

Police Written Exam - How To Think Like A Cop

Preparation for judgment/situational test questions on the police written test may seem daunting, but in reality, you need to capture only one thing -- the mindset of a police officer.

Thinking like a police officer is not simple, yet the elements that make up a police officer's mindset are simple, straightforward and support effective, correct actions and decisions in situational dilemmas.

Preparing yourself to view situational questions with the mindset of a police officer involves establishing a solid analytical foundation based on three fundamentals:

1. Common Sense
2. Police Priorities
3. Police Hierarchies

When these fundamentals are combined and applied to police situational questions, they become a single, skilled viewpoint that ensures the most effective and equitable actions and decisions. Using these fundamentals as your primary information filters; you can approach any situational problem and determine an effective and appropriate course of action.

Common sense is knowledge acquired through trial and error, experience and commonly accepted animate and inanimate behaviors, and the laws of physics.

For example: Is it safer to talk to someone involved in an auto accident in the street or on the sidewalk? Common sense indicates: Sidewalk. If you're knocking on someone's door, would you stand in front of the door or off to the side? Common sense indicates: Side. If you're pursuing a traffic violator at a high rate of speed through downtown traffic, do you continue the pursuit or let him go? Common sense indicates: Let Him Go. The risk of injuring innocent people is too high versus upholding the law by stopping a traffic violator.

Another example: What would you do if you saw a naked man walking down the street with only a cell phone in his hand? Arrest him? If so, on what charge? You should first ask questions and determine what happened. He may be a victim of a crime, so don't jump to conclusions.

In police work, and in police situational test questions, using common sense to evaluate the situation means basing actions and decisions on knowledge that is generally common to everyone, but is occurring in a situation that involves a need for police action.

Common sense should temper your reactions, allowing you to control the urge to jump to conclusions before gaining all the available facts. Often the set of circumstances seen at first glance seems to warrant a certain conclusion, however, common sense allows us to see where circumstances simply could not co-exist in certain situational conflicts.

Police Priorities are defined by each law enforcement department in particular, but can also be identified in general for the purposes of preparing for police situational test questions.

Assessing a situation and the information pertaining to it requires relying on your common sense and using Police Priorities to determine the most effective, appropriate course of action.

The most important Police Priorities will normally fall in this order:

1. Protect Others -- Citizens, victims, fellow officers -- assist and protect people who are endangered.
2. Secure Public Order -- Whether on your beat or during a critical incident -- keep the peace.
3. Uphold the Law -- Enforce, arrest, investigate, protect crime scenes, preserve evidence.
4. Provide Non-Emergency Assistance -- To non-injured victims, the elderly, neglected children, lost or stranded people, the mentally ill, the homeless -- those in distress, but not imminent danger.

5. Maintain Order On Your Beat -- Check your beat for suspicious activity. Investigate suspicious persons, potential hazards, etc. Know your beat by becoming familiar with the streets, the buildings and the people, especially the criminal element.

6. Maintain Traffic Flow -- Report and ensure defective or damaged traffic signals and signs are repaired or replaced -- direct traffic safely and effectively until signs and signals are in place.

Police work continually brings officers face to face with situations that can be fraught with conflicting values. Police priorities are set up to support every officers decision-making capabilities so actions are determined based on accepted values and department-designated priorities.

To further support every officer in making effective decisions, every police department has in place a well-defined list of Police Hierarchy.

Police Hierarchy establishes importance as regards to rank and authority. It will remind you of the Police Priorities list, but the value system behind the Police Hierarchy involves the parameters of orders, regimens, policies, and regulations -- and how an officer operates and defines his decisions for taking action within those parameters.

Generally, a departments' Police Hierarchy list will be as follows:

1. Protect Life and Limb -- Your first action should always be a response to those things that pose a threat to anyone's safety and well being: performing CPR, first aid, calling for an ambulance, etc.

2. Obey Orders -- Emergency or non-emergency situations demand an officer obey orders. The only acceptable exception to this is when an order interferes with the primary directive: protecting life and limb.

3. Protecting Property.

4. Maintaining Assigned Duties -- Your effectiveness is compromised if an assigned duty is not maintained, regardless of a seeming mis-use of skills or experience.

For example: You are assigned to a specific area during an emergency situation and ordered by your supervisor to stay at this location. But, by leaving this location you can help a seriously injured person and possibly save that persons life. What would you do? You are justified in choosing to leave your assigned area to help the injured person, even though you are disobeying the supervisors order -- provided that leaving your assigned area will not put other lives in danger. Always remember protection of life is the number one priority.

Another example: You are ordered to guard a prisoner. Another officer is assigned to write the arrest report. You are a better report writer than the other officer. If you write the report, both you and the other officer will be able to return to street patrol sooner. What would you do? Do you watch the prisoner or write the report? Answer: you watch the prisoner. Obeying an order is a higher priority than maintaining your assigned duties.

Every police officer operates as part of a team effort. This effort becomes most efficient when all participants operate under the same set of rules and the same hierarchy list. Rank and authority procedures established in the Police Hierarchy list ensure that the department operates as a whole and that individual officers make decisions within judgment parameters based on historical experience and professional consensus.

Recommended techniques for answering police judgment/situational questions:

1. Pay close attention to the information you are provided.
2. Read carefully and thoroughly. Ask yourself questions -- is there anything that is a threat to life or limb or is there anything that needs immediate attention?
3. Apply Common Sense, Police Priorities, and Police Hierarchies.
4. Don't jump to conclusions. Don't make assumptions. Weigh all the facts before making a decision.
5. Make your decision.
5. Review your decision -- do they make sense within the framework of the three fundamentals?
6. Trust your instincts.

The majority of police departments set clear parameters for many types of situations. But, because of unforeseen situations officers face on a daily

basis, these parameters cannot cover every possible type of situation. That is why law enforcement agencies test your practical judgment and common sense so intensely. It is also why it is so important to know the priority lists used by police agencies before you take the written test. You must know what they consider the order of importance before you can successfully answer police situational questions.

With careful consideration and thought, you can bring these three defining fundamentals to play in your preparation for police situational test questions. You can develop your police mindset and learn to think like a police officer.

About the Author

Discover the three reasons why 70% of all police applicants fail the police written exam...and get your free no obligation report: "How To Pass The Police Polygraph." Yours free for visiting [Police Exam Strategies](#).

Source: www.isnare.com

Source: <http://articles.exospy.com>