

2009 STATE CORRECTION SERGEANT ORIENTATION GUIDE

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Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Personnel has prepared this supplemental orientation guide for promotional candidates who will participate in the 2009 State Correction Sergeant Examination. The information in this booklet and the **General Multiple-Choice Study Guide** (available via DOP's web site www.state.nj.us/personnel under the *Quick Access tab then Orientation Guides*) is designed to help candidates better understand the testing process and the types of questions they will encounter on the State Correction Sergeant Examination. The General Multiple-Choice Study Guide contains preparation strategies that candidates should find helpful in exam preparation. We encourage candidates to review this guide along with the General Multiple-Choice Study Guide and to take advantage of all opportunities to prepare for the examination.

When and where will the examination be held?

The **tentative** plan is to administer the State Correction Sergeant examination on a Saturday (double-session) in **May 2009 (Will not interfere with Memorial Day weekend plans)**. However, in the event there are difficulties scheduling the examination for any unforeseen reason, the examination date may change. The test date and location will be confirmed when candidate examination notices are mailed two to three weeks prior to the test date. **NOTE:** There will be a mandatory sequestration period (AM Session only) during which, you will be required to remain at the test center, even if finished with the exam, in order to maintain test security. Non-compliance and/or failure to sign the sequestration agreement will result in immediate disqualification.

Electronic devices and personal items in the examination center

With the threat of high-tech cheating on the rise, possession of personal communication devices such as cell phones, blackberries, pagers/beepers, photographic equipment, MP3 players, or other similar electronic communication devices is strictly prohibited at test centers. **Candidates who are seen with these devices in the test center, even in a power-off mode, will be disqualified and dismissed immediately.** The device may also be confiscated to ensure that an attempt was not made to compromise the testing process. In addition, briefcases and other personal items should be left outside of the test center. The Department of Personnel is not responsible for any personal items. Upon completion of the testing process, candidates must leave the testing premises so that other candidates (still involved in the testing) will not be disturbed/distracted by outside conversations.

How is the examination developed?

A job analysis was conducted to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to perform the job of State Correction Sergeant. A job analysis is the process of critically examining job components in order to provide a functional description of a job. Based on this job analysis, a number of work components were identified, and it is from these work components that a distinct examination has been developed. During the job analysis, State Correction Sergeants ranked each work component in terms of its importance. Examination questions will relate to those work components that were determined to be most critical. A list of the most critical work components

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along with the relative test weight of each, follows:

<u>Weight</u>	<u>Test Content</u>
21.43%	Standard Operating Procedures for State Correctional Facilities/ Corrections Code of New Jersey Title 10A
14.29%	Interpersonal Communication/ Public Relations
14.28%	Analysis of Written Material
14.28%	Effectiveness of Expression
14.29%	Report Writing
<u>21.43%</u>	Supervision/Leadership
100.00%	

Is there study material that candidates can use to prepare for the examination?

The following source will be used by the Department of Personnel to develop test questions related to the Standard Operating Procedures for State Correctional Facilities. Please note, however, that the development of test questions may not be restricted to this particular source.

New Jersey Administrative Code Title 10A

In addition, the following source material will be used by the Department of Personnel to develop test questions related to Supervision/Leadership the posting of this guide, the publisher has indicated a sufficient supply of the book. *[The Department of Personnel will not be responsible for the quantity of books available.]*

The Effective Corrections Manager: Correctional Supervision for the Future 2nd Ed.

Richard L Phillips & Charles R McConnell

Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2005

ISBN-10: 0763733113

ISBN-13: 978-0763733117

NOTE: The development of all test questions will not be restricted to these sources.

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Are there practice multiple-choice questions?

The following 20 questions are sample questions that are similar to the ones that will appear on your examination. Use these questions to get a general idea of what the exam will look like as you prepare for the upcoming examination.

