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# Police Captain 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 2018.**

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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 2018 Police Captain exam. The information in this booklet and the General Multiple-Choice Study Guide (available via CSC's website at <https://www.nj.gov/csc/seekers/jobs/orientation/>) is designed to help candidates better understand the testing process and the types of questions they will encounter on the Police Captain exam. The exam is designed on the basis of information obtained from a job analysis of the Police Captain position. The exam for promotion to Police Captain will consist of two components: a Written Multiple-Choice Test and an Oral Assessment Exercise. We encourage candidates to carefully review this guide along with the General Multiple-Choice Study Guide and to take advantage of any and all opportunities to prepare for the exam.

Please note that no study group has been involved in the development or review of CSC exams, and at no time has any exam material been provided to such groups. Additionally, the CSC is not responsible for any claims made by study groups or the manner in which they represent themselves for advertisement purposes.

## II. PRE-EXAM INFORMATION

### A. Date and Location

The timeframe to administer the Police Captain written exam is October 2018. In the event there are difficulties scheduling the exam for any unforeseen reason, this timeframe may change. A specific test date will not be determined until test centers have confirmed their availability. Once the specific test date has been determined, it will be posted on the Public Safety News webpage at <https://www.nj.gov/csc/about/news/safety/index.html>. 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.

You will be notified at a later date to appear for the oral component of the Police Captain exam, which will tentatively take place in December 2018. Once again, 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. Also, after the specific test date has been determined, it will be posted on the Public Safety News webpage at <https://www.nj.gov/csc/about/news/safety/index.html>.

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.

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

Candidates arriving at the test center should have their notification card and a valid photo I.D. Candidates arriving at the test center without their notification card should report directly to Room A with their photo I.D., so that the center supervisor can issue them a new card. Candidates arriving at the test center without a valid photo I.D. **WILL NOT** be admitted to the exam. Answer sheets for CSC multiple-choice exams are scored electronically, so candidates should bring No. 2 pencils to the exam. In addition, candidates are permitted to bring highlighters to 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 electronic devices, such as cell phones, pagers, tablets, PDAs, or any photographic/recording equipment, is prohibited at test centers. Candidates who are seen with these devices in the test center, even in a power-off mode, will be disqualified. 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 not be brought inside the test center. The Civil Service Commission is not responsible for any personal items.

### D. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Candidates who require special assistance or ADA accommodations for this exam must check the corresponding box on the “Preferences” tab of their online application, regardless of whether or not they have previously been approved for accommodations with CSC in the past. Candidates who are indicating a need for accommodations for the first time will subsequently be contacted with further instructions.

Upon receipt of their exam notice with the test date, time, and location information, candidates who are already on file with CSC as being approved for accommodations must call (609) 292-4144, extension 1991001, in order to discuss the specifics of their accommodation needs for this exam.

### 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:

1. Debilitating 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;
2. Death in the candidate’s immediate family;
3. A candidate’s wedding which cannot be reasonably changed;
4. Military service;
5. Error by the Civil Service Commission or Appointing Authority.

**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: NJCSC Make-Up Exam Unit, 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 for Make-Up Examinations form (DPF-728), completed by the treating physician. This form can be obtained from our website at <https://www.nj.gov/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. Exam Information for Make-Up Candidates

Because of exam security concerns relating to the illicit discussion and/or dissemination of test content, the make-up exam for this announcement may not be identical to the original exam. It will, however, match the content specifications of the original exam as closely as possible. This means that the make-up exam will measure, in equal proportion, the same knowledge and/or abilities that were measured by the original exam. It will also be administered and scored in the same manner as the original exam. If a different exam 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 and abilities that are necessary to perform the duties of a Police Captain. A job analysis is the process of critically examining the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) required to perform successfully on the job. As a part of this job analysis, staff from the Civil Service Commission visited various police departments throughout the state. They gathered information about the job through interviews and surveys of on-the-job activities of incumbent (permanent) Police Captains. Based on the results, critical KSAs were identified and considered for inclusion in the exam. In order to best measure these KSAs, the Police Captain exam will be divided into two parts: a multiple-choice portion and oral portion.

