



Charles County Sheriff's Office

Applicant Oral Interview Orientation and Preparation Guide

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The oral interview is an important component in the hiring process for law enforcement. This Orientation and Preparation guide is designed to help you prepare for the oral board interview process. This guide will provide you with topics of questions you may encounter and tips to help you be successful on the day of your interview.

The goal for any oral interview is to make that all-important first impression and move you forward to the next step in the hiring process.

Oral Interview:

An Oral Interview is a step in the hiring process that must be completed to evaluate an applicant's judgement, emotional maturity, interpersonal skills and decision-making skills. These questions are designed to assess the abilities of an applicant necessary to perform as an officer with the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

The Oral Interview panel will consist of three law enforcement personnel who will be observing and recording your responses to questions asked. A copy of the questions will be provided to you at the start of your interview. You will be able to read the questions silently while the question is being presented by the panel. You are able to refer to your copy while providing your response. At any time you need the question to be repeated or clarified, feel free to ask the panel.

Panel Members:

As mentioned, the panel will consist of three law enforcement personnel who are currently employed with the Charles County Sheriff's Office. Each member has been trained to evaluate applicants for the position desired.

Interview Topics:

The Oral Interview is designed to evaluate an applicant's abilities and skills related to the position desired. Some of the topics you will see include the following: teamwork, problem analysis, customer service, honesty, integrity and stress tolerance. Some questions may consist of scenarios, at no time will you be evaluated on your knowledge of the departments operations and procedures.

How to Prepare:

1. Do your research:

Study up on the agency you're interested in. Walking into an interview with knowledge of the agency and the mission statement can help your confidence level while interviewing.

2. Practice:

If you have never been interviewed by a panel, this is the perfect time to practice. Invite family members to ask you questions with multiple parts, taking mental note of the question and being able to answer all parts of the questions without hesitation. Practice speaking in front of a mirror, noting eye contact and facial expressions while speaking. Pay attention to your verbal cues, and eliminate as many "um's," and "uh's," as you can. These responses can distract the interviewer from the thought you're trying to convey.

3. Arrive early:

Arrive to your interview at least 10/15 minutes before your scheduled time. This extra time will allow you to prepare mentally one last time before entering the interview room. Do not bring in any personal devices such as laptops or phones. Bring photo identification and make sure it can easily be accessible if requested. Dispose of any gum, candy or mints before entering the interview.

4. Check your appearance:

Present yourself as a professional in business attire. Nose rings, tongue piercings, and earrings should be removed prior arriving before your interview. Business attire can be described as a suit/tie or a dress shirt/tie with appropriate pants for men. Women's business attire can be described as business suit or suitable dress business attire. Clothes should be cleaned and pressed. Applicant should also consider their hygiene before arriving to the interview, to include shaving.

5. Make eye contact:

Be sure to make eye contact with each person in the room when responding to questions. Making consistent eye contact shows confidence and respect in yourself and what you are saying.

6. Speaking:

Speak with confidence and loud enough that each panel member can hear your answers and understand your points. If you speak too low, the panel may not be able to note exactly your point or could miss an important detail you are trying to convey. Provide complete responses to each question. Pause if you need a moment to organize your thoughts before providing an answer. The more organized and thought-out answer is, the more the panel will understand what you are saying.

7. Honesty:

The main key in passing any oral board interview is to be honest. If you always give honest answers to whatever question you're asked, your knowledge and skills will shine

through. Be yourself, being nervous is to be expected in an oral board interview. Make it a point to put your best foot forward and display all your confidence that you have.

8. Ask questions:

At the conclusion of your interview, if you have questions regarding the position or an overall view of the Sheriff's Office, feel free to ask questions. This is your time to show your interest in the position and requesting more information will not be counted against you.

9. Shake hands:

Your initial contact with the oral board will be the first impression of you. When an appropriate moment comes up, usually before exiting the interview room, stand up and walk over to each member of the panel. If you are familiar with the rank structure, thank them individually by rank for their time while shaking their hand.

If you believe in yourself and are well prepared, you'll have no problem with the interview. Even if you don't move forward to the next step in the process, you'll have gained valuable experience to help you build your confidence on a future interview.