



**Department of  
Civil Service**

# A Guide to the Written Test

for the

## First Line Correctional Supervisor Series

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Governor

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

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The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the First Line Correctional Supervisor written test. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas to be tested and an explanation of the different types of questions that will be presented. The examination announcement will list the subject areas that will be included on the test you will be taking.

The First Line Correctional Supervisor written test will cover the following subject areas:

1. **Preparing written material** - These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately and for the ability to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly.
2. **New York State minimum standards for correctional facilities** -- These questions test for knowledge of Minimum Standards for state, county, and local correctional facilities that are promulgated by the New York State Commission of Correction in areas such as the admission/discharge, care, custody, movement, correctional treatment, security, supervision and discipline of all persons confined in the systems.
3. **Supervising inmate correctional programs, services, visitation areas and correctional staff** -- These questions test for knowledge in such areas as: coordinating programs with civilian staff; ensuring that all employees relate well to visitors and guests and answer their questions in accordance with facility rules; organizing and supervising special programs involving outside groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.) and insuring full cooperation from employees. The questions may also deal with such areas as: understanding new concepts and developments in the field of Corrections, and evaluating employees' capabilities and limitations on the job.
4. **Coordinating appropriate responses to emergencies, disturbances and other unusual situations** -- These questions test for knowledge in such areas as: anticipating possible correctional emergency situations, responding to situations promptly, and allocating staff where needed; notifying supervisors of situations when appropriate; acting within rules to alleviate problems as quickly as possible with minimum use of force; investigating the causes of incidents; submitting reports on incidents.

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 to each sample presented. You should study these in order to understand how the correct or best answers were determined.

## **SUBJECT AREA 1**

**PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL:** These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately and for the ability to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly.

**TEST TASK:** There are two separate test tasks in this subject area:

- ◆ In the first, **Information Presentation**, you will be presented with information in two or three sentences, followed by four restatements of the information. You must choose the version that presents the original information most clearly and accurately.
- ◆ In the second, **Paragraph Organization**, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must choose, from among four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

### **INFORMATION PRESENTATION:**

#### **SAMPLE QUESTION**

Read the information given, then select the choice which presents the information most clearly and accurately.

Frank met Sam after the class. Sam received a call. Because of this, Frank left early.

Which choice below presents this information most clearly and accurately?

- A. Frank met Sam after the class, but he left early because Sam received a call.
- B. Frank met Sam after the class, but he left early because he received a call.
- C. Frank met Sam after the class, but Sam received a call, so he left early.
- D. Sam received a call when Frank met him after the class, so he left early.

**SOLUTION:** *Choice B sounds as if it was FRANK who received the call. Choices C and D sound as if it was SAM who left early. Choice A makes it clear that SAM received a call and that FRANK left early. **Choice A is the best answer to this sample question because it is the only choice that is clear and accurate.***

### **PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION:**

#### **SAMPLE QUESTION**

The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences, and then answer the question about the best arrangement of these sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together, and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a job, people usually think about several possibilities.
3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing an occupation is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 2-3-1-4
- B. 2-3-4-1
- C. 4-2-1-3
- D. 4-2-3-1

**SOLUTION:** *The best arrangement of these sentences is 4-2-3-1. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: "choosing an occupation." Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice. **Choice D is the best answer to this sample question.***

## **SUBJECT AREA 2**

**NEW YORK STATE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:** These questions test for knowledge of Minimum Standards for state, county, and local correctional facilities that are promulgated by the New York State Commission of Correction in areas such as the admission/discharge, care, custody, movement, correctional treatment, security, supervision and discipline of all persons confined in the systems.

**To help you in your study efforts, the following questions are general guidelines for studying the above source. In preparing for this examination, you should not limit yourself to the topic areas contained in the study questions below. You should have a thorough knowledge of the entire source.**

**Examples of study questions – all sections of the minimum standards should be studied.**

### **Admissions:**

- ◆ What are the admission requirements with regard to the commitment document and inmate identification?
- ◆ How is contraband defined?
- ◆ What must facility staff do before releasing inmate property to a person designated by the inmate?
- ◆ List the topics which must be included in the facility rules distributed to a new inmate.