Sample S.O.P. / Title 10A Questions:

1. An inmate writes a letter that he wants included in the next batch of outgoing mail. He seems anxious to have the letter sent quickly. You are suspicious of this behavior and wish to have the content of the letter reviewed before sending it out. According to 10A, which type of correspondence shall **NOT** be opened, read or censored?
 - (a) Certified mail.
 - (b) Letters addressed to the news Media.
 - (c) Correspondence addressed to relatives or family members.
 - (d) Letters labeled as “confidential.”

The correct answer is (b).

As stated in **10A:18-2.7(b) 3**, outgoing mail shall not be opened, read, or censored if it is considered legal correspondence or if it is addressed to a news media representative.

2. Correction Officer (CO) Jackson is authorized to carry an off-duty firearm. Consider the following:
 - I. State Department of Corrections (DOC) ID
 - II. Union membership card
 - III. Off-duty weapons card
 - IV. Valid N.J. driver’s license
 - V. State DOC badge

Which is/are **REQUIRED** of CO Jackson while carrying his off-duty firearm?

- (a) III only
- (b) I and V only
- (c) I, III, and V only
- (d) I, II, III, IV, and V

The correct answer is (c).

According to **10A:3-4.8**, authorized personnel shall be required to carry their off-duty weapons card, the official badge, and photo identification card of the New Jersey Department of Corrections at all times while carrying their off-duty firearm.

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3. CO Zedney has witnessed Inmate Franco commit a minor infraction and is going to issue an “on-the-spot correction.” Consider the following:
- I. Verbal reprimand
 - II. Up to five hours or extra work duty
 - III. Up to five hours of confinement to the room or housing area
 - IV. Loss of radio or television privileges for a period of no more than seven days
 - V. Loss of recreation privileges for a period of no more than five days

Which are **AUTHORIZED SANCTION(S)**?

- (a) I and V only
- (b) I, II, and IV only
- (c) II, III, and IV only
- (d) I, II, III, IV, and V

The correct answer is (a).

Based upon **10A:4-7.3**, the following are authorized sanctions for on-the-spot corrections: verbal reprimand; loss of recreation privileges for a period of no more than five days; up to four hours of extra work duty; up to four hours confinement to the room or housing areas; loss of radio or television privileges for a period of no more than five days; and/ or confiscation.

Sample Interpersonal/ Public Relations Questions:

1. You notice that an above average officer of five years seems to be distracted and distant at the last few squad meetings. Afterward, in private he tells you that he and his wife are having marital difficulties. What is your next course of action?
 - (a) Listen attentively and determine who is at fault.
 - (b) Listen attentively and suggest professional counseling.
 - (c) Discuss the issue in detail to see if it is drug or alcohol related.
 - (d) Inform him that his private life is his own business and he must not let it affect his work.

The correct answer is (b).

By listening attentively, you are demonstrating to the officer that you are interested and concerned about his problem. However, since most supervisors do not possess the expertise to offer professional advice in these matters, suggesting professional counseling is the next, and most appropriate course of action.

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2. You have noticed that one of your better officers has recently begun to slack off. He is taking longer to complete his duties and is doing a less thorough job than in the past. Your **BEST** course of action to get this officer to improve his behavior is to
- (a) tell him that he will be disciplined if his performance does not return to its previous level.
 - (b) tell him that he must be crazy if he thinks you will accept his present level of performance.
 - (c) pay less attention to him and his sub-par performance.
 - (d) tell him that he did a great job before, and you would like to see him perform that way again.

The correct answer is (d).

This action addresses the situation by encouraging a return to the performance level you know is within the officer's capabilities. Since performance has only recently dipped, it's possible that this is the only action you will need to take. However, if the officer's performance continues to decline, stronger measures may be needed in the future.

3. You have an officer who is a habitual complainer. He takes every opportunity to complain about the institution's rules and about his coworkers. What is the **BEST** way to deal with this behavior?
- (a) Order him to stop complaining.
 - (b) Redirect his complaints to a constructive activity.
 - (c) Ignore his complaints.
 - (d) Discipline him each time he complains.

The correct answer is (b).