#### B. Multiple-Choice Portion

The written portion of the exam will be in a multiple-choice format. Candidates will be provided with a question preceded by a statement, situation, or other stimulus, such as a brief scenario. Each multiple-choice question will have four choices from which candidates will select one answer that BEST addresses the problem or situation. Answer choices will be labeled as (a), (b), (c), and (d). Candidates must mark the answer they've selected on their standardized answer sheet. This is done by completely filling in the appropriate space on their answer sheet that designates the letter that corresponds to their answer choice. No credit will be awarded for any answer that is not properly marked on the answer sheet. Candidates should mark only one answer for each question, while making sure to erase cleanly any answer changes. Stray marks should be avoided. There will be no penalties for wrong answers, meaning points will not be deducted for wrong answers. Therefore, it is in the candidate's best interest to answer all questions. In answering all questions, candidates are to assume the role of a Police Captain and should choose the BEST answer from the options provided.

Prior to starting the exam, candidates will be informed as to the total number of items to answer and the total time allotted to complete the test. Candidates should budget their time so that they can respond to all questions within the allotted time. No warnings will be given as to how much time is left.

Test questions related to this portion of the exam will be based upon, but not limited to: the application of N.J.S.A. 2C, New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines/Directives, and Case Law; the candidate's knowledge of principles relating to effective supervision, management, employee evaluation, discipline, training, etc.; and the application of the ability to read and interpret regulations, analyze information, and use proper judgment. The results from the written test component will account for approximately 52% of the candidate's final test score.

### C. Oral Portion

For the oral portion of the exam, candidates will be presented with information and questions about one or more situations taking place. Candidates will individually provide an oral response to the questions to an exam monitor, who will record the response using audio and video recorders. The candidates' recorded responses will be scored at a later time.

The administration of the oral assessment exercise may require that candidates be "sequestered." When a candidate population is large, concerns often arise as to how the entire population can be tested on the same day without compromising the integrity of the exam. The only way that the Civil Service Commission can manage this is by holding candidates after they have been tested, in an area apart from non-tested candidates. This prevents the two groups from coming in contact with each other. Usually, this means that all candidates will be at the test center for several hours, even though the actual testing process may only take one hour. In such circumstances, candidates are encouraged to bring non-perishable bag lunches/snacks/beverages to the test center. The test center may not have refrigerators, vending machines, or any food service available. Candidates' lunches will be collected during the check-in process and then returned upon completion of the test. Candidates with medical/dietary concerns must provide for their own needs; no one will be permitted to leave the test center until completion of the testing and sequestering processes. Candidates with special situations/ADA concerns must contact the CSC's Information Center at (609) 292-4144, extension 1991001 upon receipt of their exam notification, in order to discuss their special needs.

Test questions related to this portion of the exam will be based upon, but not limited to: oral communication, problem solving/decision making, and technical supervision. The results of the oral test component will account for approximately 48% of the candidate's final test score.

#### D. Potential Source Material

While preparing for the exam, candidates may find it helpful to consult the following sources of information:

Constitution of the United States and Amendments  
Past and Current United States and New Jersey Court Decisions (Case Law)  
N.J.S.A. 2C  
Motor Vehicle and Traffic Laws Title 39  
New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines and Directives  
New Jersey School Search Policy Manual

In addition to these sources, the CSC will utilize the following text to develop test questions related to police supervision and management:

Law Enforcement Management: What Works and What Doesn't  
By Michael Carpenter and Roger Fulton  
Looseleaf Law Publications, Inc © 2010, [www.looseleaflaw.com](http://www.looseleaflaw.com)  
ISBN 13: 978-1-932777-90-1

Prior to the posting of this guide, the publisher indicated sufficient quantities of this title, which is available in both a printed and electronic format. Candidates should be able to buy this text directly from the publisher or through another retail source. If there are any problems regarding the availability of this text, please contact the publisher at the website noted. [The Civil Service Commission will not be responsible for the quantity of books available.]

Please note that the development of test items IS NOT limited to the sources provided in this orientation guide. Candidates are encouraged to consult any additional source material they feel will aid them in their preparation for the Police Captain exam.



## IV. POST-EXAM INFORMATION

### A. Explanation of Scoring Process

*Multiple-Choice Portion:* The written exam will be scored electronically. The raw score will be based on the number of correct responses.

