New York State
Department of Civil Service

Committed to Innovation, Quality, and Excellence

A Guide to the Written Test

for the

High-Level Custodians/Janitors Series

Opportunities at work.

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Governor

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with some of the written test materials which will be included in the High-Level Custodians/Janitors Series. This test guide provides a general description of the most common subject areas which will be tested and an explanation of the different types of questions you may see on the test.

Not all subject areas tested in this series are covered in this test guide. The examination announcement will list the subject areas that will be included on the particular test you will be taking.

The tests in the series commonly cover the following subject areas:

1. **Ability to read and follow written instructions –** These questions test for the ability to read, understand and apply written instructions for performing tasks similar to those encountered on the job. All the information needed to answer these questions will be provided in the test booklet.

2. **Building cleaning –** These questions test for knowledge of basic principles and practices of building cleaning. They will deal with, but not necessarily be limited to, such areas as equipment, tools, supplies, methods and procedures for cleaning different types of surfaces and materials under various, commonly occurring circumstances.

3. **Building operation and maintenance –** These questions test for knowledge of the basic principles, practices and techniques essential to the correct operation and maintenance of public buildings. They deal with, but are not necessarily limited to, such areas as building maintenance; preventive maintenance, and minor repair of electrical and plumbing systems; methods and equipment for snow removal; building safety and equipment storage.

4. **Operation and routine maintenance of heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems –** These questions test for knowledge of basic principles, practices and techniques essential to the correct operation and maintenance of heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, including such areas as minor cleaning; room temperature and building ventilation control; steam, hot water, and hot air heating systems; boiler operation; troubleshooting air conditioning system problems, and proper maintenance of air conditioning systems.

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

ABILITY TO READ AND FOLLOW WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS: These questions test for the ability to read, understand and apply written instructions for performing tasks similar to those encountered on the job. All the information needed to answer these questions will be provided in the test booklet. There will be 15 questions in this subject area on the written test.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with two or more "sets" of questions, each set concerning a different problem. Typical problems might involve reading and comprehending written instructions and tabular data. You must use the appropriate data from the written instructions and tables, in combination with the information given in each question, in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION: Base your answer to the following sample question on the information below.

The table presented below, labeled SCHEDULE OF CUSTODIAL WORK, identifies how frequently a custodial task should be performed in each area listed, using the following Key:

Key
6W = Six times a week
3W = Three times a week
W = Weekly
6M = Six times a month
3M = Three times a month
M = Monthly
M6 = Once every six months
N/A = Not Applicable

SCHEDULE OF CUSTODIAL WORK

TASK	AREA TO BE ADDRESSED				
	High Traffic Corridors and Lobbies	Other Corridors and Lobbies	Office Areas	Classrooms and Reading Rooms	Restrooms, Lounges and Locker Rooms
Remove Trash	3W	6W	6W	W	6W
Sweep Floor	3W	3W	6W	W	3W
Vacuum Carpet	6W	M	3W	6W	N/A
Clean & Supply Restroom(s)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6W
Disinfect Toilets / Urinals & Descaling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6W
Apply Wax / Polish Floor	W	M	M	W	W
Wet Mop	3W	6M	W	6W	6W
Regular Dusting	W	M	W	W	W
Clean Drinking Fountain	6W	3W	3W	6W	6W

SUBJECT AREA 1 (continued)

ABILITY TO READ AND FOLLOW WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS: (cont.)

According to the SCHEDULE OF CUSTODIAL WORK presented on the previous page, how often should the *Other Corridors and Lobbies* be *Wet Mopped*?

A. three times a week
B. six times a week
C. six times a month
D. one time every six months

SOLUTION :

Choice A *is not correct. High Traffic Lobbies are scheduled to be Wet Mopped three times a week, but not Other Corridors and Lobbies.*

Choice B *is not correct. Other Corridors and Lobbies are scheduled to be Wet Mopped six times a month, not six times a week.*

Choice C *is the correct answer to this question. Other Corridors and Lobbies are scheduled to be Wet Mopped six times a month.*

Choice D *is not correct. Other Corridors and Lobbies are scheduled to be Wet Mopped six times a month**,** not one time every six months.*

The correct answer to this sample question is C.