The other three options either would fail to address the problem or could antagonize the officer even further. By redirecting the complaints to a constructive activity (e.g. having him submit suggestions for process improvement), the Sergeant is empowering the officer to go beyond simply complaining and taking corrective action to address his concerns.

Sample Analysis of Written Material Questions:

Procedures for Disciplinary Hearings

An inmate has a Constitutional Right to a written notice of all charges (that he committed a rules infraction) at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to a hearing. The inmate has a right to waive this right. In order to do so, the inmate must complete Form IDP11C, Waiver of Twenty-four Hour Notice.

The inmate has a right to be present at the hearing. The inmate may waive his right to be present. The hearing may be held in absentia if the inmate: (a) has escaped; (b) is adjudged (by the hearing officer or a member of the custody staff, lieutenant or above) to represent a danger to himself or any other person by being present; or (c) is incapacitated.

The inmate has a Constitutionally Guaranteed Right to call witnesses on his behalf. The hearing officer must either call the inmate's witnesses or document reasons for declining to do so.

The inmate has a right to remain silent during all, or any part of the disciplinary process. Should the inmate choose to exercise this right, his silence may be used to draw an adverse inference against him (his innocence). However, an inmate's silence alone may not be sufficient to support a finding that he committed a prohibited act.

When a staff member either witnesses a prohibited act, or has reasonable belief that one has been committed by an inmate, the staff member shall prepare an Incident Report promptly and forward it immediately to the appropriate supervisor.

The report should contain details of the activity (prohibited act) which is being reported. All facts which are known to the staff member and are not confidential, must be reported. Anything unusual about the inmate's behavior should be included in the report.

The reporting employee should also list any staff or inmate witnesses to the incident and the disposition of any physical evidence. The report is to reflect any action taken, especially the use of force. The report is to be signed. The time and date are to be appended.

An investigation is to be conducted promptly by a uniformed employee of the rank of lieutenant or higher, unless circumstances beyond control exist. The investigator may not be the employee reporting the incident, nor be involved in the incident. The investigator is to be appointed within four hours of the time the violation is officially reported (the report is submitted to the appropriate supervisor). Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, the investigation should be completed within twenty-four (24) hours of the appointment of the investigator.

When the inmate receives formal charges, the investigator shall read the charges to the inmate and ask for the inmate's statement concerning the incident. The investigator must advise the inmate of his right to remain silent. The investigator must thoroughly investigate the incident. He shall

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record all steps and all actions taken in the investigation on the investigation report. The investigation report must be included with the documents submitted to the hearing officer.

At any time during the investigation, the investigating officer may recommend dismissal of the charges to the captain. The captain may act upon the recommendation of the investigating officer or perform his own review to dismiss the charges and expunge the inmate's record.

The charging officer, or other staff member, may use information provided by an inmate informant to substantiate a disciplinary charge against an inmate. The identity of the informant may be withheld from the charged inmate. In cases where a hearing officer relies upon evidence provided by a confidential informant to conclude that an inmate did commit a prohibited act, the hearing officer must include in the record a statement of his findings concerning the reliability of the informant and the factual basis for his finding of reliability. Testimony provided by a single confidential informant is not sufficient to support a finding that an inmate committed a prohibited act. Information from sources of unknown reliability may not be used to support a finding that an inmate committed a prohibited act, regardless of how many sources provided the information.

The hearing officer must make a decision regarding the guilt or innocence of the charged inmate in accordance with the greater weight of the evidence, and which is supported by circumstantial evidence.

Substantial evidence may be physical evidence or it may consist of statements. At times, circumstantial evidence may be substantial enough to support a finding that an inmate committed a prohibited act without any direct evidence being introduced.

1. In which situation may a charged inmate be excluded from a hearing? When the
 - (a) hearing is held less than 24 hours after notification.
 - (b) inmate is in protective custody.
 - (c) inmate is in disciplinary segregation.
 - (d) inmate threatens to commit suicide.

The correct answer is (d).