*Oral Portion:* A candidate's score on the oral assessment exercise will be based on how well the candidate handles the situation(s) presented and how well the candidate communicates orally. A candidate's performance will be evaluated using pre-established rating scales developed by Subject Matter Experts in the police field.

*Combining Test Scores:* The written exam component is worth approximately 52% of the overall test score; the oral component is worth approximately 48%. After the administration of BOTH the written and oral exam portions, test scores on both of these components shall be combined. A passing score will then be established based upon the combined test score. Those candidates who attain scores at or above the passing point will have their seniority added to their score. The total test score is weighted at 70% of the final average. A candidate's seniority score is weighted at 30% of the final average. The "weighted" test and seniority scores are then combined to determine the final average and rank on the eligible list.

### B. Review and Appeal Information

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

Candidates should be aware that all appeals pertaining to test administration and/or test content are subject to a \$20 processing fee, paid by check or money order to NJ CSC. Persons who have veteran status are exempt from this fee.

*Multiple-Choice Portion:* At the test center before the written 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. During the review, candidates will have up to 30 minutes to look through a clean copy of the exam booklet and a copy of the key sheet containing the correct answers.

*Oral Portion:* At the time of list issuance, candidates will be sent a review form that notes the specific dates and times that will be made available for review. Appointments are made on a first-come, first-served basis, until all appointments are booked. During the review, candidates will have up to 30 minutes to view their videotaped response and look over scoring justifications and calculations. Candidates will then have up to 20 minutes to review their answer sheet from the written exam, to ensure proper credit was awarded for their answer choices.

### C. Explanation of Seniority

A candidate's final score (and rank) on a New Jersey Civil Service Commission Police promotional list consists of two weighted parts: the test score and the seniority score.

The seniority score combines two elements. The first, length of service, is the time from the regular appointment date (of the eligible title) to the closing date of the announcement, minus the time spent on suspensions, layoffs, and regular leaves of absence without pay (not including military, educational, gubernatorial appointments, personal sick, disability, family, voluntary furlough, furlough extensions, and to fill elective office) on a day-for-day deduction. The second element, record of service, adds a maximum of ten points to the seniority score. The ten points are reduced by disciplinary suspensions up to five years from the closing date.

For the Police Captain promotional exam, seniority is weighted at 30% and test score is weighted at 70%. Seniority is combined with the test score to produce the final average score.

### D. Calculation of Seniority Score

To a base score of 70.000, one point is added for each year of eligible service up to a maximum of 15. The maximum score for the length of service component is 85.000.

Ten additional points are given for record of service. The record of service component is reduced by disciplinary suspensions occurring within five years of the closing date, by the following rules:

- .0025 times the number of days suspended, up to three years from the closing date, and
- .00125 times the number of days suspended, from 3 years to 5 years from the closing date.

The maximum possible seniority score is 95.000.

### E. Explanation of Exam Results and Promotions

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

After the exam is scored, candidates will be ranked within their particular jurisdiction according to their final score (a composite of written exam score, oral exam score, and seniority score). Promotions to the level of Captain are made from a certified list based upon this ranking. Please Note: Promotional appointees are considered to be serving conditionally, pending resolution of all scoring appeals related to the exam.

## V. SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following five questions are examples of the types of questions that will appear on the upcoming exam. Please note that these are only sample items. The exam will contain different questions, although similar in structure and content. Answering these sample items correctly does not guarantee you the same success on your exam.

Question 1 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of N.J.S.A. 2C.

1. Samantha Smith speaks with your officers about an ex-boyfriend whom she believes has been stalking her. The offense of stalking requires the suspect to purposely and knowingly engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person, which would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or death to himself or an immediate family member. Course of conduct includes various types of contact repeatedly made by the suspect. According to N.J.S.A. 2C, "repeatedly," as related to stalking, is specifically defined as occurring on
  - (a) one or more occasions.
  - (b) two or more occasions.
  - (c) three or more occasions.
  - (d) four or more occasions.

Question 2 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of the NJ Attorney General Guidelines.