SUBJECT AREA 2

BUILDING CLEANING: These questions test for knowledge of basic principles and practices of building cleaning. They will deal with, but not necessarily be limited to, such areas as equipment, tools, supplies, methods and procedures for cleaning different types of surfaces and materials under various, commonly occurring circumstances. There will be 30 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 building cleaning in order to answer the question correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following is the proper mixing water temperature to use when mixing a Green Seal certified floor stripping solution immediately before it is used to clean a floor?

A. hot
B. warm
C. cool
D. cold

SOLUTION:

Choice A *is not correct. Hot mixing water increases evaporation and allows more odors of the stripping product to escape into the air.*

Choice B *is not correct. Warm mixing water also increases evaporation and allows more odors of the stripping product to escape into the air.*

Choice C *is not correct. Cool mixing water is not recommended for Green Seal certified floor stripping products, because it causes more odors and product evaporation than mixing with colder water.*

Choice D *is the correct answer to this question. Cold is the mixing water temperature Green Seal certified floor stripping product manufacturers recommend, because it causes fewer odors to be noticeable and less product evaporation during the mixing than warmer water.*

The correct answer to this sample question is D.

SUBJECT AREA 3

BUILDING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE: These questions test for knowledge of the basic principles, practices and techniques essential to the correct operation and maintenance of public buildings. They deal with, but are not necessarily limited to, such areas as building maintenance; preventive maintenance, and minor repair of electrical and plumbing systems; methods and equipment for snow removal; building safety and equipment storage. 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, practices and techniques of building operation and maintenance in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following components of a fluorescent light fixture would most likely need replacement if the fixture hums and oozes a tarlike liquid?

A. the ballast
B. the lamp holder
C. the tubes
D. the electric wiring

SOLUTION:

Choice A *is the correct answer to this question. The humming sound and oozing of a tarlike liquid is most likely coming from a faulty ballast that should be replaced before further attempts to operate the fluorescent light fixture.*

Choice B *is not correct. The lamp holder in which the ends of the tubes connect to the electricity would not exhibit the symptoms described in the question if they were at fault and in need of replacement.*

Choice C *is not correct. The tubes may show a dark discoloration on their ends, have extended start-up flicker, or fail to light when they need replacement, but the symptoms described in the question are unique to a malfunctioning ballast.*

Choice D *is not correct. The symptoms described in the question do not indicate any fault in the electrical supply to the ballast. They indicate a fault unique to the ballast itself.*

The correct answer to this sample question is A.

SUBJECT AREA 4

OPERATION AND ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF HEATING, VENTILATING AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS: These questions test for knowledge of basic principles, practices and techniques essential to the correct operation and maintenance of heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, including such areas as minor cleaning; room temperature and building ventilation control; steam, hot water, and hot air heating systems; boiler operation; troubleshooting air conditioning system problems, and proper maintenance of air conditioning systems. 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, practices and techniques of the operation and routine maintenance of heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems in order to answer the questions correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

When condensation water from a window air conditioner drips onto the floor inside a room, which one of the following is the best solution for this condition?

A. Place a bucket under the drip point.
B. Reposition the air conditioner to provide a downward slope toward the outside of the building.
C. Drill a hole in the bottom of the metal base of the air conditioner on the outside of the building.
D. Replace the air conditioner.

SOLUTION:

Choice A *is not correct. Catching the drip in a bucket is a temporary measure and creates a spill hazard on the floor.*

Choice B *is the correct answer to this question. Repositioning the air conditioner so that the level slopes toward the outside of the building allows the water to properly drain from the unit.*

Choice C *is not correct. Drilling a hole in the metal on which the condensation settles invites rust and insects and does not correct the ultimate problem, which is the incorrect level of the air conditioner.*

Choice D *is not correct. Replacing the air conditioner is an extreme action that does not attempt to solve the solvable condition of condensation water drainage.*

The correct answer to this sample question is B.

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 supervisory principles and practices in order to answer the question correctly.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Assume 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.

SOLUTION:

This question asks for the action that you should take FIRST in this situation.

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.*

The correct answer to this sample question is D.

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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