

Office of the Sheriff Prince George's County

Sergeant

**Written Knowledge Examination
*Orientation Material***



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Overview

This packet of information is designed to provide you with information useful in studying for and taking the written knowledge examination. The more familiar you are with test taking strategies, the more you will be able to focus on applying your knowledge rather than struggling with the testing environment. In the information provided we will discuss:

- The competencies to be tested in this exam,
- Studying for the exam,
- Preparing for the exam,
- Filling out the answer sheet,
- Tips for reading each question,
- Tips for determining the best answer,
- Test administration and scoring, and,
- Details of the test administration.

There are many methods used by individuals when taking multiple-choice exams. ***The information provided here describes just one approach.*** It is not intended to suggest that other methods do not work equally as well. You may already have certain skills that have served you well in taking multiple-choice exams. You should decide, based on your own skill and experience, what information in this orientation packet is useful to you. However, please remember that each promotional exam developed by THE PITTMAN MCLENAGAN GROUP, L.C. (PMG) contains only newly developed test questions. While the content on the prior tests may be similar, test questions are not re-used. Therefore, it is recommended that you study the content of the identified source material instead of studying informally prepared test questions or study guides.

Test Content

The Office of the Sheriff has a current job analysis study for the rank of Sergeant. The result of this analysis has been used to identify the specific critical knowledges relevant for testing purposes.

Appendix A lists the knowledges to be tested.

These knowledges are not listed in order of importance. Certain knowledges will receive greater attention in the test content than others based on the results of the study. This information allows test question writers to focus the question on job-related material.

Studying for the Test

To focus your efforts, you should look at the listed knowledge areas and then try to find information related to that knowledge within the source material. If there is some portion of the knowledge that is not in any of the source material then it will not be on the test.

Also think about how this knowledge relates to the rank. Try to find relevant examples of that knowledge area in the source.

Here is an example:

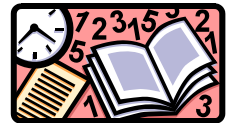
Pretend you are looking for information about arrest procedures. If you only had the reading list material for this test where would you look?

This location is probably a good place to start in studying for the test for the knowledge of "arrest procedures."

Think through the other competency areas in this same way.

Think about these tips in your study efforts

- Create sample questions based on the source material and the knowledge areas. Learn and/or memorize other areas that appear relevant for the test.
- Use flash cards to help you memorize key information. Create these by using 3x5 index cards with key issues on the front and answers on the back.
- Think of other ways to memorize information through the use of mnemonics such as memory formulas and phrases.
- Write notes on the important information you discover during your studies. Some people remember better the things they have written.
- Some candidates in past processes have said that forming a study group with others proved helpful. One approach would be to have each member provide outlines or key concepts/issues from certain parts of the source material. How these relate to the various knowledge areas could be discussed.



Reading List

The reading list is provided in the Announcement.

Filling out the Answer Sheet

Doing well on the test is about more than just knowing the answer to the question. Your test is scored by computer. Your answers are recorded on an answer sheet that is scanned through the computer. If you do not fill out the answer sheet correctly, your answers may be scored incorrectly.

To help avoid this problem remember the following:

- Make sure that the question number in the test booklet matches the question number you are answering on the answer sheet.
- Make sure that the letter (a, b, c, d) you choose from the test booklet matches the letter you darken on the answer sheet.

- Review the answer sheet before beginning the test to avoid confusion and loss of time in correcting errors. Notice that on the answer sheet the numbers are in groups or rows of 50 answers. For example, questions 1-50 are in the first row and questions 51-100 are in the second row. For numbers 1 through 50, the first column of numbers is 1 through 10. There is room for 200 questions on this answer sheet. Since your test will have 100 questions, you will only be using the first two rows of responses.
- During the test, if you change an answer, erase your mark completely. Stray marks may be misinterpreted as your intended answer by the computer scanner.
- Do not fill in more than one answer for any question. **Multiple answers for a question will be scored as incorrect!**
- It is your responsibility to mark the answer sheet correctly!

See Appendix B for a copy of the answer sheet.

