

# **NEW JERSEY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

## **2017 SHERIFF'S OFFICER CAPTAIN EXAM**

### **ORIENTATION GUIDE**

**\*Please Note: The year listed on the orientation guide refers to the year the exam will take place. This guide applies both to candidates from the current administration and make-up candidates from an earlier administration who will be tested in 2017.**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) has prepared this supplemental orientation guide for promotional candidates who will participate in the 2017 Sheriff's Officer Captain examination. The information in this booklet is designed to help candidates better understand the testing process and the types of questions they will encounter on the Sheriff's Officer Captain examination. We encourage candidates to review this guide and to take advantage of all opportunities to prepare for the examination.

## II. PRE-EXAM INFORMATION

### A. Date and Location

The tentative plan is to administer the Sheriff's Officer Captain examination in May 2017. However, in the event there are difficulties scheduling the examination for any unforeseen reason, the examination date may change. A specific test date will not be determined until approximately mid-March, once test centers have confirmed their availability. Candidate exam notices will be mailed two to three weeks prior to the test date and will confirm the test date, report time, and location.

### B. What Candidates SHOULD Bring to the Exam

Candidates arriving to the test center should have their notification card and a valid photo identification. Candidates arriving at the test center without their notification card should report directly to Room A with their photo ID, so that the center supervisor can issue them a new card. Candidates arriving at the test center without a valid photo ID **WILL NOT** be admitted to the exam. Candidates are permitted to bring writing instruments (highlighters, pens, and pencils) for use during the exam.

C. What Candidates Should NOT Bring to the Exam

With the threat of high-tech cheating on the rise, possession of personal communication devices such as cell phones, BlackBerrys, 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 CSC is not responsible for any personal items.

D. ADA Policy

Candidates who require special accommodations for this exam should check off the “ADA Assistance” box on the “Preferences” tab of their online application. This includes candidates who are requesting accommodations for the first time, as well as candidates who are already on file with the CSC as being approved for accommodations. Candidates with a first-time accommodation request will be contacted regarding the next step in being approved for ADA assistance. Candidates who are already on file as being approved for ADA assistance will receive confirmation and further information.

Anyone who receives their test notice but has not yet been contacted about their accommodations for this exam, or is not sure that their accommodation needs are in place for this exam, should contact Marty Berrien at (609) 292-4144, extension 1991001.

E. Make-up Policy

According to the New Jersey Administrative Code 4A:4-2.9(c), make-up examinations for public safety open competitive and promotional examinations may only be authorized for the following reasons:

- Death in the candidate’s immediate family;
- Error by the Civil Service Commission or Appointing Authority;
- When required for certain persons returning from military service (see N.J.A.C. 4A:4-4.6A); or
- A catastrophic health condition or injury, which shall be defined as either (1) a life-threatening condition or combination of conditions or (2) a period of disability required by the candidate’s mental or physical health or the health of the candidate’s fetus which requires the care of a physician who provides a medical verification of the need for the candidate’s absence from work for 60 or more days.

**Make-up requests, with supporting documentation, must be submitted in writing within five days of receipt of the test notification.** However, in situations involving an illness, death, or natural disaster that occurs on or immediately before the test date, a request for make-up must be made in writing no later than five days after the test date. Written requests for make-up examinations should be mailed to: Public Safety Make-up Unit, Civil Service Commission, P.O. Box 310, Trenton, NJ 08625-0310.

All make-up requests based on medical grounds must include a New Jersey Civil Service Commission Medical Authorization Form for Make-up Examinations (DPF-728). This form can be obtained from our website at <http://www.state.nj.us/csc/about/publications/forms/pdf/dpf-728.pdf> or by contacting the CSC's Information Center at (609) 292-4144.

Additionally, your treating physician must provide a separate detailed letter containing a diagnosis and statement clearly indicating why your physical condition will prevent you from taking the examination as scheduled. This letter should include the date the injury/illness began, the date of your last office visit, and the earliest date you can take the test. Information on your leave time from work because of your illness/injury should also be included. The documentation must be on official letterhead, written in layman's terms and legible. If insufficient, untimely, or illegible information is provided, your request will be denied.

