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The Forest Range Officer — commonly called the Ranger — is the officer in charge of an entire range of the forest department. A range contains several forest blocks, and within them the protection of forest, planting and...



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कमलेश चौधरी

व्याख्याता (राजनीति विज्ञान) · रा.उ.मा.वि. टापरा

करियर मार्गदर्शन कार्यशाला, डाइट बाड़मेर (14-17 जुलाई 2026) में विकसित व लोकार्पित
Developed & unveiled at the Career Guidance Workshop, DIET Barmer (14-17 July 2026)

यह एक स्वतंत्र परियोजना है, जो सरकार की आधिकारिक करियर-मार्गदर्शन सामग्री पर आधारित है। · An independent project based on the Government's official career-guidance content.

1 About this career

The Forest Range Officer — commonly called the Ranger — is the officer in charge of an entire range of the forest department. A range contains several forest blocks, and within them the protection of forest, planting and afforestation, wildlife conservation, control of illegal felling and poaching, investigating and prosecuting forest offences, management of forest produce, and joint forest management with the villages along the forest edge all fall to this post. It is a uniformed post and carries legal powers under the forest legislation. Much of the work is outdoors, often in difficult terrain and sometimes on patrol at night. The post matters particularly in Rajasthan, which has protected areas such as Ranthambhore, Sariska and Keoladeo, a desert ecology of its own, and continuous pressure on its forest land.

2 At a glance

Minimum qualification	A Bachelor degree with at least one of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Application/Science, Environmental Science, Horticulture, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics or Zoology; or a Bachelor degree in Agriculture, Forestry or Engineering (Service Rules 2015, Schedule I)
Recruiting body	Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC), Ajmer — department: Forest
Age limit	18 to 40 years, reckoned on the 1st of January following the last date for applications (Service Rules 2015) — the upper limit is relaxed for reserved categories and for women (detail below)
Starting salary	The pay matrix level is not given in the service rules — see the advertisement
Demand	50% by direct recruitment, 50% by promotion (from Forest Range Officer Grade II on 5 years of experience)

3 What you need

INTERESTS

- A deep interest in forests, wildlife and the natural world
- Working outdoors, in the field
- Leading and running a team

ABILITIES

- Physical capacity and endurance — the rules prescribe height and chest measurements
- Deciding under pressure and in situations of confrontation
- Readiness to work in difficult terrain and at night

KEY SKILLS

- Forest management, planting and afforestation
- Investigation and prosecution under the forest and wildlife legislation
- Mapping, GIS and forest survey
- Leading a team — Foresters, Assistant Foresters and Forest Guards report to this post
- Wildlife conservation and census work
- Patrolling, fire control and prevention of encroachment
- Joint forest management and work with forest-edge villages

4 How to get there

- 1 Pass Class 12 with science.
- 2 Do a graduation, and here the choice of subject is decisive. The rule gives two routes: either the degree carries at least one of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Application/Science, Environmental Science, Horticulture, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics or Zoology; or it is a degree in Agriculture, Forestry or Engineering. An ordinary arts or commerce degree does not make you eligible for this post.
- 3 Meet the physical standards, because they are written into the rules and the relaxation is limited. Male candidates: height 163 cm, chest 84 cm normal with 5 cm expansion. Female candidates: height 150 cm, chest 79 cm normal with 5 cm expansion. Candidates from the Scheduled Tribes and from certain races and regions named in the rules have a relaxed minimum height — 152 cm for men. Start physical preparation early; this is a condition that cannot be arranged after the examination.
- 4 Choose two optional subjects and keep them in view from graduation onwards — the examination requires two optionals, and their standard is set equal to the Indian Forest Service examination. Which means plainly that the depth of preparation has to go above university level, and that the UPSC Indian Forest Service material is the right material here.
- 5 Your age must be between 18 and 40.
- 6 Apply when the RPSC advertisement appears, sit the written examination, and then appear for the personality test.