2. During roll call, two officers are debating what must be covered in their department's upcoming mandatory in-service training and they ask you to provide them with the correct information. According to the NJ Attorney General Guidelines, which type of in-service training is mandatory for all police officers, regardless of each individual's duties or assignments?
  - (a) Vehicular pursuit
  - (b) Hazardous materials
  - (c) Bloodborne pathogens
  - (d) First Aid refresher training

Question 3 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of effective employee evaluation techniques.

3. Your subordinate, Lieutenant Saunders, is due for his annual performance evaluation. Lieutenant Saunders has performed well over the last year, but there are a few areas in which you would like to see him improve. For your feedback to be effective, it is BEST for it to be
  - (a) general.
  - (b) personal.
  - (c) descriptive.
  - (d) universal.

Question 4 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' knowledge of effective disciplinary practices.

4. Captain Lovett saw Lieutenant James perform an unacceptable action and he decided to give Lieutenant James a simple warning. Which should Captain Lovett NOT include in his simple warning to Lieutenant James?
- (a) A description of the reason for the corrective procedure and its importance
  - (b) An explanation of the logic behind the department's rules about how a task should be performed
  - (c) A threat about what will happen if future mistakes are made
  - (d) An emphasis on the importance of all department members carrying out their duties in a consistent and uniform manner

Question 5 is an example of a test question designed to measure candidates' ability to read and interpret written material. For this question, an excerpt from a fictional department policy is followed by a question related to it.

5. Ride-Along Policy

Introduction

Unlike many jobs in today's society, the duties of a police officer are not easily described to persons outside the profession. Therefore, the purpose of allowing citizens to ride with police officers is to add to the public's understanding of the complexities involved in law enforcement and the many issues that are encountered daily. With this greater awareness of the police profession, it is hoped that relations will improve between the Anytown Police Department and the community.

A citizen named Joe Valentine participated in a ride-along last week. Which of these would provide the MOST evidence that the ride-along that he took part in served its stated purpose? Joe

- (a) has suggested to his daughter that she become a police officer.
- (b) has gained a deeper appreciation of how difficult the job of a police officer is.
- (c) agrees with the town's mayor that the number of police officers in their jurisdiction should be reduced.
- (d) is unsure of the skills and abilities needed for a police officer to do the job well.

## ANSWERS TO THE SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The correct answer to sample Question #1 is (b).

This is an example of a technical question based on the New Jersey Criminal Code 2C. According to 2C:12-10a(2), “repeatedly” means on two or more occasions. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

The correct answer to sample Question #2 is (a).

According to the New Jersey Attorney General Guideline on Mandatory In-Service Law Enforcement Training, all police officers are required to complete mandatory in-service training regarding vehicular pursuit. Options (b), (c), and (d) are all types of training that are either listed as mandatory due to a particular assignment, or are part of voluntary in-service training. Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.

The correct answer to sample Question #3 is (c).

This question should be analyzed from the perspective of a Police Captain and how to best conduct employee evaluations. As a supervisor, you should be descriptive in your evaluative feedback. Employees should not just be told that they did something effective or ineffective, but instead should also be told the reasons why their actions were or were not effective. Feedback should be impersonal (focused on the action and not the person); therefore, option (b) is incorrect. Options (a) and (d) are incorrect because this type of feedback will not provide employees with enough information as to how they should perform in the future. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

The correct answer to sample Question #4 is (c).

Again, consider this question from the perspective of a Police Captain. The question asks what should NOT be part of a simple warning given to a subordinate. Options (a), (b), and (d) are all appropriate to include as part of a minor disciplinary action, such as a simple warning. They are all instructional and constructive. While you would want to make the staff member aware of future consequences, you should not do this through the use of threats. There is a difference between cautioning/warning someone and threatening someone. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

The correct answer to sample Question #5 is (b).

