

**New York State  
Department of Civil Service**

*Committed to Innovation, Quality, and Excellence*

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*A Guide to the Written Test*

**for the**

**Parks and Grounds Series**

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Opportunities at **work.**



David A. Paterson  
*Governor*

Nancy G. Groenwegen  
*Commissioner*

## ***INTRODUCTION***

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The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the written test for the on-demand Parks and Grounds Series. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas which will be tested and the different types of questions you may see on the test.

The written test for the Parks and Grounds Series has an overall time allowance of 4 1/2 hours. The following lists all of the subject areas that are included in this series. The exam announcement will tell you which of the following subject areas you will be tested on.

1. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, INCLUDING TURF, TREES AND SHRUBS:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in grounds maintenance and may include such areas as turf grass planting, fertilizing, and maintenance, tree and shrub selection, planting, transplanting, trimming and maintenance, and safe operating practices involved when performing grounds maintenance activities.
2. **WORK SCHEDULING:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles for developing and implementing work plans and for the ability to arrange work assignments in a manner that will achieve work goals while staying within scheduling criteria. This may include setting up vacation or work schedules, taking into consideration such factors as seniority, work skills, duty hours and shift coverage.
3. **INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR OF RECREATION AREAS:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in the installation, upkeep, maintenance and repair of park and recreation facilities, including such areas as picnic facilities, playgrounds, athletic and playing fields, trails and walkways, sanitary facilities, and lawn care and grounds maintenance.
4. **MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in the overall maintenance and upkeep of the typical structures, buildings, and equipment found in park facilities; and may include such areas as proper maintenance and repair of buildings, minor mechanical and electrical systems maintenance, and safe operating practices
5. **SUPERVISION:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in planning, organizing, and controlling the activities of a work unit toward predetermined objectives. The concepts covered, usually in a situational question format, include such topics as assigning and reviewing work; evaluating performance; maintaining work standards; motivating and developing subordinates; implementing procedural change; increasing efficiency; and dealing with problems of absenteeism, morale, and discipline.

The remainder of this test guide explains how you will be tested in each of the subject areas listed above. A **TEST TASK** is provided for each subject area. This is an explanation of how a question will be presented and how to correctly answer it. Read each explanation carefully. This test guide provides at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each subject area. The sample questions will be similar to what will be presented on the actual test. This test guide provides the **SOLUTION** and correct answer(s) to each sample question. You should study these in order to understand how the correct or best answers were determined.

## **SUBJECT AREA 1**

**GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, INCLUDING TURF, TREES AND SHRUBS:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in grounds maintenance and may include such areas as turf grass planting, fertilizing, and maintenance, tree and shrub selection, planting, transplanting, trimming and maintenance, and safe operating practices involved when performing grounds maintenance activities. There will be 15 questions in this subject area on the written test.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of grounds maintenance principles and practices in order to answer the question correctly.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

A park has 8,000 sq. ft of lawn area that needs to be fertilized. Which one of the following is the correct amount of 25-4-6 fertilizer to use if it is desired to apply three pounds of Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.?

- A. 12 pounds of fertilizer
- B. 36 pounds of fertilizer
- C. 48 pounds of fertilizer
- D. 96 pounds of fertilizer

*The correct answer to this sample question is D.*

**SOLUTION:** *To answer this question you must realize that 25-4-6 fertilizer contains 25% nitrogen. To apply 3 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 sq.ft., requires 12 pounds of this fertilizer since 25% times 12 pounds = 3 pounds. Then to fertilize all 8,000 sq.ft. requires 12 pounds of fertilizer times 8 = 96 pounds of fertilizer.*

## **SUBJECT AREA 2**

**WORK SCHEDULING:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles for developing and implementing work plans and for the ability to arrange work assignments in a manner that will achieve work goals while staying within scheduling criteria. This may include setting up vacation or work schedules, taking into consideration such factors as seniority, work skills, duty hours and shift coverage. There will be 15 questions in this subject area on the written test.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of implementing a work plan in order to answer the question correctly.

**NOTE:** You will be allowed to bring a calculator and use it during the test.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

Answer the next question using the following information concerning a particular Municipality's Public Works Department. The Department's work schedule consists of ten-hour days and there are 3 crews working each day. Each crew consists of the following personnel.

<u>People per crew</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	Supervisor
3	Medium Motor Equipment Operator
3	Loaders
6	Laborers

The total number of Loader worker-hours per 10-hour day is

- A. 30
- B. 60
- C. 90
- D. 120

*The correct answer to this sample question is C.*

### **SOLUTION:**

*To answer this question you must determine how many total loaders work on all three crews. From the table you can see each of the three crews has 3 loaders, so 3 times 3 or 9 total people work as loaders. The total number of loader worker-hours per-day is then 9 loaders times 10 hours per-day or 90.*

## **SUBJECT AREA 3**

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**INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR OF RECREATION AREAS:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in the installation, upkeep, maintenance and repair of park and recreation facilities, including such areas as picnic facilities, playgrounds, athletic and playing fields, trails and walkways, sanitary facilities, and lawn care and grounds maintenance. There will be 15 questions in this subject area on the written test.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of installation, maintenance, and repair of recreation areas in order to answer the question correctly.