MAIN EXAMS

- The examination scheme is in the rules (rule 27 and the syllabus attached to it), so what follows is from the official text. Two compulsory subjects — General Knowledge and General English, 100 marks each; and two optional subjects, 200 marks each. Three hours are allowed for each paper. Candidates who qualify in the written test appear for a personality and viva-voce examination carrying a maximum of 75 marks.
- One rule here should be read before choosing subjects, because it cannot be undone later. A candidate may not take more than one subject from any of these groups: (i) Agriculture, Agriculture Engineering and Veterinary Science; (ii) Chemical Engineering and Chemistry; (iii) Computer Application/Science and Computer Engineering; (iv) Electrical Engineering and Electronic Engineering; (v) Mathematics and Statistics. So preparing both Mathematics and Statistics and then offering both is not possible.
- Answers may be in Hindi or English, but no candidate is permitted to answer any one paper partly in both languages.
- The list of optional subjects runs to fourteen: Agriculture, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Applications/Science, Engineering (Agriculture / Chemical / Civil / Computer / Electrical / Electronics / Mechanical), Environmental Science, Forestry, Geology, Horticulture, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, Veterinary Science and Zoology.
- The rules also state expressly that the standard of these subjects shall be equivalent to the prevalent standard of the Indian Forest Service examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission. That single sentence sets the direction of preparation: this is a state examination pitched at the level of an all-India service examination, so the material has to be read at that level.
- Know the recruitment structure too: this post is filled 50% by direct recruitment and 50% by promotion, the promotion coming from Forest Range Officer Grade II on five years of experience. Lower in the same Schedule is the post of Forester, filled 50% by direct recruitment and asking only for Senior Secondary — for candidates who do not meet the graduate subject condition, that is a separate way into the forest department.

- Relaxation in the upper age limit — 5 years for male candidates of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, More Backward Classes and Economically Weaker Sections; 5 years for women candidates of the General category; and 10 years for women candidates of those same categories. Which means plainly that the bare figure printed against a post understates a reserved-category woman's eligibility by a decade — if you are in that category, work out your eligibility only after adding the relaxation. In Rajasthan, 30% of the posts in direct recruitment are reserved category-wise for women candidates. Widows and divorced women have no upper age limit at all — the rules say it in those words. It is Rule 13(9) of the Rajasthan State and Subordinate Services (Direct Recruitment by Combined Competitive Examination) Rules 1999, it appears again as the same proviso in the Rajasthan Medical & Health Subordinate Service Rules, and RPSC advertisements reproduce it. A widow must furnish a certificate of the death of her husband from the competent authority, and a divorced woman the proof of divorce. The exact terms of relaxation and reservation are given in that recruitment's own advertisement.

5 Where to study

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTES

- Government colleges and state universities — B.Sc. with botany, zoology, chemistry, geology, mathematics or environmental science — All divisions of Rajasthan (<https://hte.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- Rajasthan agricultural universities — B.Sc. Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture — Bikaner, Jobner, Udaipur (<https://raubikaner.org/>)
- Forest Research Institute, Dehradun — the national institution for forestry — Dehradun, Uttarakhand (<https://fri.icfre.gov.in/>)
- District sports stadiums and school grounds — free preparation for the physical standards — District headquarters and blocks