The hearing may be held in absentia if the inmate: (b) is adjudged (by hearing officer or a member of the custody staff, lieutenant or above) to represent a danger to himself.

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2. When may an investigating officer dismiss the charges?
- (a) At any time during the investigation.
 - (b) Upon completion of the investigation.
 - (c) When the investigation shows that, the inmate did not commit a prohibited act.
 - (d) The investigator may not dismiss the charges.

The correct answer is (d).

At any time during the investigation, the investigating officer may recommend dismissal of the charges to the captain. The captain may act upon the recommendation of the investigating officer or perform his own review to dismiss the charges and expunge the inmate's record.

3. When may a sergeant perform an investigation of a charged disciplinary infraction?
- (a) When a lieutenant or higher-ranking officer is not available due to uncontrollable circumstances.
 - (b) A sergeant may not conduct this type of investigation.
 - (c) When the lieutenant delegates the responsibility to him.
 - (d) The procedures do not clearly indicate the conditions under which an investigation may be performed by a sergeant.

The correct answer is (b).

The procedures state, an investigation is to be conducted promptly by a uniformed employee of the rank of lieutenant or higher, unless circumstances beyond the control of the investigator intervene.... Since the procedures indicate that the exception is triggered by circumstances beyond the control of the investigator, the exception refers to the timeliness of the investigation and not to the rank of the officer. As such, the question is correct as keyed. MSB Decision: March 17, 2004, DOP Docket No. 2003-4214

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Sample Effectiveness of Expression Passage and Questions:

Each underlined phrase has a number below it that corresponds to one of the numbered questions that follow. The underlined segments are included as choice (a) in the corresponding questions.

For each question, you are to choose the **BEST** or **MOST EFFECTIVE** way of expressing the thought implied by the underlined segment. Your choice may depend, in part, on what precedes or follows an underlined segment. When making your choice, you should consider the following elements of effective expression:

Spelling and Punctuation, Variety, Proper emphasis, Discrimination in the use of words, Conciseness, Clarity, Consistency with accepted usage, Appropriate structure, Smoothness.

Memo to all Corrections Personnel

The following are changes to the current booking policies and procedures

1.

regarding inmate footwear. Its very important that these new procedures are instituted

2.

immediately. Please read this memo and post them in the booking area.

3.

1. See preceding passage, Number 1.

- (a) The following are changes
- (b) The changes following are
- (c) The following is changes
- (d) The following is a change

The correct answer is (a).

This is a case of subject/verb agreement. The verb “are” should be used with the subject “changes” which is plural. The verb “is” would be used when referring to a single “change” as is the case in option (d), however this is not the best answer because it changes the meaning of the sentence.

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2. See preceding passage, Number 2.
- (a) Its very important
 - (b) Its' very important
 - (c) It's very important
 - (d) It is of great importance

The correct answer is (c).

“It’s” is the proper contraction of the two words “it” and “is.” Although (d) is grammatically correct, it is overly formal given the tone of the surrounding sentences.

3. See preceding passage, Number 3.
- (a) post them in the booking area.
 - (b) post it in the booking area.
 - (c) in the booking area, post them.
 - (d) in the booking area, post it.

The correct answer is (b).

“It” in option (b) refers to “memo” which is singular; therefore, option (a) is clearly incorrect. Option (b) is also more clear and concise than options (c) or (d) which lead with prepositional phrases (in the booking area).

Sample Report Writing Questions:

1. Which is **MOST IMPORTANT** to include in an incident report?
- (a) The suggested legal outcome of the incident.
 - (b) Details about the conclusion of the incident.
 - (c) The officer’s analysis of what caused the incident to occur.
 - (d) Codes and abbreviations.

The correct answer is (b).

A report, especially an incident report, should be factual, objective, and comprehensive. Option (a) is incorrect because it is not factual and would be based only on opinion. The same is true of option (c). Although a report could contain codes and abbreviations as stated in option (d) it is a better practice not to abbreviate because different people use different abbreviations and as a result, they can be misinterpreted.