F. Examination Information for Make-up Candidates

Because of concerns regarding loss of examination security due to the illicit discussion and/or dissemination of test content, the make-up examination for this announcement may 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.

### **III. EXAM INFORMATION**

#### **A. Exam Development**

A job analysis was conducted to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to perform the job of Sheriff's Officer Captain. 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, Sheriff's Officer Captain ranked each work component in terms of its importance. Examination questions will relate to those work components that were determined to be most critical. The critical work areas identified during the job analysis process are as indicated below, and will be utilized as a basis for the development of the forthcoming examination:

- Supervision
- Written Communication
- Interpersonal Relations
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Arrest Procedures
- New Jersey Title 2C
- Search Procedures
- New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines

#### **B. Examination Format**

The Sheriff's Officer Captain exam will consist of an essay and short answer format. The essays and short answers will involve the review of several scenarios related to the duties of a Sheriff's Officer Captain. Candidates will be given a set amount of time to complete the essays and short answers. The responses will be hand-written.

C. Potential Source Material

The following sources will be used by the Civil Service Commission to develop test questions for this examination:

New Jersey Title 2C

New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines

Management and Supervision of Law Enforcement Personnel – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

Donald J. Schroeder & Frank Lombardo

LexisNexus

ISBN 978-1-4224-9151-5

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

#### IV. EXAM ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

##### A. Late Policy

Candidates should plan their route to the test center in advance of the test date as soon as the test location is made available. Candidates are encouraged to arrive early, since candidates arriving late will **NOT** be admitted to the exam.

#### V. POST-EXAM INFORMATION

##### A. Explanation of Exam Results and Promotions

A candidate's final score (and rank) on the promotional list consists of two weighted parts: the test score and the seniority score, which is calculated by the Appointing Authority.

The results from this exam will be available after the receipt and review of all exam appeals. Candidates should **NOT** call the CSC for their scores. Candidates will receive their exam results in the mail.

If you pass the exam, your name will go on a promotional list ranked by your final score (a composite of your essay 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 CSC for up to one additional year.

When your appointing authority (hiring agency) notifies CSC that it wants to fill vacancies, the CSC 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, CSC 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.

It must be noted that 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.

B. Review and Appeal Information

At the test center before the exam begins, candidates will be given a review form that explains the specific dates and times that will be made available for reviewing the exam. Candidates will be permitted to leave the test center with the review form so they can reference the information contained on it, in order to schedule an appointment if they choose to do so. Appointments are made on a first-come, first-served basis, until all appointments are booked.

Any objection to the manner in which the examination was administered must be made in writing immediately following the completion of the examination, by completing a Test Administration Comment/Appeal Form prior to leaving the examination center. This form can be obtained from the Center Supervisor. No appeal relating to the manner in which the examination was administered shall be permitted after the test date.

Candidates should be aware of the new fee schedule for item, scoring, and administrative appeals. The fee schedule can be accessed via the CSC website (<http://www.state.nj.us/csc/authorities/faq/appeals/>).

## VI. STUDY TIPS

### A. Descriptions and Study Tips for Different Learning Styles

Research suggests that not all people learn the same way. With so much information available in the source material, it may help you to consider which learning style best matches your abilities, so you can determine the most effective way for you to study the material. While this is not an exhaustive description of the different learning styles, consider the following information and the links that follow, as one possible way to determine which study method is best for you.

#### i. *The Visual Learning Style*

##### Description

You learn best when information is presented visually and in a written language format. In a classroom setting, you benefit from instructors who use the blackboard (or overhead projector) to list the essential points of a lecture, or who provide you with an outline to follow along with during lecture. You benefit from information obtained from textbooks and class notes. You tend to like to study by yourself in a quiet room. You often see information "in your mind's eye" when you are trying to remember something.