ONLINE

- वन विभाग, राजस्थान — This is the department the post belongs to (<https://forest.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- UPSC Indian Forest Service — the syllabus the rules set this examination equal to — Union Public Service Commission (<https://upsc.gov.in/>)
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change — Government of India (<https://moef.gov.in/>)
- India Code — the Indian Forest Act and the Wild Life (Protection) Act — Government of India (<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/>)
- आर.एस.एस.बी. — पिछले प्रश्न-पत्र, उत्तर कुंजी व पाठ्यक्रम (निःशुल्क) — The Staff Selection Board's own site — the most reliable free preparation material there is (https://rsmssb.rajasthan.gov.in/show_archived?menuName=Xj4lCb9vGxpQnfls%2FxlZ2g%3D%3D)
- विभागीय सेवा नियम (कार्मिक विभाग) — पद की योग्यता व आयु मूल दस्तावेज़ में पढ़ें — The Department of Personnel publishes the service rules for every cadre. Read these before any coaching material — qualification, age and the method of recruitment are settled here and nowhere else. (<https://dop.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- स्वयं (SWAYAM) — भारत सरकार के निःशुल्क ऑनलाइन कोर्स — Free (<https://swayam.gov.in/>)
- राष्ट्रीय डिजिटल पुस्तकालय (NDLI) — Free books and study material (<https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/>)
- एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. — निःशुल्क पाठ्यपुस्तकें — The foundation for general knowledge, maths and science (<https://ncert.nic.in/>)

FEES

A graduation costs little at government colleges and agricultural universities, and the subjects this post requires — botany, zoology, chemistry, geology, mathematics, environmental science — are ordinary B.Sc. subjects, so no special or expensive course is needed. Physical preparation costs nothing and can be done on village roads or a school ground — the cheapest and most important preparation for this post. The most suitable study material is that for the UPSC Indian Forest Service examination, because the rules set the standard equal to it, and that examination's syllabus and past papers are free on the Commission's website. The examination fee is a few hundred rupees with a concession for reserved categories.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- Mukhyamantri Anuprati Coaching Yojana (free coaching, apply via SSO) (<https://sso.rajasthan.gov.in/signin>)
- Rajasthan Social Justice and Empowerment Dept scholarships (<https://sje.rajasthan.gov.in/>)
- National Scholarship Portal (NSP) (<https://scholarships.gov.in/>)
- Buddy4Study scholarship search (<https://www.buddy4study.com>)

6 What the work is like

WHERE YOU WORK

The ranges of Rajasthan's forest divisions — including Ranthambhore, Sariska, Mukundra, Keoladeo and other protected areas; the range office, check posts, forest chowkis, nurseries and plantation areas, and the villages along the forest.

WORK CULTURE

This is a uniformed, field-based post carrying real responsibility, and the life differs from most government jobs. Postings are often remote, quarters come at the range headquarters, and the hours are not regular — a fire, an illegal felling or a wild animal entering a village does not arrive at a convenient time. The Ranger holds powers under the forest legislation and leads a team of Foresters, Assistant Foresters and Forest Guards, so it is an administrative post as much as a technical one. Confrontation is a reality of the work: the interests behind illegal felling, encroachment and mining are powerful, and action has to be taken against them. In return this is one of the few posts where the result of the work is visible for decades — the forest you protected or planted will still be standing after you retire. For those who want to be outdoors and physically active, there are few government posts that fit better.

WHO HIRES

- Forest Department, Rajasthan — forest divisions and ranges
- Tiger project and protected area management
- The wildlife wing and national parks
- Social forestry and plantation schemes

DEMAND (2026)

The forest department's structure is permanent and every forest division contains several ranges, so the need for this cadre persists; climate change, plantation targets and growing attention to wildlife conservation have raised the importance of the work further. Keep the recruitment structure in view: half the posts are filled by promotion, so direct-recruitment vacancies are about half the total, and the advertisement does not come every year. The real filter is not the count but meeting three conditions together — a graduation in the prescribed subjects, the physical standards, and preparation at Indian Forest Service level. A candidate working on all three at once is in a far smaller field than the number of applicants suggests. One practical point: the same preparation also serves for the UPSC Indian Forest Service examination, since both the level and the subjects are close. The number of posts describes the department's requirement, not your chances of selection. One thing to be clear about — the "demand" described above counts posts, not your chance of getting one. Selection is by open competition and the number of applicants runs to many times the number of posts, so most candidates are not selected in any given recruitment. That is not an argument against this career; it is an argument against making it your only plan. Keep studying or building a skill alongside your preparation, so that the year is not lost whichever way the result goes.