### **Security and Supervision:**

- ◆ What is the difference between general supervision, active supervision, and constant supervision?
- ◆ What level of supervision should be maintained when inmates are in the facility, outside their housing areas?
- ◆ What must be included in the written record of inmate population counts?
- ◆ List the information that must be included in an inspection of facility firearms and ammunition.
- ◆ What rules are associated with the keeping of duplicate keys?
- ◆ What information must be recorded in writing, following the inspection of facility locks and securing devices?

### **Correspondence:**

- ◆ What is the difference between legal privileged correspondence and general privileged correspondence?
- ◆ Under what circumstances may outgoing inmate correspondence be opened and read by a facility staff member?

### **Prisoner Personal Hygiene:**

- ◆ What are the guidelines regarding inmate laundry and clothing repair?

### **Discipline:**

- ◆ When an inmate is confined to administrative segregation pending a disciplinary hearing, within what time period must he receive a written statement that gives the reason for the confinement?
- ◆ List the circumstances under which an inmate may not appear at his own hearing.
- ◆ At a hearing, under what circumstances may a hearing officer deny the appearance of a certain witness?
- ◆ List the types of disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on an inmate.

### **Visitation:**

- ◆ Who may deny or limit an inmate's visitation?

### **Food Services:**

- ◆ What are the allowable times of day for serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

### **Health Services:**

- ◆ How must a facility handle inmates' prescription medication?
- ◆ Who authorizes medical treatment for an inmate?

## **SUBJECT AREA 2 (cont.)**

### **Classification:**

- ◆ Regarding initial screening and risk assessment of an inmate, list six areas which must be checked during the screening interview.
- ◆ List the conditions under which the chief administrative officer may revise an inmate's classification status.
- ◆ Following inmate admission, how soon must facility staff determine the inmate's housing assignment?

### **Reportable Incidents:**

- ◆ What incidents must be reported to the NYS Commission of Correction within 24 hours?
- ◆ How soon must next of kin be notified following an inmate death?

### **Access to Media:**

- ◆ What are the guidelines for media interviews of inmates?

### **Religion:**

- ◆ What factors are considered in determining whether to recognize a generally unknown religious group or organization for worship by inmates?

### **Packages:**

- ◆ What are the guidelines for outgoing inmate packages and for incoming inmate packages?

### **Printed Material and Publications:**

- ◆ For what reasons may incoming printed material or publications be censored?

### **Exercise:**

- ◆ To what extent does exercise within housing units, in cell corridors, and in day rooms fulfill the Minimum Standards requirements for exercise?

### **Legal Services:**

- ◆ Define legal counsel.
- ◆ How should visits between an inmate and his legal counsel be monitored?
- ◆ List the legal reference materials which local facilities must keep and make accessible to inmates.

### **Grievance Program:**

- ◆ What information must be gathered and assessed in the investigation of an inmate grievance?
- ◆ What issues are NOT grievable by an inmate?

### **Fire Prevention and Safety:**

- ◆ What are the guidelines for regular fire inspections by facility staff?

### **Staffing Requirements:**

- ◆ List the facility functions that are considered in the determination of facility staffing requirements.

### **Chemical Agents:**

- ◆ What authorization, if any, is required for emergency use of chemical agents?
- ◆ What must facility staff attend to after the use of a chemical agent?
- ◆ Which facility staff must complete a chemical agents training program?

### **HIV and AIDS-Related Information/Confidentiality:**

- ◆ When may an HIV-related test be ordered without obtaining a written informed consent?