##### Study Tips

- Find a quiet place to study, away from noise and visual distractions.
- Preview the study material by looking at the table of contents, headings, and pictures before starting to read.
- Write symbols or key words in the margins of your textbook or manual.
- Use highlighters in different colors to emphasize and organize important concepts.
- Write down key points and details that you want to remember.
- When given information in charts, write out explanations in your own words.
- Organize your notes in outline format, including main headings or categories and notes below each. As an alternative, you can organize your notes by using charts, graphs, pictures, or diagrams.
- Make flashcards of important points and key terms. Limit the amount of information placed on each card.
- Visualize key concepts in your head.

## ii. *The Auditory Learning Style*

### Description

You learn best when information is auditory (presented in an oral language format). In a classroom setting, you benefit from listening to lecture and participating in group discussions. You also benefit from obtaining information from audio tape. When trying to remember something, you can often "hear" the way someone told you the information, or the way you previously repeated it out loud. You learn best when interacting with others in a listening/speaking exchange.

### Study Tips

- Before reading, look through headings and pictures and say out loud what you think each section may cover.
- While reading your notes or textbook, read out loud whenever possible.
- Take pauses while reading to summarize aloud what you have read.
- Record yourself reading your notes or textbook, then play it back and listen to it repeatedly. Or, listen to audiobooks.
- Study in a group or with a friend. Discuss the material.
- Make up flashcards and read the material out loud as you memorize it.
- Ask a friend to help quiz you on test material.

## iii. *The Tactile-Kinesthetic Learning Style*

### Description

You learn best when physically engaged in a "hands on" activity. In the classroom, you benefit from a lab setting where you can manipulate materials to learn new information. You learn best when you can be physically active in the learning environment. You benefit from instructors who encourage in-class demonstrations, "hands on" student learning experiences, and field work outside the classroom.

### Study Tips

- Before reading, look over the table of contents, headings, etc., to get a feel for the book or manual.
- Write notes, draw pictures, or make charts as you are reading or listening to study material.
- Take short (3-5 minute) breaks during your study time.
- Walk around while reading or memorizing information.
- It may be helpful to move while learning (e.g., tap a pen, squeeze a "stress relief" object, swing an arm, kick a leg, etc.).
- Listen to audio recordings of study material while working out.
- Type notes on the computer. Incorporate tables and graphics as needed.

- Consider studying in a lounge chair rather than at a desk.
- Background music (baroque) may be helpful while trying to learn new material.
- Reading material through colored transparencies may help with focus.
- While reading, point to or trace the words as you go along.
- Paraphrase the material being learned.
- When possible/appropriate, act out what is being learned. If this is not possible, visualize the concept in your mind.
- Find real-life examples of concepts being learned.
- Write important information several times to help with memory.

### **Sources:**

Barsch, J. (1991). Barsch Inventory.

<http://faculty.valenciacollege.edu/koverhiser/Learningstyles.htm>

Berghuis, A.J. (2001). Abiator Online Education.

Jester, C., Miller, S. (2000). DVC Online Learning Styles Survey.

<http://www.dvc.edu/enrollment/counseling/lss/>

Lazear, D. Eight Ways of Teaching.

Littlefield, J. (2010). Smart Study Strategies.

<http://distancelearn.about.com/od/studyskills/a/studysmart.htm>

Lynch, M. (2003). Learning Style Survey.

NJEA. Learning Style Inventory.

<http://www.njea.org/pdfs/LearningStyleInventory.pdf>.

B. Understanding and Reducing Test Anxiety

Sheriff's officers face a level of stress on a daily basis that is unlike almost any other career. However, most officers would prefer to deal with the stress involved in maintaining safety within the facility than to deal with the anxiety caused by sitting for an exam that impacts their chances of being promoted. This portion of the Sheriff's Officer Captain orientation guide attempts to assist candidates in recognizing some of the causes of test anxiety and provides strategies on how to reduce it. Test anxiety is a condition in which a person experiences worry or distress before, during, or after a test or other assessment, to such an extent that it causes poor performance or interferes with normal learning. Because of its effect on performance, it is important that candidates recognize the potential symptoms of test anxiety and take steps to reduce it.

