to qualify for the GL-7 under the SAA provision, you must have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited 4 year college/university. SAA is based on (1) grade point average (GPA of 3.0 or higher out of a possible 4.0 for all completed undergraduate courses, or courses completed in the last 2 years of undergraduate study, or a GPA of 3.5 or higher out of a possible 4.0 for all courses in the major field of study, or required courses in the major field completed in the last 2 years of undergraduate study; (2) class standing (applicants must be in the upper third of their graduating class in their college, university or major subdivision; or (3) honor society membership (applicants must have been a member of a national scholastic honor society other than freshman honor societies).

To qualify at the GL-9 level based on work experience, we must be able to determine that you have at least one year of specialized experience comparable in level of difficulty and responsibility of the grade level 7, that includes practical knowledge to interpret and an ability to enforce Federal laws, rules, and regulations. The experience must demonstrate the ability to do all eight (8) of the following elements:

1. Develop cases, conduct interviews or interrogations, make apprehensions, and arrests in order to further the process or cease development;
2. Prepare cases and appear as a professional witness in court;
3. Exercise sound judgment in the use of firearms and conduct training, qualification exercises, or courses in the proper care and use of firearms;
4. Deal effectively with individuals or groups of persons in a courteous and tactful manner in their detention, control or interrogation, and work to promote effective community outreach programs and public relations;
5. Analyze and disseminate intelligence information and data rapidly; and apply a practical knowledge of the laws, concepts, operational practices and law enforcement methods and techniques in order to independently perform duties typically encountered in law enforcement;
6. Develop and maintain contact with a network of informants, social and political organizations, state and local enforcement agencies, and private citizens, to ensure continuity of enforcement work and to carry out enforcement responsibilities;
7. Use a variety of law enforcement databases and information retrieval systems, such as TECS, NCIC, and NEXUS; and
8. Prepare reports and write other documents that deal with the collection, protection, and recording of evidence, the presentation of testimony, and the retention of informational materials concerning illegal activities and practices encountered during daily activities.

Combining qualifying experience and education: If you do not qualify based on experience or education alone, you may be able to qualify based on a combination of your experience and education. Follow the directions below in order to convert each to a percentage, and then add the percentages together to see if they total 100 percent. To determine your percentage of qualifying experience, you must divide your total number of months of qualifying experience by the required number of months of experience. The GS-5 level and the GS-7 level require 12 months of qualifying experience. To calculate your percentage of undergraduate education, divide your number of undergraduate semester hours by 120 or the number of quarter hours by 180. For GS-7, divide the number of graduate semester hours by 18, graduate quarter hours by 27, or by the school's definition of one year of graduate study. Finally, add your percentages of education and experience. The two percentages must total at least 100 percent for you to qualify under the combination of experience and education.

III. Job Requirements: Border Patrol Agents must wear a uniform, carry a weapon, work overtime and shift work (sometimes under arduous conditions), and be subject to random drug testing.

Physical and Medical Requirements: Duties of the position involve physical exertion under adverse environmental conditions such as extremes of weather and terrain. Hours of work are often irregular and protracted. The ability to safely and efficiently perform a variety of duties, e.g., while on foot or while using motor vehicles (car, air, marine, etc.) is required. We will schedule, provide and pay for the required basic medical examination. If medical information is required beyond the pre-placement examination, it is provided at the applicant's expense. Any medical or psychiatric condition resulting from an injury or disease may result in disqualification for appointment if the condition(s) would affect your ability to perform the essential functions of the position.

Medical Qualification Requirements

- Physical training and duties employ firearms, weapons and arrest techniques, as well as defensive tactics. Physical conditioning is essential and includes the ability to: run long distances, weight train, swim, sprint, and climb walls, ropes and ladders. The ability to crawl through a simulated culvert, jump ditches, and stand/stoop for prolonged periods, etc. is also required. Trainees are expected to successfully complete a confidence course practice session(s) and a final timed proficiency course. Operating motor vehicles including doing so under simulated emergency responses is also required.
- Prior to an offer of employment, tentative selectees must undergo a pre-employment medical examination and be found to be medically qualified to perform the full range of duties of the position safely and efficiently. **Any disease or condition that may potentially interfere with the safe and efficient performance of the job's duties or training may constitute grounds for medical disqualification.** Individualized assessments of each person's medical history, current condition and medical qualifications will be made on a case-by-case basis. Final consideration and medical determination may require additional information and/or testing. If medical information is required beyond that provided by the pre-placement examination, it is provided at the expense of the tentative selectee.