## **SUBJECT AREA 2 (cont.)**

### **SAMPLE QUESTION**

When reviewing a request by an inmate to exercise a belief of a little-known religious group, the Chief Administrative Officer should consider whether the belief

- A. has a substantial following
- B. has a long-established history or tradition
- C. is based on the concept of a Supreme Being or its equivalent
- D. is supported by substantial literature as being related to religious principle

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

### **SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not correct. *Minimum standards for management of county jails do NOT state that the Chief Administrative Officer should consider whether the religious belief has a substantial following when reviewing an inmate's request to exercise a belief of a little-known religious group.*

**Choice B** is not correct. *Minimum standards for management of county jails do NOT state that the Chief Administrative Officer should consider whether the religious belief has a long-established history or tradition when reviewing an inmate's request to exercise a belief of a little-known religious group.*

**Choice C** is not correct. *Minimum standards for management of county jails do NOT state that the Chief Administrative Officer should consider whether the religious belief is based on the concept of a Supreme Being or its equivalent when reviewing an inmate's request to exercise a belief of a little-known religious group.*

**Choice D is the correct answer to this question.** *According to Section 7024.10(b)(1) of the Minimum Standards, the Chief Administrative Officer should consider whether the religious belief is supported by substantial literature as being related to religious principle when reviewing an inmate's request to exercise a belief of a little-known religious group.*

## **SUBJECT AREA 3**

**SUPERVISING INMATE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS, SERVICES, VISITATION AREAS AND CORRECTIONAL STAFF:** These questions test for knowledge in such areas as: coordinating programs with civilian staff; ensuring that all employees relate well to visitors and guests and answer their questions in accordance with facility rules; organizing and supervising special programs involving outside groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.) and insuring full cooperation from employees.

The questions may also deal with such areas as: understanding new concepts and developments in the field of Corrections, and evaluating employees' capabilities and limitations on the job.

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

### **SAMPLE QUESTION**

The correctional unit you supervise is given a new work assignment and you are unsure about the proper procedure to use in performing this assignment. Which one of the following actions is the best one for you to take first in this situation?

- A. Obtain input from your staff.
- B. Consult other correctional 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 choice 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.*

## **SUBJECT AREA 4**

**COORDINATING APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES, DISTURBANCES AND OTHER UNUSUAL SITUATIONS:** These questions test for knowledge in such areas as: anticipating possible correctional emergency situations, responding to situations promptly, and allocating staff where needed; notifying supervisors of situations when appropriate; acting within rules to alleviate problems as quickly as possible with minimum use of force; investigating the causes of incidents; submitting reports on incidents.

**TEST TASK:** You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of security maintenance and emergency response in a correctional facility in order to answer the questions correctly.

### **SAMPLE QUESTION**

Two inmates in a housing unit are physically fighting over the ownership of a magazine and they are told by the correction officer in charge to stop. The fight continues and the officer calls for assistance. You are the first supervisory officer to respond along with two other officers. The responding officers break up the fight. In addition to assigning someone the responsibility of writing incident reports, which one of the following actions is the best one for you to take next in this situation?

- A. Have the inmates keeplocked in a Special Housing Unit immediately.
- B. Ascertain the extent of injury to the inmates and have them evaluated by medical.
- C. Suspend all programming for the housing unit where the fight took place until the investigation is complete.
- D. Secure the magazine until ownership can be determined.

*The correct answer to this sample question is choice B.*

### **SOLUTION:**

**Choice A** is not correct. *Immediately keeplocking the inmates in a Special Housing Unit is NOT the best action for you to take NEXT in this situation. This action does not address any injuries that may have been received by the inmates involved in the fight. If the inmates are injured, this action does not provide them with proper medical attention.*

**Choice B is the correct answer to this question.** *Ascertaining the extent of injury to the inmates and having them evaluated by medical is the best action for you to take NEXT in this situation. This action is the most appropriate response in this situation because the health and well-being of inmates is a priority. As such, any injury to an inmate requires immediate action.*

**Choice C** is not correct. *Suspending all programming for the housing unit where the fight took place until the investigation is complete is NOT the best action for you to take NEXT in this situation. This action could anger other inmates in the housing unit, which could lead to further physical confrontations and possible injuries.*

**Choice D** is not correct. *Securing the magazine until ownership can be determined is NOT the best action for you to take NEXT in this situation. This action is not a priority and does not take into account the immediate treatment of any inmate injuries as a result of the fight.*

## **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.
- Visit our website at <http://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker> for further information and there you will find 'A General Guide to Written Tests' and 'How To Take A Written Test for NYS Civil Service Examinations'

### **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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