

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Volume 5, Issue 1
First Quarter, 2007

Examination Preparation

What Should I Do?

There are several steps that may be taken to reduce your exam related stress. After being scheduled to take an exam, you may have many questions and begin feeling anxious about how you will do on the exam. Included in this article are some suggestions that may help to reduce your anxiety and nervousness leading up to the exam.

- 1.) Get information about the exam you will be taking so that you know what to expect. The exam announcement which is provided at the time you file your application includes a wealth of useful information including the exam type. The exam type indicates if the exam consists of multiple-choice, in-basket, performance, other or multiple components. The announcement also indicates what subject areas will be tested, for example mathematics, reading comprehension, memorization or others. If you have other questions or need clarification regarding the exam, see the announcement for a contact number you can call to obtain further information. Being informed and being knowledgeable of what to expect on test day may help to reduce stressors prior to and during the exam.
- 2.) Make sure you have enough time to complete the exam. Although there are time limits for completing exams, make sure you can stay for the entire time permitted. You may be able to find out in advance the time permitted to complete the exam. Use this to your benefit, and avoid scheduling other commitments within this time frame. You may need the entire time permitted to complete your exam. This will also help to prevent feeling rushed to complete your exam and help to prevent turning in an incomplete exam.
- 3.) Know what materials you will need to provide on test day. Bring your photo I.D. and your exam notice on test day. If you forget either of these items you will be admitted to the exam conditionally and may be required to provide proof of identification at a later date. In addition, some exams permit the use of a calculator. Bringing and using your own calculator may help to ease tension during the exam; you will not have to worry about using a calculator that you may not be familiar with or if there will be a calculator available for your use.
- 4.) Prepare in advance for personal considerations. If you wear eye glasses make sure they are with you on test day. Bring a watch so you can monitor the time and pace yourself during the exam. Dress in layers so you are comfortable during the exam; layering allows you to easily adjust if the room temperature is not comfortable for you. Try to get plenty of rest the night before the exam. Plan your food intake so you are not hungry or too full while taking the exam.

Inside this issue:

Examination Preparation	1
Test Taking Tips	2
Job Observations	2
Civil Service Commissioners	3
Did You Know?	3
Background and Drug Screening	3
New Commission Employee	3
Upcoming Tests	4
Meet Jennifer Hutchinson	4

"It takes time to succeed because success is merely the natural reward of taking time to do anything well." — Joseph Ross

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

Examination Preparation

- 5.) Know the exam location and get an early start on the date of the exam. The exam location may be unfamiliar to you, so getting a late start the morning of the exam or becoming lost on the way to the exam may be very disconcerting and cause a great deal of stress. It is recommended that you locate the facility where you will be tested and physically go to that location on a date prior to the exam. On the date of your test, be sure to get an early start in order to avoid being late due to unexpected delays.
- 6.) Study and practice prior to the exam. Find or make up practice exams or work on problems in the subject area you will be tested. Practice completing problems in a timed situation; this will simulate the testing environment. Identify your weak areas and work to improve prior to the test.

The examples listed in this article are a small sampling of tips which may help in reducing stress and exam related anxiety. Individuals must decide for themselves which tips will work best for them. For more information please refer to section labeled "Employment Tips" on the Civil Service Commission's website at www.csc.columbus.gov.

I Can't Make it to the Test THAT Day!!

If you receive a letter inviting you to a Civil Service examination and the test date you have been assigned conflicts with your schedule, read the letter to see if additional test dates are provided. If not, there will be a name and number on the letter to contact for questions



regarding the examination. This person can tell you if additional test dates are provided for the examination. The number of candidates will determine how many test dates are necessary. If there are multiple test dates, you

may test on an alternative test date as space is available on a first-come-first-served basis. Be sure to ask what time to report to the test site to be placed on the waiting list. Please note: the only test date guaranteed is the date for which you were originally scheduled; however, we are generally able to accommodate everyone.

Job Observations

The Civil Service Commission staff develops most of our examinations in-house. When we are developing or updating an exam, we meet with and observe City employees to get an understanding of their jobs. A Commission analyst may contact you in the future to schedule a job observation.

What does that mean?

That means that we will be gathering information for the test that we are developing. It is our goal to administer exams that mirror the position being tested so that those who do well on the test will succeed on the job. We will ask about your duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the job. Using this information, questionnaires, and input from the departments, the test will be reviewed, and potentially changed.

Is Civil Service reviewing my work?

Only in relation to the test, and the specification (the document that defines and describes the classification), so that we may gain a better understanding of what is required. For example, if the duties of the job have significantly changed since the last review, the test or specification may need to be modified. The determination of any changes would depend partly upon the frequency and importance of the duty. Another factor is the practicality in testing the duty.

Can I get a raise from an observation?

No. We are not reviewing the work of any individual; instead we are looking at all of the positions in a classification, and will make determinations based on the combined information. In fact, Civil Service does not determine the pay assigned to any classification.

So, if your supervisor tells you that Civil Service is coming, don't run the other way!! This is your opportunity to assist us in providing quality candidates for future openings in your classification. This person may be working next to you in the future and everyone wants this person to be qualified to do the job. We realize that no one knows what you do better than you and we appreciate your input and expertise!