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2. Which statement is **NOT** true of an incident report? An incident report should be
- (a) written in clear, concise language.
 - (b) written in the past tense.
 - (c) written in the third person.
 - (d) proofread for spelling or grammatical errors.

The correct answer is (c).

An incident report should be written in the first person (e.g: I, my, etc.) since it is usually written by the person who observed the incident or was involved in the situation being reported.

3. A report about an incident should typically **NOT** include
- (a) who was there.
 - (b) what happened.
 - (c) where it happened.
 - (d) why it happened.

The correct answer is (d).

The minimum information for reports includes the who, what, when, where and how with necessary details. The *why* is not supposed to be given by law enforcement unless it is obvious from the evidence.

Sample supervision questions:

Note: These sample questions were NOT derived from the Supervisor's Survival Kit. They were developed using a different text. Use these questions to gain a general idea of the type of questions that will be created from the prescribed reading material.

1. Your subordinate needs to learn a new task. What is the **LEAST** effective way for her to learn the new task?
- (a) Trial and error
 - (b) Coaching
 - (c) On-the-job training
 - (d) Mentoring

The correct answer is (a).

Learning a new task through trial and error is not only time consuming, it can be demoralizing for the subordinate if the task is not learned quickly. It could also lead to mistakes that may need to be corrected by others. For these reasons, this is not a recommended method.

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2. You have recently been transferred, and you need to set performance standards for your new officers. You want to set the standards at a point that will elicit the best performance from them. In order to get your officers to perform at their best, how should you set the standards?
- (a) Set the standards very high and unreachable.
 - (b) Set the standards high and reachable.
 - (c) Set the standards low and easily reachable.
 - (d) It doesn't matter where the standards are set, officers' performance are affected by other factors, not the set standards.

The correct answer is (b).

Standards should be set high, but reachable. If they are set too high, morale may be negatively affected. If they are set too low, performance will not improve and may, in fact, decline over time.

3. If a subordinate performs at a level lower than the set standard, and his supervisor accepts that level of performance, then
- (a) the standard is lowered for the future to the level at which the subordinate performed.
 - (b) the standard is lowered for the future below the level at which the subordinate performed.
 - (c) the standard is raised higher for the future than the previously set standard.
 - (d) there is no change in the set standard for the future.

The correct answer is (a).

By accepting a level of performance that is below the established standard, a new standard has been set even if it is not formally recognized. Only by consistently rejecting sub-standard performance and rewarding above standard performance, may a supervisor expect subordinates to recognize and respect the formal standards that have been set.

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4. You decide to delegate a task to one of your subordinates. Consider the following:
- I. You do not have time to complete this task.
 - II. Your subordinate will take the blame if the task is not done properly.
 - III. Your subordinate can complete the task more quickly than you can.

Which is/are **NOT** acceptable reason(s) for the supervisor to delegate the task?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) III only
- (d) I, II, and III

The correct answer is (b).

A task should never be delegated if the primary reason behind delegating it involves the shifting of blame. Such a situation could result in hard feelings and distrust when a similar situation arises in the future. Reasons I and III are valid reasons for delegating a task.

5. Sergeant Wilson assigned his subordinate Officer Spencer to complete an audit by the end of the month. When the deadline arrived however, Officer Spencer had not completed the task. What is the **LEAST** likely reason that Officer Spencer did not finish the task? Officer Spencer
- (a) wanted to irritate Lieutenant Wilson by not doing the task.
 - (b) was not motivated to do the task.
 - (c) did not know how to do the task.
 - (d) had obstacles preventing him from doing the task.

The correct answer is (a).

When expectations are not met, the problem is not that employees do not want to please their supervisors. A survey of 4,000 managers asked, 'Why don't subordinates do what they are supposed to do?' The responses included reasons such as: They don't know how to do it; there are obstacles beyond their control; and they are not motivated--poor attitude.

NOTE: These are only sample items. The examination will contain different questions, although similar in structure and content. Answering these sample items correctly does not guarantee you the same success on your examination.