The ability to correctly answer this question relies on being able to read and interpret the given portion of the fictional policy. The policy states, that “the purpose of allowing citizens to ride with police officers is to add to the public’s understanding of the complexities involved in law enforcement and the many issues that are encountered daily.” The correct answer for this question would be the option that best illustrates that this understanding has taken place. In option (a), it is unclear whether Joe’s understanding of the complexities of law enforcement has increased since the reason for why he is suggesting that his daughter become a police officer is not stated. Option (c) illustrates that the ride-along had the opposite effect of its stated purpose. Rather than valuing police officers and the work they do, Joe thinks that it is not necessary for the town to employ as many as it does. Option (d) also shows that the program did not have its desired effect as Joe seems no more informed about the job of the police officer than he was before taking part in the ride-along. Option (b), however, states that Joe has gained a deeper appreciation of how difficult the job of a police officer is. By appreciating how difficult the job is, he likely has gained some understanding as to how complex law enforcement is and the variety of problems that police officers encounter on the job. Therefore, option (b) provides the MOST evidence that the program’s purpose has been achieved and is the correct answer.

## 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 as one possible way to determine which study method is best for you.

#### 1. *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.

#### 2. *The Auditory Learning Style*

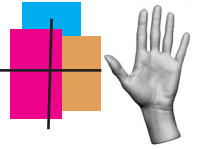


##### Description

You learn best when information is auditory (presented in an oral language format). In a classroom setting, you benefit from listening to lectures 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.



### 3. 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.
- Move while learning (e.g., tap a pen, squeeze a “stress relief” object, swing an arm, kick a leg).
- 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.
- Consider playing background music (baroque) while trying to learn new material.
- Consider reading material through colored transparencies in order to 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:**

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## B. Understanding and Reducing Test Anxiety

Police 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 responding to a call for service than to deal with the anxiety caused by sitting for an exam that impacts their chances of being promoted. This portion of the Police 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 "blinking," 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.

### **1. *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 Police 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 the areas where my knowledge is strong and I 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 Police Captain job specification through the webpage at [https://nj.gov/csc/seekers/jobs/announcements/title\\_search.html](https://nj.gov/csc/seekers/jobs/announcements/title_search.html) 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 information covered by the exam will assist you in organizing a study plan.

### **2. 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 in 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 will 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 solely 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 all 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.

### **3. Practice**

The final step in reducing test anxiety is to practice. While it is not possible to replicate the conditions you will encounter during the exam administration, there are strategies that you can use to simulate the skills you will need during the exam. For instance, during a multiple-choice exam, you may be sitting at a desk for several hours working on your exam. To prepare for this, it may help to block out a similar amount of uninterrupted time while you are studying. This can help you experience what it will be like to have to focus your attention for that period of time. Using the chapter review in a text book or other resource is often another way to test your knowledge, while also giving you the opportunity to practice reading and analyzing multiple-choice questions. 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 the night before, 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 you will be responsible for keeping track of your own time. Remember that, unless instructed otherwise, you are permitted to write in your test booklet.

As you proceed through the test, you may wish to circle key words or concepts that may be important in answering test questions, making sure to properly mark all answers on your answer sheet. Review each question carefully and select the BEST answer from the options given.

Remember that anxiety is fed by a fear of the unknown. The more you do to prepare before the exam, the better chance you will have at performing at your highest level.

Additional study tips are available in the General Multiple-Choice Exam Orientation Guide, which is available via the CSC's web site at <https://www.nj.gov/csc/seekers/jobs/orientation>.

#### Sources:

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

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

#### C. Tips for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

- Don't read too much into each question. Avoid imagining scenarios in which the answer could be true. In most cases, questions that appear to be "trick questions" are usually only tricky because they are not taken at face value. Determine the best answer using only the information supplied in the question, without making unwarranted assumptions. The correct answer is the one that works best for the situation described.
- Be sure to choose an answer that is directly related to the question being asked. Do not select an answer choice, even if it is a true or correct statement by itself, unless it specifically answers the question asked.
- The correct answer is the choice that contains the most exact or most complete information in response to the question. Some answer choices may be correct or true in part, but less exact or less complete than the "best" choice. An answer choice that is only partially correct, partially true, or true only under certain conditions should be considered an incorrect choice.
- Don't let more difficult questions affect your attitude and steal valuable time.
- Don't linger over questions you cannot answer. If you cannot decide on an answer choice, make your best guess and move on. However, if you must guess, try to eliminate as many clearly wrong choices as you can in order to make your guess from as few options as possible.

D. 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
ATTENUATED	Weakened or reduced, as in strength or value
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 o
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 Police 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!