Civil Service Commissioners

The Civil Service Commission is made up of three members who are appointed by the Mayor, with the approval of City Council. The Civil Service Commissioners are responsible for establishing the rules that govern the selection, classification, promotion, and termination of the classified employees of the City of Columbus and the Columbus Public Schools. Information about our Commissioners is available on our website at www.columbus.gov.

In 2006, the full Commission held 15 public meetings including 12 regular meetings and 3 special meetings. A total of 26 disciplinary appeals and 40 non-disciplinary appeals were ruled on by the Commission during 2006. In addition, the Commission decides on administrative review filed by applicants removed from the eligibility lists as a result of background checks. Last year, the Commission ruled on a total of 229 administrative reviews.



Did You Know?

- Over 19,000 applications for exams were received by the Commission in 2006.
- 72% of those applications were filed online.
- Over 24,000 job interest forms were received by the Commission in 2006.
- Over 19,000 job vacancy and test announcements were mailed out to individuals in the job interest database in 2006.

Background Check and Drug Screening

What happens after I get a job offer from the City?

The individual selected for the position after interviews will receive a conditional offer of employment. This offer is conditional based on passing the background check and drug screening. You will be contacted by the department or division human resources representative and scheduled for a drug screening which is required to occur within 24 hours. Results will be sent directly to the department.

At the same time, you will be scheduled for a background check. The City uses a system called WebCheck for this part of the process. WebCheck is a system set up through the state Attorney General's office to accomplish criminal background checks via the internet. All new employees and current City employees changing classifications are required to complete the background check, with the exception of temporary employees, employees under 18 years of age, and police officers and firefighters who go through their division's own background investigation. Some departments conduct the background checks themselves or you may need to come to the Commission offices. During the background check your fingerprints will be taken and then your information will be entered into the computer. The fingerprints and your personal information will be transmitted to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) to complete the criminal background check.

After passing the drug screening and the background check, the final step before beginning work is the new position overview. The human resources representative will schedule this appointment to complete all of the hiring paperwork. You will be asked to view a short video presentation which describes all of the steps you will complete and the paperwork required by the City and the Federal government. This video also covers important information about the residency requirement and your probationary period. Once you have completed the new position overview and the department submits the information to the Civil Service Commission, you will be ready to begin your new job.

New Commission Employee

The Civil Service Commission Staff would like to welcome our newest employee **Pamela Cole!** Pamela is working in Police and Fire testing in our Classification and Selection Unit. Welcome aboard Pamela!

Civil Service Commission

Email: CivilService@columbus.gov

50 West Gay Street, Room 500
Columbus, Ohio 43215-9038
Phone: 614-645-8300
Fax: 614-645-8379

Piedmont Testing Center
750 Piedmont Road
Columbus, Ohio 43224-3266
Phone: 614-645-0800
Fax: 614-645-0866

www.csc.columbus.gov

Commission Comments brought to you courtesy of:

Michael B. Coleman, Mayor
Grady L. Pettigrew, Jr., President
Eileen Y. Paley, Member
Barbara McGrath, Executive Director

Articles and information contributed by

Newsletter Committee:
Brenda Sobieck, Editor
Angie Bowman, Assistant Editor

Joey Faber
Barb Hutton
Sonya Moore
Sheri White
Laura Wright

Upcoming Tests

The following tests are planned to be given this year: **Equipment Operator I and II, Excavator, Refuse Collection Vehicle Operator, Sewer Cleaning Equipment Operator, and Property Maintenance Inspection Trainee.** All other testing is administered at-vacancy when requested by the Department. This means that the testing occurs when an actual vacancy exists. If you have questions about these upcoming exams or another scheduled non-uniformed exam, you may contact Barb Hutton at (614) 645-7409.

To be notified about the listed exams or other exams that you are interested in, you should complete a Job Interest form. You will then be notified of any upcoming exams by mail. You can find the Job Interest forms on our website,

Meet Commission Employee Jennifer Hutchinson

Jennifer Hutchinson has been employed by the Civil Service Commission for over eight years. As a Personnel Analyst, she works on developing and administering examinations for non-uniformed job classes. Jennifer enjoys talking to people about their jobs, and her favorite projects usually include working with departments to create performance tests. She said that in working for the City of Columbus, she has enjoyed learning about different jobs that she never knew even existed. Jennifer is also the recipient of the 2006 Commission Award for Peak Performance for her work on the large clerical job class consolidation and test development project.

Born in Pensacola, Florida, Jennifer's father was in the Navy so her family moved around quite a bit during her childhood. She went to high school in three different states although she graduated from Reynoldsburg High School. She attended college at Ohio State University and Broward Community College in Florida and then completed her bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Marketing at Franklin University.

Jennifer and her husband Scott, who works for Columbus Public Health, have two beautiful daughters age nine and six. They are very excited about building their new home in Fairfield County and will be moving in this spring. In whatever free time she has, Jennifer enjoys watching movies with her family.