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What happens with promotions resulting from the examination?

If you pass your exam, your name will go on a promotional list ranked by your final score (a composite of multiple-choice examination score, and seniority score). This promotional list will last for 3 years from its promulgation date or until it is exhausted, whichever is sooner. However, for good cause, the promotional list may be extended by the Commissioner of the Department of Personnel for up to one additional year.

When your appointing authority (hiring agency) notifies DOP that it wants to fill vacancies, DOP sends them the names that are ranked highest on the promotional list. This is called a certification list. When your name appears on a certification list, it means that you may be interviewed and considered for promotion.

Also, when your name appears on a certification list, DOP will send you a Notification of Certification. You **must** contact the appointing authority in writing within five business days to express your interest. If you do not respond, your name may be removed from the promotional list.

If a Disabled Veteran or Veteran is the first name on the certification, the appointing authority must hire that candidate unless there is a very good reason not to. If there are no disabled veterans or veterans on a certification, the appointing authority can normally choose from among the top three candidates for each position.

After the examination is scored, candidates will be ranked according to their final score (a composite of multiple-choice examination score and seniority score). **NOTE: All appointments will be conditional pending resolution of all scoring appeals related to the examination. Once all appeals have been resolved, appointments from the list will be considered permanent.** Appeals are considered resolved after the Merit System Board makes its final ruling.

What is the Department of Personnel's make-up policy?

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 4A: 4-2.9, make-up examinations for public safety promotional examinations may be authorized only in cases of:

- I. Error by the Department of Personnel or appointing authority.
- II. Death in the candidate's immediate family as evidenced by a copy of the death certificate; or
- III. Catastrophic injury or illness requiring an extended convalescent period provided the candidate submits a doctor's certification containing a diagnosis and a statement clearly showing that the candidate's physical condition precluded his or her participation in the examination, as well as documentation from the candidate's employer noting the candidate's related leave from work.

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- IV. Military leave, which will be handled as stated in NJAC 4A:4-2.9(c).
- V. Exoneration from pending disciplinary or criminal charges will be handled as stated in N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.9(d).

Make-up requests must be submitted, in writing, with supporting documentation, to: NJDOP Make-Up Exam Unit, Attn: Marty Berrien, P.O. Box 310, Trenton, NJ 08625-0310 **within 5 days** upon receipt of your Notification Card.

NOTE: All requests for **medical** make-up examinations must be accompanied by the Department of Personnel's Medical Authorization for Make-up Examination form (DPF-728), completed by the treating physician. The Medical Authorization for Make-up Examination form can be obtained through the Make-up Unit or from our website at www.state.nj.us/personnel/forms

Candidates with special situations/ADA concerns must contact Marty Berrien at (609) 292-4158, upon receipt of their examination notification in order to request/discuss special needs, if you have already been approved for ADA accommodations with DOP.

Candidates with a first-time request for ADA accommodations must check Box 8 on the front of your application. You will subsequently be contacted for information regarding your special need(s).

Will make-up candidates take the same examination?

Due to concerns regarding loss of examination security relating to the illicit discussion and/or dissemination of test content, the make-up examination for this announcement will not be identical to the original examination. That is, it may be very similar to the original examination, matching the content specifications of the original examination as closely as possible. This means that the make-up examination would measure in equal proportion, the same knowledge, skills and/or abilities that will be measured by the original examination. It will also be administered and scored in the same manner as the original examination. If a different examination is used for make-up purposes, make-up candidates may be required to obtain or use resource material for test preparation/study purposes that is particular to the make-up examination.

Conclusion

This orientation guide attempts to familiarize candidates with aspects of the Written Multiple-Choice Test, including some suggestions for preparation. The suggestions provided here are not exhaustive – we encourage candidates to engage in whatever additional preparation strategies they believe will enhance their chances of performing effectively on the examination.

We hope that this Orientation Guide has been beneficial.

GOOD LUCK!