

# Law Enforcement Interviewing

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. Review potential questions- practice and rehearse
2. Get good sleep and eat breakfast
3. Arrive early
4. Bring a copy of your resume
5. Dress nice, preferably a business suit
6. Greet recruiters with a smile and firm handshake
7. Exhibit confidence, not arrogance
8. Maintain eye contact and sit up straight

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

The interview panel will be looking for *honest, integrity, confidence and communication*. There are generally 4 phases of an interview: introduction, open-ended questions, hypothetical questions, and the closing. Answer all questions truthfully and to the best of your ability. Speak clearly and at the appropriate volume.

### Introduction

Review of your application/resume

### Open-ended Questions

1. **What do you know about our agency?** Do your research! On-line, employer files.
2. **What motivated you to apply?** Talk about why you wanted to apply with this specific agency, what you like about them/philosophy/mission.
3. **Why did you choose a career in law enforcement?** Investigative, good morals, protecting others, etc.
4. **Have you applied to any other agencies?** It is okay to say yes. Elaborate that you are determined to get into law enforcement and have a back-up plan.
5. **What are your career goals?** Perhaps refer to a specific career track. Ex: deputy officer, senior officer, specialized team, management.
6. **What qualities do you have that makes you a good candidate?** Talk about your strengths. Try to match them up with what the recruiters are looking for.
7. **Name something that you need to improve on (a weakness)?** Name a quality and follow it up with how you have been working to improve on it. Ex: computer skills, public speaking, second language.
8. **How many speeding tickets have you received?** They are looking for self-control and obeying of the law. You may need to explain some ex: family emergency.
9. **Have you ever been arrested?** Be honest. Explain the situation and outcome. They might want details. They are looking for habitual deviant behavior. They want to know if this was something you did regularly, but never got caught until then.
10. **Do you drink alcohol?** It is okay to say yes. They are looking for self control and moderation.
11. **Have you ever used an illegal drug?** Be honest and admit any previous use. Covering up or lying could be grounds for dismissal long after you've been hired.
12. **Do you have any substantial debt?** A car, home and student loans normally don't count unless you are in default. Disclose those items, but concentrate more on credit cards. High balances may make you more susceptible to bribes.
13. **Any medical restrictions?** A disease, condition, or injury that would affect high intensity physical duties.

### Hypothetical Questions

These will be hypothetical or situational type questions to test your logical reasoning and see how you react in a certain situation. They usually test your *judgment, integrity, supervision, and use of force*. After you answer, the panel might probe to why you answered that way or as to why you didn't answer a different way. Stay Calm! It doesn't mean that you were wrong. They want to know how well you stand up to pressure. Defend your answer and explain your reasoning.

### Judgment

**1. You and your partner are driving a dangerous prisoner to jail. On the side of the road, there appears to be a serious 3-car accident. What would you do?**

Should you stop to help or continue driving? Since the prisoner is dangerous, you should probably continue driving. Ensure them that you would call in for medical assistance.

**2. You are driving down a street and see a man that has a felony warrant. At the same time you hear a loud scream one block over. You are not sure if it is a group of kids playing or a scream for help. What would you do?**

Select the answer that portrays the most immediate danger. In this case, it would probably be the screams. The man with the warrant can be picked up later.

### Integrity

**1. During a drug search a large amount of money is found. You see your partner pocket a wad of cash. What would you do?**

Ask for your share or report it? Talk to your partner about what you saw. Try to convince them to put the money back. If your partner won't comply, report what you saw to your supervisor.

**2. You suspect drunk driving and pull a car over. It turns out to be one of your friends. What would you do?**

Would you handle your duties or give your friend a break? Convey that your duties come first. Try to get another officer to handle the situation. If not, handle the situation routinely and fairly.

### Supervision

**1. You have been planning a weekend trip with your family for over a month. Right before you are about to leave, your supervisor calls and asks you to work that weekend. What would you do?**

Don't answer your phone? Lie and tell your supervisor you are already on the road? This weighs the importance of family vs. work. Tell your supervisor about your plans. Ask if another officer can work instead. If not, offer to work the weekend.

**2. You have been with the department for 5 years and would like to move into a specialized unit. Everyone else in your office has been promoted expect you. What would you do?**

Talk with your supervisor. Go over your accomplishments, achievements, and commendations. Express your interest in an advancement opportunity and look for openings.

### Use of force

**1. You are driving and see a purse snatching. The two are struggling and the man begins to hit the woman. What would you do?**

You might want to call for back up. Get out and order the man to let go. The situation may require you to chase, pepper-spray or arrest the man. Use appropriate means of force.

**2. You and a team pull up to arrest a man and he begins shooting. What would you do?**

Seek cover! Return fire. When safe, radio for assistance.

### Closing

1. You will want to create a list of questions that you have for the panel. Here are some samples.

1. What is the next step in the process?
2. Do you know how many UTSA students have been successful in completing their co-op?
3. How many of those went onto the academy?
4. What types of assignments are given to interns?

2. Thank the panel for their time and consideration

3. Ask for business cards

4. Follow-up with a thank you letter to each panel member