Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What can I do to prepare for testing?

A. There is nothing to study. Get a good night's rest, have something to eat before you arrive, and just be yourself.

Q. What kinds of questions are asked?

A. The tests used are published, proven measures that ask you to demonstrate your vocabulary and problem solving skills, and to answer questions about yourself, your preferences and interests.

Q. When taking the tests can I ask questions to be sure I am doing it right?

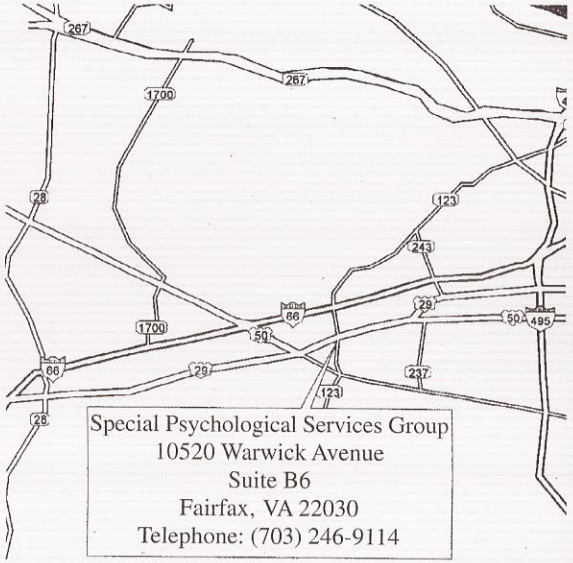
A. Your examiners will be able to help you follow directions and confirm you are proceeding correctly. Examiners cannot tell you what a word means, explain a term contained in a question or otherwise help you answer a particular test question. There are over 1,000 questions in all, so being unsure about a few answers will not have a significant effect. During your interview a psychologist will ask about any answers that may benefit from clarification.

Q. When will I know how I have done?

A. At the end of the interview, a psychologist will advise you of your preliminary recommendation. Usually that will consist of a statement saying that the results do not reveal any problems areas, or if there are concerns, you will be told what they are. The final recommendation awaits quality assurance review. The hiring department always makes the actual hiring decision.

Special Psychological Services Group

www.policepsychology.com



Special Psychological Services Group
10520 Warwick Avenue
Suite B6
Fairfax, VA 22030
Telephone: (703) 246-9114

Directions (see website for area map)

➔ *From the Washington Beltway (Interstate 495),* take Interstate Route 66 W (towards Front Royal); take Exit 60 Route 123 (South) towards Fairfax.

➔ *From Points West,* proceed towards Washington on Route 66; take Exit 60 Route 123 (South) towards Fairfax.

- Just past the second traffic light (which is the intersection of Route 123 with Route 29, which is also Route 50), turn right at the first street (Warwick Avenue).
- Park on Warwick Avenue or turn into the driveway on the right.
- Our office is 10520 Warwick Avenue. Suite B6 is on the second level on the right.

Special Psychological Services Group

Providing Psychological Services to

Law Enforcement Agencies
Corrections
and
Fire Departments

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Pre-Employment Selection Screening

Pre-employment assessments are conducted to assure that personnel hired are emotionally fit and have attributes that will enhance their ability to perform the demanding duties of their work. Accreditation for a police department requires a psychological component in the applicant review process. All screening involves informed consent and is researched to assure that recommendations conform to meet requirements established by professional standards of care, equal opportunity law and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Psychological screening uses standardized tests which measure features recognized as being essential to the job. The recommendation that concludes the process is integrated with other applicant information in the departmental hiring decision. The psychological report and other materials involved in the evaluation are the property of the hiring department. Psychologists working with you do not have the authority to release a copy of your materials. Only the hiring department can do that, if their policy allows it.

Psychological pre-employment screening is usually conducted in one day. Applicants are administered psychological tests in the morning or at midday. Most applicants complete testing in three to four hours. Then they are scheduled for interviews later that afternoon or evening. The interview takes about an hour. The entire process can usually be completed the same day.

Special Duty Screening

As with pre-employment screening, the psychologist represents the department. There is no confidentiality, all elements are on the record and disclosable to the department.

Specialized duty prescribes separate performance requirements. These are separate duties that have their own unique characteristics. Assessments for these duties are used to confirm that personnel have attributes that are suitable for the demands of the duty, and free of features that could be at risk. This screening assures the success of specialized programs by ensuring that those involved are psychologically suitable for tasks that are specialized or different from those of the position for which they were originally hired.

Assessments may be used to consider an employee for assignment to a special duty field, or afterwards, to affirm continuing readiness for these duties. Results are time limited; accordingly, many agencies periodically re-assess personnel to confirm their continuing suitability.

These assessments consist of tests used for entry level screening and a structured clinical interview. The psychologist conducting the evaluation will be knowledgeable of the requirements of the proposed assignment. During the interview the psychologist will discuss findings and relate their relevance to recommendations that will be forwarded to the Department.

Fitness For Duty Evaluations

Whenever the suitability of a public safety professional becomes uncertain, departments are faced with potential liability. The first would be the emotional risk to the employee. The fitness for duty evaluation serves to prevent further risk due to continued exposure to circumstances that may be detrimental to the employee's well being. Another liability consists of failure of the department to assure the agency's commitment to other workers and the public. Agencies cannot permit at risk personnel to remain on the job without jeopardizing other workers and the delivery of services. Over-reactions, wrongful conduct and failure to perform are some of the consequences that could result when employees are psychologically unsuited for their duty.

The purpose of the fitness for duty evaluation is to assess an employee's status, and recommend what to do based on psychological capability to perform duties of the job. Sometimes the issue is an administrative or disciplinary matter, and not a psychological concern. If fit, the employee is recommended for return to work. If the employee is found to be emotionally unprepared and unfit, then consideration is given to meeting the employee's needs. This includes treatment and/or accommodation, when suitable. When unresolvable disability is involved, medical retirement could be recommended.

Fitness for duty evaluations take a full day. The morning is usually filled with testing, the afternoon involves several hours of interview.