It is normal for any candidate taking an exam to feel a certain degree of nervousness. However, true test anxiety can be a serious threat to a candidate's preparation and performance on the exam. Test anxiety can manifest itself in psychological ways such as "blanking," having difficulty concentrating, and experiencing negative thoughts, as well as physical ways, such as nausea, headache, sweating, and muscle tension. Candidates can attempt to reduce the effects of test anxiety and increase their chances of maximizing their performance on the exam by focusing on three steps: be prepared, get organized, and practice.

*i. Be Prepared*

Preparation begins with recognizing and confronting negative thoughts you may have about your past exam performance and your chances for scoring well on the upcoming Sheriff's Officer Captain exam. Negative thoughts can influence your preparation for the exam by affecting your study habits, breaking your concentration, and causing you to second-guess your abilities. One strategy to reduce these thoughts is to take out a sheet of paper and create two columns. On the left side of the paper, you will honestly assess your attitudes and write down every negative thought you have about the prospects of taking a written exam. Next, on the right side of the paper, you will write a positive thought that counteracts the negative thought. For example:

Negative Thought

I always do poorly on tests.

If I don't pass this test, I'm a failure.

I can't possibly know everything that will be on the exam.

Positive Thought

I will be more prepared than I have been in the past.

I'm going to pass, but if I don't I can still bounce back.

I know where my knowledge is strong and will focus on the areas in which I am unfamiliar.

Honestly assessing your feelings and concerns will help you begin to change your attitudes and create a positive mindset.

Another strategy to prepare for the exam is to gather as much information about the exam as possible. Consulting the Sheriff's Officer Captain job specification (<http://info.csc.state.nj.us/jobspec/03696@.htm>) and reading over this orientation guide thoroughly will help you familiarize yourself with all aspects of the exam. Information provided in this guide will tell you, in general, what topics will be covered and what resources you can use to learn about the topics. This is a vital step in preparation for the exam, because knowing the extent of information covered by the exam will assist you in organizing a study plan.

## ii. *Get Organized*

Being organized in your study habits is the next step in reducing test anxiety and increasing your performance on the exam. After you have determined from the information available to you, the topics to be covered on the exam, you need to honestly assess which areas you are strong and which areas require more attention. You may find it helpful to create a study plan or schedule that defines what you will need to study, what resources you'll need to compile, and the amount of time you will spend on each topic. When creating a study plan you must remember to make it realistic for your current lifestyle. Candidates with responsibilities, such as family obligations, cannot expect to spend all their off-duty hours studying. Candidates should also make an attempt to avoid changing their normal routine in order to focus all their energy only on studying. Although you may find that you need to make some sacrifices in order to put in the proper amount of time studying, it should not be at the expense of eliminating your other interests and obligations. Some candidates believe that if they skip meals or stay up late, they are gaining extra hours of study time. Research suggests, however, that altering your normal sleeping and eating patterns, as a result of trying to spend all your spare time studying, does not have the benefits you would expect. Physical health is as important as emotional health in reducing anxiety.

Finally, remember that studying involves more than highlighting words in a book and memorizing definitions. When establishing your study plan or schedule, your goal should be to have a full understanding of terms and concepts. You will know you have a full understanding of the information when you can define a given term in your own words and discuss why it is important. Similarly, concepts are fully understood when you are able to take two related concepts and discuss their similarities and differences.

### iii. *Practice*

In some cases, candidates will know others who are taking the exam. Although many people prefer to study on their own, coming together to review in a group can also be helpful. During this review, each member of the group can come with prepared questions based on the source material. This strategy has the benefit of ensuring that you are reading the material critically enough to develop questions from it, while at the same time, practicing the routine of sitting down and answering questions prepared by another person.

