



April 11, 2017

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q-50 Examination Tactical Exercise

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) recognizes that candidates devoted considerable time and effort preparing for and participating in the Tactical Exercise component of the recently administered Q-50 Sergeant promotional examination. We understand that our decision to re-administer this component of the examination is frustrating for many candidates. Before making our decision to re-administer the Tactical Exercise, we carefully considered all alternatives in consultation with our outside/independent Test Administrator, APT Metrics. We determined that retesting all candidates was the only alternative that would sufficiently remedy the errors and produce a fair, consistent and valid exam for all candidates.

We have compiled this list of Frequently Asked Questions to address the various questions candidates have raised regarding this decision.

Q. What happened during the administration of the Tactical Exercise of the Q-50 test component that requires candidates to be retested on that component?

Background: The individuals who served in the role of the Tactical Exercise “Resource Person” were trained for approximately 11 ½ hours regarding how they should perform in that role. At the conclusion of the training, they also were tested to determine if they could successfully perform in the role as trained. All passed and had a printed script with them to answer candidate questions during the actual test administration.

Discovery of the Problem: When raters reviewed the videotaped recordings of candidate responses to the Tactical Exercise for scoring purposes, they observed performance issues involving the Resource Persons and brought these to the attention of the Test Administrator. As the ratings continued and more videos were observed, it became apparent that there were three significant issues involving the Resource Persons. That is, some Resource Persons: (1) delivered wrong information to candidates; (2) took too long to provide requested information; and/or (3) delivered more information to candidates than they should have. Although the first, and most serious, issue affected approximately 48 candidates, a large percentage of the candidate population was affected in varying degrees by the latter two issues. In other words, some candidates were clearly disadvantaged (received wrong information or “lost” time) or were advantaged (received more information than they actually requested) compared to other candidates.

Q. If I like my score and don't want to return for re-testing, may I keep my test score? Why must EVERYONE return to re-take the Tactical Exercise?

The performance of the Resource Person affected some candidates but not others. And candidates who experienced these problems did so to varying degrees. Further, many candidates are likely unaware of the extent to which they were disadvantaged or advantaged by the actions of their Resource Person. The inconsistency in performance among the Resource Persons significantly compromised the testing environment and thereby impacted all candidates and the reliability of the test to validly measure the knowledge, skills and abilities among the candidates.

Q. Why not allow all candidates to decide whether to retest after they see their Tactical Exercise scores? Will the scores be posted?

Given the inconsistencies in the administration of the Tactical Exercise, scores on that component are not accurate. Release of these scores, therefore, would be misleading and inappropriate.

Q. Why not simply discard the Tactical Exercise altogether and rank candidates on the Role-Playing component of the Q-50 examination process?

The weight of the Tactical Exercise in the overall examination process is approximately 60%. Eliminating 60% of the criteria for evaluating Sergeant candidates would seriously undermine the validity of the overall selection process. That is, the competencies measured by the Tactical Exercise must be included in the Q-50 selection process in order to have an accurate and reliable measure of candidates' abilities to perform the job of Q-50 Sergeant.

Q. Is it possible to avoid retesting by allowing candidates to substitute their scores on the multiple-choice component for those attained on the Tactical Exercise?

Candidates were notified in the Job Knowledge Test Preparation Guide that the multiple-choice component of the Q-50 examination would be scored on a pass/fail basis. Similarly, in the Q-50 promotional announcement, candidates were informed that their final scores (i.e., the ones used to rank and place them on an eligible list) would be based on a composite of the scores attained on the Role-Play and Tactical Exercise. The competencies measured by the Tactical Exercise must be included in the Q-50 selection process in order to have an accurate and reliable measure of candidates' abilities to perform the job of Q-50 Sergeant.

Q. If I were to retake the Tactical Exercise, what assurance do I have that this problem will not occur again?

The use of Resource Persons was intended to increase the realism of the Tactical Exercise. However, the Department of Human Resources will not risk a reoccurrence of the inconsistent treatment of candidates by using Resource Persons in this re-administration. Therefore, the re-administration of the Tactical Exercise will be similar in many respects to the original exercise, but no Resource Persons will be involved. The new test will differ somewhat in its format. For

example, information previously provided by the Resource Person will be provided in either written form or via audio narrative.

Q. Who will develop the new test? Will the scope of the test change?

The development of the new test will be facilitated by APT Metrics, the vendor that developed and administered the original test. The scope of the test will not change, and the format will change only insofar as there will be no Resource Person used. The knowledge areas and abilities measured by the retest will be the same or similar to those measured by the original test, although different test scenarios (i.e., police situations) may be presented.

Q. When will the retest be administered? Will there be a new prep guide?

All candidates will be informed as to the test date as soon as it is established. Tentatively, it appears at this time that the re-test will not occur any sooner than June 9, 2017. Candidates will be given as much notice as possible to prepare (i.e., at least 30 days and hopefully more if possible). An addendum to the prior test preparation guide will be sent if there are changes to the competencies to be assessed or to the resources on which the exercise is based.

Q. Will vacations be accommodated?

DHR will continue to follow its standard policy and do its best to accommodate candidates who request an alternate test date based on schedule conflicts.

Q. Will Role-Play “no-shows” be invited to retest?

Only candidates who participated in both the Tactical and Role-Play Exercises will be scheduled to re-take the Tactical Exercise.

Q. Were there similar problems with the Role-Play Exercise? Was it unbiased?

We are not aware of the Role-Play Exercise having any inconsistencies with respect to its administration.

Q. Will the current test results be secured and available for review or investigation?

Examination records are retained in accordance with DHR record retention policies, but candidates will not be allowed to review the Tactical Exercise.

Q. Will candidates be credited for personal time used in association with the original Tactical Exercise administration? Will the retest be on company time?

Participation in a promotional opportunity is voluntary, as all candidates are free to decide whether to participate in the examination. Preparing for and taking a promotional examination does not constitute work time. Employees who wish to take the examination will do so on their own time.

Q. Will the retest involve sequestration of candidates?

DHR anticipates that the new test format/plan will reduce the sequestration time to less than two hours.

Q. May I see my scores on the Role-Play Exercise? This will help me decide whether it makes sense for me to return to retake the Tactical Exercise.

No. Please note that as the Tactical Exercise is 60% of the weighted result, it is possible for an employee to recover from a somewhat poor performance in the Role-Play exercise by performing very well in the Tactical Exercise. We encourage all candidates who maintain their interest in promotion to complete the re-administration of the examination.