Looking at the Test Questions

- All questions related to a particular source document will be grouped together.
- *Do not let yourself get sidetracked into the common problem of, "That's not how we do it in the field."*
- Each grouping of test questions will be preceded by a paragraph similar to the following:

The following questions were taken from Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff General Orders. Answer each question in this section by choosing the best answer based on the information contained in this source. Disregard conflicting information from other sources and/or contrary practices that you may have observed through your personal experiences.

Question Format

Below are two examples of test questions that are similar to the types of questions that you will see on the actual test. These examples are not based on any source material for this particular test. Familiarize yourself with this format.

Question Examples

1. What is the proper procedure for arresting a suspect within the Courthouse?
 - a. There is no different procedure for arresting a suspect within the Courthouse than arresting a suspect anywhere else.
 - b. You should always use two Deputies when arresting a suspect within the Courthouse.
 - c. Only handcuff the suspect with his hands behind his back.
 - d. Only handcuff the suspect with his hands in front of him.

The ABCs of Police Work, page 45

2. Who should respond to a domestic disturbance call?
- Only Officers from the Police Department.
 - The Deputy closest to the call.
 - Always a supervisor.
 - Only the Domestic Violence Unit.

The ABCs of Police Work, page 45

One section of the test will include questions based on reports. A portion of, or a complete, report will be shown and you will be required to answer certain questions about those reports. The report may or may not be complete. You may be asked to identify missing information, classification details, types of information that should be in various sections of the report or other information about the reports. The possible answers will be in a multiple choice format.

Reading the Test Questions and Picking Answers

Think about the following when reading the questions:

- Read the entire test question and each possible answer before making your choice. A common mistake is to choose the first answer that you come to that “sounds good.” Don’t fall into this trap! Read each possible answer carefully before choosing the one you think is best.
- If you find yourself getting bogged down in a question, circle the question number on the test booklet and make your best GUESS and fill in the answer on the answer sheet. Make sure you come back to the question after you have answered the remaining questions. You could put a light pencil mark next to the number on the answer sheet so you can easily find those questions you want to review. *Do not forget, however, to come back to the question before the time period is up.*
- Do not “read into” the question or possible answers. Look at the question as it is stated.
- Be sure to have a watch or some other timer (but you cannot use your cell phone as your watch). Keep track of your own time. If you have skipped any questions, be sure to leave time at the end to go back and answer them. If you have time at the end of the test, check your answers and make sure you responded to all questions.



Keep these ideas in mind when picking an answer:

- Try to decide if any of the options are clearly wrong to you. Once you have eliminated one option, your chance of choosing the correct answer increases.
- Do not believe the myth that suggests that “c” is the most common correct answer. The correct answer is distributed across a, b, c, and d. If you pick all of one answer (a, b, c, or d), your result will be a low score on the test.
- There is no penalty for guessing. **DO NOT LEAVE ANY QUESTION UNANSWERED.** Knowing the answer is best, of course, but guessing or even filling in an answer without reading the question is better than leaving a question blank.

Preparing for the Test

The following tips will help you prepare for the test:

- Be sure to eat before the test. Some foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, can help to reduce stress. Foods that can increase stress should be avoided (e.g., artificial sweeteners, chocolate, fried foods, junk food).
- Bring everything you will need for the test (e.g., watch, departmental credentials). Pencils will be provided.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive before the test. You must be registered and in your seat by the time the test is scheduled to start. There will be no late entries without approval from the Sheriff or his designee.
- Prepare for the test mentally. Visualize yourself being calm and collected during the test.
- Have confidence that you will do well. Stay calm and avoid putting too much pressure on yourself. Some anxiety is normal, but if you feel overwhelmed and anxious, your test performance may suffer. Instead, focus on doing the best you can.
- If necessary, use relaxation techniques to calm yourself. For example, take several slow, deep breaths to relax or stretch.
- Don't panic when other test takers begin handing in their tests. There's no prize for finishing first.



