

PolicePrep Comprehensive Guide to Canadian Police Officer Exams

Copyright © 2009 Dekalam Hire Learning Incorporated

www.policeprep.com

Psychological Tests

Most police services in North America will have applicants undergo some form of psychological testing before offering them employment. If you get to this stage of an application process you are in very strong position. Some police services will have you speak to a psychiatrist or psychologist, while others will have you take a standardized psychological test, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2™.

Psychological Interviews

This may be your first experience speaking to a professional in the psychology field. There isn't a great deal of advice to provide for you at this stage other than:

- 1) Relax
- 2) Be Honest

Professional psychologists or psychiatrists will not expect you to put on a show. They will be able to tell if you are trying to hide something, or answering questions in a dishonest manner in an attempt to impress them. **DO NOT DO THIS**. If you are asked how you are feeling, and there is something wrong, admit it. Everything you say will be kept in confidence.

Other strategies you can use to succeed at this stage are similar to the tactics you would employ during an interview: maintain eye contact, shake hands, and be respectful.

Standardized Psychological Tests

Standardized psychological tests such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2™ consist of hundreds of True-False questions. Two major reasons why psychologically healthy people can fail these tests are attempting to memorize patterns and reading meaning into the questions.

Memorizing Patterns

You have to look at each question individually. If you try to remember your previous answers or establish patterns, you may unintentionally demonstrate an undesirable trait, which could keep you from the job. Your score could also be invalid because you were not answering honestly. The test picks up discrepancies due to dishonesty. There are too many questions to remember previous answers and you will confuse yourself and risk failing the test if you attempt to memorize your answers.

Reading Meanings into Questions

A second fatal mistake is to read meaning into the questions. People often look at a simple question and ask, "What are they trying to figure out?" This type of thinking can cause problems. You may find a question like the one below on a psychological test.

Do you like little boys? True False

Some applicants would choose false believing that the test is attempting to uncover a sexual deviation. However, if an applicant answers false, what does that say? Why doesn't the applicant like little boys?

Whenever you encounter a question you are not sure how to answer, ask yourself the opposite question. This can clear up any problems you may have with the question. For example:

Do you not like little boys? True False

Once you have selected an answer, move on. Worrying about your answer is pointless, and no one answer will fail you or create a problem with your score. What these tests search for are patterns in your answers. Answering each question honestly and treating each question independently is the best strategy for standardized psychological tests.

Lie Detector Examinations and Integrity Questionnaires

There are several police services across North America that have begun to use Lie Detector Examinations on applicants. These are often performed along with Integrity Questionnaires. Applicants will be asked personal questions such as:

- How often do you drink alcohol?
- Have you ever driven a vehicle while intoxicated?
- Have you committed any crimes in the last three years?

All of these questions have to be answered honestly during both the questionnaire and during the lie detector examination. If there are discrepancies between the two examinations, if the lie detector indicates that you are lying, or if your answers aren't measurable, **your application may be permanently removed from the process and you may be prohibited from ever applying to the police service again.**

Strategies

1) Be Honest.

Police services understand that no one has a perfect past. No matter what your past transgressions have been, admit to them and be ready to explain what you learned from your mistakes.

- Q. Have you committed any crimes in the last 5 years?
- A. Yes. I worked at a grocery store, and on one or two occasion I took property without paying for it.

2) Demonstrate What You Learned.

If you are asked later about the situation, try to demonstrate what you learned.

- I always felt bad about myself after I took the objects. They didn't belong to me and my actions were hurting the owners of the business after they gave me a job. I've learned that respect for property is important and I value people's possessions to a much greater degree.

3) Think About The Question Before Answering.

Give some thought to these questions before answering. Everyone has done something foolish in their past of which they aren't proud. Don't just write an answer down without giving it any thought. Answering "Yes" to a question such as "Have you ever driven while intoxicated?" will not get you disqualified from the application process, whereas lying about it and failing the lie detector test will.

4) Relax.

You are going to be nervous. The police service will understand this. Try to be well rested on the test date and have fun with the process. If you aren't hiding anything, you have nothing to worry about. Don't get nervous about admitting to past transgressions. However, if you have a serious criminal record, you might want to consider an alternative career choice.

5) Correcting Mistakes.

It is acceptable to provide a different answer on the lie detector examination than you did on the questionnaire if it was an honest mistake or if you remembered something during the test. Relax, answer the questions honestly and, at the end of the examination, mention to the examiner that you made a mistake and forgot to include something on the questionnaire. If you need to contact a recruiter at a later date and ask them to correct something, do so. Recruiters realize that you are nervous, but the best solution is still to read the questions carefully and answer them completely and honestly the first time.

6) Listen To Instructions.

Prior to beginning the examination or filling out the questionnaire, pay close attention to the instructors, read all instructions fully, and ask any questions you might have.

7) Clarifying Questions.

If a question is unclear, ask the recruiter to explain exactly what the question is looking for. Most of the questions should be straightforward and the recruiters should explain the process to you. But if something is unclear to you, ask for assistance.