Vision

- Uncorrected distance vision must be equal to or better than 20/100 in each eye.
- Binocular distance vision must be correctable to 20/20.
- Depth perception must be equal to or better than 70 seconds of arc.
- Peripheral vision must be normal.
- Color vision must be normal. X-Chrome lenses or other artificial devices are not acceptable as a means for correcting color deficiencies.
- Monocular vision is generally disqualifying.
- Candidates must be able to safely tolerate rigorous / hazardous law enforcement activities such as physical altercations and exposures to toxins such as pepper sprays, etc.
- Any disease or condition that interferes with a person's vision may be considered disqualifying; this will be determined on a case by case basis.

Refractive Eye Surgery: Individuals who have undergone refractive surgical procedures (such as LASIK surgery) are considered acceptable provided the individual's vision meets the above standards post-operatively, and an acceptable recovery time period has occurred. The individual must be free of post-operative complications. For refractive surgery, the results of an additional evaluation by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist will be required to ensure that vision is not impeded due to post-operative complications such as glare and contrast-sensitivity, and the individual must be cleared for rigorous law enforcement training including exposure to pepper spray.

Hearing/Speech

- As measured by an audiometer, hearing loss must not exceed 30 decibels in either ear in the 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz ranges.
- At 3000 Hz, the deficit should not exceed 40 decibels in either ear.
- The use of any hearing aid to comply with the medical standards is unacceptable

Medications

All medication requirements, including psychotropic medication, will be evaluated to ensure that safe and efficient job performance will not be adversely affected. Each of the following considerations will enter the medical recommendations:

- Medication(s) and type and dosage requirements
- Potential drug side effects
Drug-drug interactions
- Adverse drug reactions
- Drug toxicity and any medical complications associated with long-term drug use
- Drug-environment interactions

- Drug-food interactions
- History of patient compliance

Medications such as narcotics, sedative hypnotics, barbiturates, amphetamines, or any drug with the potential for addiction, that is taken for extended periods of time (usually beyond 10 days) or is prescribed for a persistent or recurring underlying condition would generally be considered.

Any condition that would hinder full, efficient performance of duties or would cause a hazard to self or others, or the presence of medical conditions aggravated by environmental conditions, may be disqualifying.

Physical Fitness Screening: Due to the strenuous nature of Border Patrol Agent duties and the associated training programs, fitness tests have been developed and will be used to screen candidates for entry-level Border Patrol Agent positions. Although fitness tests are a separate pre-employment requirement, they are administered at the same time and location as the medical examination. The fitness tests include a (1) push-up test, (2) sit-up test, and (3) 5-minute cardiovascular endurance step test.

The pre-employment tests are as follows:

1. **Push-up Test** is a timed test which requires you to complete twenty (20) proper form push-ups in sixty (60) seconds. The depth of the push-up will be measured using a foam block. If needed, rests between pushups must be taken in the "up position." The Test Administrator will evaluate your form during the test and will instruct you when to start and stop.
2. **Sit-up Test** is a timed test, requiring you to complete twenty-five (25) proper form sit-ups in sixty (60) seconds. The Test Administrator will hold your feet during this test and instruct you when to start and stop.
3. **Step Test** is a timed test, requiring you to step up and down on a fourteen-inch high step at a rate of one hundred twenty (120) steps per minute for a total time of five (5) minutes duration. To maintain the cadence, an audiotape is used which maintains a constant beat and gives verbal cues. The audiotape also contains special instructions to switch your lead leg every minute to avoid local muscle fatigue.

In order to graduate from the required training at the CBP Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, NM, all trainees must pass a fitness test which includes running 1.5 miles in 13 minutes or less, running a 220-yard dash in 46 seconds or less, and completing the Confidence Course in 2 minutes and 30 seconds or less.

For more information on the fitness tests and how to prepare for them, visit www.cbp.gov, click on careers, then click on **Border Patrol Agent**.

IV. Training

Border Patrol Agents must complete a 58 day resident course of instruction in integrated law, physical training, firearms instruction, and driving at the Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, NM. Your time at the Academy will be spent attending formalized classroom training and a rigorous participatory training program. If you are not already involved in a physical fitness program, you may wish to begin exercising now to prepare yourself for the physical demands and requirements of training. Failure to successfully complete the training may be grounds for mandatory removal from the position.

Any Border Patrol Agent intern not fluent in the Spanish language must also complete a 40-day Task-Based Language Training program.

V. Appearance Standards for the BPA Position:

In general as a uniformed Border Patrol Agent, you will be required to adhere to the Agency's uniform and appearance standards. The distinctive BPA uniform is so closely related to the mission and traditions of the agency that it is virtually synonymous with both the agency's purpose and personnel. Uniformed employees are held in high esteem by the public as guardians of the Nation's borders. Extremes and fads in appearance and attire are prohibited in order to maintain the highest standards of professionalism, propriety, decorum, good taste, and to project an image that encourages and facilitates public interaction with uniformed CBP personnel.