**SAMPLE QUESTION:**

Which one of the following correctly identifies the material used in the construction of a baseball pitching mound and batters box?

- A. sand
- B. loam
- C. screened clay
- D. stone dust

*The correct answer to this sample question is C.*

**SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not correct. This material would be unstable and would not compact correctly.

**Choice B** is not correct. This material would also be unstable.

**Choice C is the correct answer.** Pure clays screened to 1/8" are used for pitching mounds and batters boxes.

**Choice D** is not correct. This material would be too stable, making a very hard surface.

## **SUBJECT AREA 4**

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**MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in the overall maintenance and upkeep of the typical structures, buildings, and equipment found in park facilities; and may include such areas as proper maintenance and repair of buildings, minor mechanical and electrical systems maintenance, and safe operating practices. There will be 15 questions in this subject area on the written test.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of maintenance of buildings and equipment in order to answer the question correctly.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

A park building is to be opened in the off season for use in a winter carnival. When workers enter the building there is a strong smell of sewer gas. Which one of the following is the most likely cause?

- A. Water has frozen in the plumbing traps
- B. The sewer pipe is dry
- C. The plumbing vents are covered with snow
- D. There is no air movement in the bathhouse

*The correct answer to this sample question is C.*

### **SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not the correct answer. *If the water was frozen in the plumbing traps the sewer gas would not be able to vent into the building through these fixtures.*

**Choice B** is not the correct answer. *Even if the sewer pipe was dry the sewer trap would always have water in it, thereby stopping sewer gas from entering the building.*

**Choice C is the correct answer.** *It is common for snow and ice to build up and block the flow of air from a sewer vent stack pipe, thereby causing the sewer gas to back up into the structure.*

**Choice D** is not the correct answer. *Lack of air movement in the building by itself does not cause sewer gas to accumulate.*

## **SUBJECT AREA 5**

**SUPERVISION:** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in planning, organizing, and controlling the activities of a work unit toward predetermined objectives. The concepts covered, usually in a situational question format, include such topics as assigning and reviewing work; evaluating performance; maintaining work standards; motivating and developing subordinates; implementing procedural change; increasing efficiency; and dealing with problems of absenteeism, morale, and discipline. There will be 15 questions in this subject area on the written test.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of the principles and practices of supervision in order to answer the questions correctly.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION:**

Assume that the unit you supervise is given a new work assignment and that you are unsure about the proper procedure to use in performing this assignment. Which one of the following actions should you take FIRST in this situation?

- A. Obtain input from your staff.
- B. Consult other unit supervisors who have had similar assignments.
- C. Use an appropriate procedure from a similar assignment that you are familiar with.
- D. Discuss the matter with your supervisor.

*The correct answer to this sample question is D.*

### **SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not correct. *Since this assignment is new for your unit, your staff would not be expected to be more knowledgeable than you about the proper procedure.*

**Choice B** is not correct. *Although discussing this matter with other supervisors may increase your knowledge of the new assignment, similar assignments performed in other units may differ in some important way from your new assignment. Other units may also function differently from your unit, so the procedures used to perform similar assignments may differ accordingly.*

**Choice C** is not correct. *Since this assignment is new for your unit, you would have no way of knowing whether the procedure from a similar assignment is appropriate to use. You would need someone with the appropriate knowledge, usually your supervisor, to determine if the procedure from a similar assignment could be used before you actually employed this procedure in the performance of your new assignment.*

**Choice D is the correct answer to this question.** *Your supervisor is more likely to be informed about what procedure may be appropriate for work that he or she assigns to you than would other unit supervisors or your staff. Even if your supervisor does not know what procedure is appropriate, a decision regarding which procedure to use should be made with his or her participation, since he or she has the ultimate responsibility for your unit's work.*

## **TEST SECURITY**

The test you will be taking is the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service. Candidates may not remove test material from the test site and may not reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others. Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law and punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine. Additionally, candidates may be disqualified from appointment to the positions for which the examination is being held and from being a candidate for any civil service examination for five years. After you take the test, other individuals may want to talk with you about the test. You should not discuss the questions and answers, even in general terms. You should be careful that you do not inadvertently violate test security and put yourself at risk.

## **CONCLUSION**

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

### **Before the test ...**

- Study and review this guide to familiarize yourself with what the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas that will be covered on the test.

### **On the day of the test ...**

- Arrive at the test site on time.
- Bring your Admission Notice, two No. 2 pencils, a photo ID containing your signature, a quiet lunch or snack, and any other **allowed** materials.
- Do **NOT** bring this test guide to the test site.

### **At the test site ...**

- Do **NOT** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site.
- The use of such devices anywhere on the grounds of the test site (this includes the test room, hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, and parking lots) could result in your disqualification.

### **During the test ...**

- Read and follow all directions on your Admission Notice, test booklets, answer sheets, and Candidate Directions.
- Follow the Monitor's instructions.
- Keep track of the time.

### **After the test ...**

- Do **NOT** remove any test materials from the test room.
- Do **NOT** paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way.
- Do **NOT** discuss the test material with others.

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