7 Career growth

- 1 Forest Guard → Assistant Forester → Forester — the lower rungs of Schedule I, promoting onward on 7 and 2 years of experience respectively together with a certificate from a recognised Forestry Training School
- 2 Forest Range Officer Grade II — 100% by promotion
- 3 Forest Range Officer Grade I (Ranger) — 50% direct recruitment, 50% by promotion (on 5 years as Grade II)
- 4 Assistant Conservator of Forests and above, in the state forest service governed by the Rajasthan Forest Service Rules, 1962

EARNINGS

Starting	विज्ञप्ति में घोषित पे मैट्रिक्स स्तर के अनुसार
Mid level	₹50,000 – ₹70,000 (भत्तों सहित, कुछ वर्षों बाद)
Senior level	₹85,000 से अधिक (भत्तों सहित, वरिष्ठ स्तर पर)

The 2015 service rules do not give a pay matrix level for this post, so no starting figure is printed on this page — it will be in that cycle's advertisement. The mid-level and senior figures above are approximate and are not confirmed from any official document. One point matters practically and sits apart from pay: departmental quarters are usually provided at the range headquarters, and uniform and field allowances apply separately under departmental rules. Because postings are remote, the cost of living tends to be lower than in cities. The starting figure is BASIC PAY, so that it can be compared directly against other careers. Dearness allowance (60% of basic since 1 January 2026) and house rent allowance are added on top of it, so take-home pay is appreciably higher. The mid-level and senior figures are approximate monthly income including allowances, not basic pay. Note — in Rajasthan a direct recruit is a probationer-trainee for the first 2 years and is paid a fixed remuneration, not the pay scale; dearness allowance and house rent allowance are not payable in those two years (Rajasthan Service Rules, rule 7(30A)). The full pay scale applies once probation is completed. The pay matrix level for this post could not be confirmed on this page from an official document — it is not in the service rules and not in the CET Rules 2022 schedule. No level is therefore stated here. The correct figure is printed in the official advertisement for the recruitment; check it there before applying. The figures above rest on the Rajasthan 7th pay matrix, which is what applies as of 17 August 2026. The Terms of Reference of the 8th Central Pay Commission were approved on 28 October 2025 and it must report within 18 months of its constitution. State governments normally adopt a Central Pay Commission with modifications, and later than the Centre does — so Rajasthan pay will be revised too, though by how much and when is not yet settled.

8 The good parts · The challenges

The good parts

- Work with nature and wildlife, and in a leadership role
- The result of the work stays visible for decades
- Ordinary B.Sc. subjects confer eligibility — no expensive specialist course is needed
- The same preparation also serves for the UPSC Indian Forest Service examination
- Departmental quarters and field allowances are usually available

The challenges

- The physical standards are mandatory and the relaxation is limited
- Postings are remote and the hours are irregular
- Confrontation with the interests behind illegal felling, encroachment and mining is a reality of the work
- The examination is pitched at Indian Forest Service level, so preparation cannot be light
- An ordinary arts or commerce degree does not lead to this post

9 Sources & further reading

1. Department of Personnel, Rajasthan — Rajasthan Forest Subordinate Service Rules, 2015 — https://dop.rajasthan.gov.in/writereaddata/modulCategory/202310060536539542329RFS2015_merged.pdf
2. Rajasthan Public Service Commission — advertisements — <https://rpsc.rajasthan.gov.in/advertisements>
3. Forest Department, Rajasthan — <https://forest.rajasthan.gov.in/>

4. UPSC — the Indian Forest Service examination, to whose standard this examination is set equal — <https://upsc.gov.in/>
5. Rajasthan Staff Selection Board (official) — <https://rssb.rajasthan.gov.in/>
6. Department of Personnel, Rajasthan — service rules — <https://dop.rajasthan.gov.in/>
7. 8th Central Pay Commission — Cabinet approval of the Terms of Reference (PIB, 28 October 2025) — <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2183289>

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