



POLICE CADET ORAL INTERVIEW GUIDANCE AND HELPFUL HINTS



City of Oakland
Employment & Classification

What if I can't make my appointment? Throughout the Police Cadet selection process the testing staff has received many requests to reschedule appointments or to schedule "make-up" tests. Due to the size of the candidate pool and the logistical effort associated with this test, the City established a policy that appointments are rarely rescheduled and require approval of the Employment Manager. The same policy will be enforced during the oral interviews. Remember if you are late, you may not be allowed to interview. The best approach is to get to the interview site early and spend the extra time relaxing prior to your interview.

What happens when I arrive at the site? At the site you will check-in and be randomly assigned to an interview panel and given a nametag with an anonymous number; no candidate names will be used during the interview. You will be allowed to review the names of the people on your panel. In the event the panel includes someone who might not be able to evaluate you objectively, you will be reassigned. You will also sign a confidentiality agreement stating you will not discuss the contents of the interview prior to the conclusion of the examination. Violation of this agreement is grounds for removal from the selection process. Shortly after you have signed-in, you will be escorted to an interview room where you will wait outside the room until the panel is ready to interview you. The interview will last approximately 20-25 minutes. When you exit the interview, you will return to the check-in room to turn in your nametag and retrieve your belongings.

What should I wear? While you will not be graded for appearance, most candidates prefer to dress in regular business casual attire, slacks, skirts, dress, shirts, no jeans. Do not wear uniforms or other attire that identifies your current department affiliation, rank, years of service, etc.

What should I bring with me? You must bring photographic identification.

Be advised that you will not be allowed to take any materials into the interview room or take notes before or during the interview. In addition, the oral board panelists are not allowed to accept resumes, school transcripts, awards, commendations, or other supplemental materials.

Who is on the panel? The panel consists of two members: (a) a sworn Police Officer, and (b) Senior Police Cadet. All panelists have been selected based on their professional commitment and dedication to public safety and the community.

What will the panelists ask me? The Oral Board will ask a series of school and work-related questions intended to identify candidates who are most suitably qualified to continue in the selection process. The interviewers may also ask follow-up questions in order to clarify your responses. The oral examination is designed to evaluate job-related skills and abilities such as oral communication, problem solving and decision-making, ability to deal with people, and composure/tolerance.

There is not necessarily a single "correct" or "best" answer to each question, so it makes sense to be yourself and try not to second-guess the interviewers. As you answer, remember that the board knows that you are not a Police Cadet and that you may not know anything about the law or agency rules and regulations.

What happens if I pass the oral interview? Passing candidates will be notified by mail or email in about one-two weeks depending on the next test in the cycle. Based on overall performance, the names of the most suitably qualified candidates will be submitted first to the Police Department for further processing. Final employment is contingent on the successful completion of the full background investigation, physical agility work sample test, and medical assessment. Please see the original job announcement for a detailed description of the process.

If I successfully complete all the stages, will I get a job? Not necessarily. Placement on the eligibility list does not guarantee a job. In making selection decisions, the appointing authority may take into account a wide variety of factors including: (a) each candidate's performance during the examination; (b) the candidate's prior education, training, preparation, and commitment; (c) the results of the background and (d) the needs of the City and the Police Department.

What can I do to prepare now? Oakland's Police Cadet Preparation Guide offers some guidance. Portions of the Guide have been adapted and repeated below.

- Carefully read all the information provided in your notice; do not be late or go to the wrong location because you misread the instructions.
- Make sure you know how to get to the site. The best approach is to visit the site a day or two before your interview and determine the best route and where to park. The location is also BART accessible.
- Get to the interview site early; in large examinations, people who arrive late will not be allowed to reschedule.
- Dress in clean, well-pressed business attire.
- Show that you are interested and motivated; an "executive" attitude often backfires.
- Be yourself; do not try to "out-think" the interview panel.
- Remember that you are not expected to have technical police knowledge; this is taught in the academy.
- Maintain good eye contact throughout the interview.
- Avoid fidgeting and rocking during the interview; it can be distracting.
- Respond directly and specifically to the interviewer's questions; avoid vague and general statements.
- Because of nervousness, there is a tendency to rush to answer each question. Be responsive to questions, but take the time to formulate what you want to say.
- Unless asked, avoid the temptation to "sneak-in" a long speech about your background and experience unless relevant under the circumstances.
- Do not be embarrassed if you are nervous; the interview panel expects you to be a little nervous (if you are too "cool," you might not care). Try to focus on the questions and your answers and not your nervousness.
- The interview panel may take notes; do not let this bother you.
- The interview panel is trained not to give feedback during the interview; do not be alarmed by their "poker faces."
- Remember the oral interview panelists also want you to do well.

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