Test Administration and Scoring

- Filling in identifying information on the answer sheet and other general instructions for the exam will be completed first. You are responsible for recording your information correctly. The most common mistakes are incorrectly darkening in the circles below the name and candidate identification number and leaving answers blank.
- You will be given at least one warning prior to the end of the exam.
- The tests will be scored on site. If you choose to wait, you will receive an unofficial test score. The score is unofficial pending the appeals process.
- PMG will retain the original answer sheets. The Office of Human Resource Management will retain a copy of the answer sheets.
- See Appendix C for a copy of the test instructions.

Appeals

- OHRM will facilitate the appeals review process.
- The appeals review process will occur on the same day as the test at a time designated.
- Specific instructions will be provided the day of the administration.
- You will receive your answers to each question and the keyed answer during the appeal review process.

Test Administration Details

- The details regarding test administration and timing are provided in the published announcement.
- You will NOT be permitted to bring food or drink into the exam room.
- You will only be permitted to wear a non-digital (analog) wristwatch with no audible alarm. You will NOT be permitted into the exam room with digital watches, stop watches, clocks, and all digital devices.
- You may NOT bring tablet computers, cell phones, two-way radios, pagers, cameras, imaging devices, or any other electronic device to the examination site.
- You may NOT bring any source materials or texts, notebooks, paper, folders, or notes or reference material of any description into the exam site.
- Backpacks, brief cases, carry bags, and luggage of any description are prohibited at the examination site. **WALLETS AND PURSES ARE PERMITTED.**
- You must have your Departmental credentials for registration.
- You must be registered and in your seat by the announced examination time. Late entries will not be allowed without approval from the Sheriff or his designee.
- The test has 100 questions and a time limit of 3 hours.
- If you need to use the bathroom during the test administration you will be escorted. You will not be allowed any extra time to complete your test.
- Expect to spend *at least* ½ day in the entire testing process including registration, instructions and test time.



GOOD LUCK!

Appendix A - Sergeant Critical Competencies for the Written Knowledge Test

KSA #	Definition
1	Knowledge of Proper Sheriff's Office Procedures – Ability to learn and apply techniques of patrol, arrest, processing, Agency procedures, prisoner control and retention, Court rulings affecting procedures, etc. Ability to learn new and different techniques for previously learned information. Ability to ensure subordinate personnel are following proper Sheriff's Office procedures throughout their work.
2	Knowledge of Laws to be Enforced – Ability to learn and apply criminal law, Motor Vehicle laws, laws of arrest, search & seizure, Civil Law, Landlord and Tenant Law, mental health law, etc. Ability to share knowledge of new and changing laws and to provide correct information to subordinates needing that knowledge.
3	Knowledge of Reports – Ability to review reports and other communications, and coach others in proper writing techniques. Ability to follow prescribed formats for investigations and other reports.
4	Knowledge of Effective Supervisory Practices – Ability to apply effective supervisory practices learned through supervisory training and other sources.
5	Knowledge of Administrative Procedures – Knowledge of administrative procedures and paperwork relevant to the Agency (e.g., Personnel Law, assignments and transfers, occupational injuries/illnesses, time reports, overtime, standby pay, leave, light duty, agency travel.)

Appendix C - Test Instructions

This is the written knowledge exam. You have three hours to complete this exam.

Each test question has been reviewed internally by subject matter experts comprised of PG Office of the Sheriff employees knowledgeable in this job.

The questions have been developed from the sources identified for this test. ***Therefore, you should answer each question based upon information provided in the source material.***

This test is presented in a multiple-choice format with each question having four possible responses from which to choose.

There is no penalty for guessing; therefore you should attempt to answer all questions.

Check to make sure you are marking the proper number on your answer sheet that corresponds to the question you are answering on the test. If you change an answer, be sure to erase your mark completely.

Provide only one answer for each question. Two answers for a question will be scored as an incorrect response.

When you are finished, bring your test booklet and answer sheet to the front, leave your pencils on the table.

Any attempts to cheat during the exam will be considered a major infraction.

If you fail to correctly enter your candidate identification number it may cause a delay in receiving your unofficial score today.

***DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.
GOOD LUCK!***