Certain aspects of the BPA appearance standard draw distinctions between standards for male and female officers. This does not reflect any difference in the degree to which it is imperative that female or male employees are well groomed; rather it reflects norms and expectations by the public of grooming standards by the two sexes. These expectations and norms are critical to the recognition, cooperation and approachability by the public.

VI. The Hiring Process

Step 1 – Internet registration. You must register for the written test for the Border Patrol Agent position during the open period. You must register for the written test online. The website address is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week during the open period. Based on your responses to the questions, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will determine if you meet the basic qualifications for the BPA position. If you meet the minimum qualifications, you will be scheduled for the written test.

Step 2 – Written Test. Scheduling of the written test is done during the on-line application process. Applicants will be directed to a pre-test for the BPA position. The pretest provides insight into how well you might do on the actual test for the BPA position. We believe that proper test preparation is essential for the successful candidate and suggest that you take time to carefully read the study guide before you begin the application process. You may download the guide from our website at: www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/study_guides/guides_supervisory/entry_guide/.

Applicants who successfully complete the application process will be scheduled for the written test by the Office of Personnel Management. As soon as you have registered and have been scheduled for the written test, you will be able to print your test admission notice which will contain the date, location, and time for the written test. You will be given a UserID and password after you have successfully registered for the written test. If you need to reprint your test admission notice, print a study guide, or reschedule yourself into another test session you will need to go to ([USA Test Manager](#)) , log in using your UserID and password, click on "Border Patrol Agent" (listed below "Application") and select the appropriate choice (Contact Information or Study Guide or Reschedule My Exam), to obtain this information and print it. If you forget your UserID/password, you will need to go to ([USA Test Manager](#)) and click on "forgot UserID and password".

We believe that proper test preparation is essential for the successful candidate and suggest that you take time to carefully read the study guide. If you want to get started, you may download the guide from our website. ([Border Patrol Study Guides](#))

Prepare for the Written Test

We suggest that you review the study guides before taking the test.

Preparation Manual for U.S. Border Patrol Entrance Examination

- This manual will familiarize you with the U.S. Border Patrol Logical Reasoning Test, the Spanish Language Proficiency Test, and the Artificial Language Test (ALT), and will give you a chance to study sample questions and explanations for the correct answers to each question. ([Preparation Manual for the U.S. Border Patrol Entrance Examination \(pdf - 666 KB.\)](#))
- **Sample Test for the Entry-Level U.S. Border Patrol Logical Reasoning Test** – This diagnostic assessment will help you prepare for the Logical Reasoning Test (LRT) by identifying your strengths and weaknesses on several of the components of the LRT. ([Additional Practice Questions for the U.S. Border Patrol Logical Reasoning Test \(pdf - 169 KB.\)](#))

The test itself takes about 4½ hours and contains 3 sections: Logical reasoning skills; Spanish language or, if you don't speak Spanish, an Artificial Language Test that predicts your ability to learn Spanish; and an assessment of job-related experiences and achievements. After you have taken the Border Patrol Agent test, you should receive a Notice of Results (NOR) in the mail within 4-6 weeks following the test. These are your test score results.

Step 3 – Selection Process. If you pass the written test, your name will be placed on an inventory. The inventory is maintained in score order including veteran's preference points. Referral for a position is dependent on the scores of the applicants that are available in the inventory when a list is issued. If you are selected, you will be emailed a tentative selection package. That package will explain the further requirements for forms submission, the structured oral interview with a panel of Border Patrol Agents, medical examination, fitness test, drug test, background investigation, polygraph examination, and the second physical fitness test, which all need to be satisfactorily completed before a firm offer of employment can be made.

Step 4 – Structured Oral Interview. The Oral Board is a structured interview given by three Border Patrol Agents. The interview consists of situational questions that do not require technical knowledge. The structured interview Assesses a candidate's judgment/decision making, emotional maturity, interpersonal skills, and cooperativeness/sensitivity to the needs of others. These qualities are key to successful performance as a Border Patrol Agent. The oral board is a pass/fail interview. Candidates must receive a "pass" in all areas in order to continue in the hiring process.

Step 5 – Pre-employment Process. In addition to completing step 4, you must also undergo and successfully complete a drug test, medical examination, fitness test, background investigation, which includes a polygraph examination, and a second physical fitness test. ***These will be scheduled as soon as possible and will dtake 12 – 18 months to complete.***

Final selection and reporting date! If you successfully complete these steps, your name will be placed on a list for a future position. As vacancies become available and your name is reachable (dependent on original selection date order and score order, including veterans' preference) you will receive a firm offer of employment.