During the days leading up to the exam, you should focus on reviewing the material you have already studied. In order to reduce test anxiety on the day of the exam, you should make every attempt to get a good night's sleep so that you can arrive at the test center well rested. Plan to arrive early, so that you are not rushing into the test center with only minutes to spare before the exam. It is important to listen to the monitor's instructions carefully and ask questions if you are unsure of anything that has been said. Be aware of how much time you have to complete the exam and the fact that, in most cases, you will be responsible for keeping track of your own time. Remember that anxiety is fed by a fear of the unknown. The more you do to prepare prior to the exam, the better chance you will have at performing at your highest level.

Sources:

<http://www.studygs.net/tstprp8.htm>

[https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/reducing\\_test\\_anxiety.pdf](https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/reducing_test_anxiety.pdf)

### C. Technical Vocabulary List

While this exam is not intended to assess your vocabulary skills, because of the nature of the concepts covered, a certain level of familiarity with technical language is necessary. The following is a short list of some terms that may appear in the source material and exam. It may be helpful to review this list and look up any other words you are unfamiliar with when reviewing this orientation guide and the source material.

ASSERT	-	To state or express positively
ACCOUNTABLE	-	Answerable; obliged to accept responsibility
AGGRIEVED	-	Wronged; deprived of legal rights or claims
AMBIGUOUS	-	Liable to more than one interpretation; uncertain
APPELLANT	-	Of or relating to an appeal
APPLICABLE	-	Relevant; applies to
APPREHEND	-	To take into custody
CAUSAL	-	Relating to, involving, or being a cause
CIRCUMVENT	-	To go around; bypass
COERCION	-	Act of bringing about by threat of force
COLLABORATE	-	To work together; cooperate
COLLATERAL	-	Security for payment of debt
COMPEL	-	To force; make necessary
COMPETENT	-	Properly qualified
CONSECUTIVE	-	Following one after the other in order; without interruption
CONSTITUTES	-	To make up, establish formally
CONSUMATION	-	Act of bringing to completion
DEMEANOR	-	Behavior towards others
DESIGNATED	-	Indicated, marked, pointed out; to select for duty
DISSEMINATE	-	Distribute or spread information
DIVERSE	-	Having variety in form; unlike
ENDEAVOR	-	To make an effort toward a given end
EXHAUSTIVE	-	Comprehensive, thorough
FACILITATE	-	To make easier
FRAUDULENT	-	Deceitful
HARASS	-	To irritate or torment persistently
ILLICIT	-	Not permitted by custom or law
IMMINENT	-	Ready to take place; impending
IMPEDE	-	To interfere or slow the progress of
IMPLEMENT	-	To put into effect; carry out
INFECTIOUS	-	Capable of causing infection
INFER	-	To conclude from evidence
INFRACTION	-	A violation
INITIATE	-	To begin
INSUBORDINATE	-	Disobedient

LIABLE	-	Legally responsible
MUTUAL	-	Directed and received in equal amount
NARRATIVE	-	A written account of events
PECUNIARY	-	Of or relating to money; requiring the payment of money
PRECEDE	-	To go before
PROHIBIT	-	To forbid; prevent
PROLONG	-	To lengthen in duration, scope, or extent
PROMULGATE	-	To put into effect by formal public announcement
PURSUANT	-	In accordance with
RANDOM	-	Having no specific pattern or objective
RECIDIVISM	-	A tendency to return to criminal habits and activities
REPRIMAND	-	A severe formal disapproval
SUBORDINATE	-	Placed in a lower rank; subject to the authority of a superior
SUPERSEDE	-	To replace; to take the place of
SURVEILLANCE	-	Close observation of a person or group

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

This orientation guide was designed to help familiarize candidates with aspects of the Sheriff's Officer Captain exam, as well as provide 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 exam. We hope that this orientation guide has been helpful to you. GOOD LUCK!