

San Francisco Police Department

Sergeant Q050 Promotional Process 2021

Candidate Prep Guide- Assessment Center



ERGOMETRICS & Applied Personnel Research, Inc.

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Candidate Information

Introduction

Ergometrics & Applied Personnel Research, Inc., is a human resource management firm specializing in personnel selection and training. Established over 37 years ago, Ergometrics has designed the most comprehensive, award-winning, video testing and job simulation testing programs in the nation. We have provided personnel testing services for over 1,800 clients in the U.S. and Canada, including many local entities.

The San Francisco Department of Human Resources (DHR) has contracted Ergometrics to assist with development, validation, and administration of the Q050 Police Sergeant 2021 promotional process. DHR and Ergometrics partnered with many members of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) during the development and validation of the exam. The purpose of this guide is to provide uniform information to all candidates regarding the Q050 Sergeant examination process.

Thank you for participating in the 2021 Sergeant promotional process. You have already performed highly responsible work in your current position. Should you be promoted, your performance will impact many more people both inside and outside the department. You will manage subordinate activities, assuming all supervisory responsibility and serve as a role model for many in the department.

Components of Assessment Center

The assessment center will be comprised of the following:

1. **Situational Interview Questions:** You will be presented with a number of scenarios relevant to the rank of Sergeant, and asked how you might respond to each scenario.
2. **Critical Incident:** You will be presented with a critical incident that has been developed by SFPD subject matter experts and asked to operate as the incident commander at the scene.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this handout is meant to be helpful and prepare you for the general nature of the process. It is not meant to advise you of every question that will be asked. Some aspects of the process may be modified including order of events and time frames. It is expected that candidates at the level of Sergeant will be able to flexibly adjust to conditions that are not exactly as they may have expected.

Assessment Center Date, and Location

Test Component	Date	Location
Assessment Center*	May 17 – 18, 2021	1740 Cesar Chavez San Francisco, CA 94124

*You will be informed of your reporting day and time approximately 10 days before the assessment center.

Analysis of Results

Following the administration of the critical incident and situational interview exercises, assessors will rate the performance of candidates using evaluation standards that were reviewed and finalized by test development subject matter experts. This is followed by statistical analyses of the results. The final eligible list will be determined using candidate scores from only the two assessment center exercises. Scores from the job knowledge test will not be used in calculating scores for the eligible list.

Posting and Inspection

Once the scores from the critical incident and situational interview exercises are compiled and analyzed, they will be reported to candidates and posted as a rank-order eligible list. Under the Civil Service Rules, this is the tentative eligible list which is subject to protest and change to correct any score calculation inaccuracies. Civil Service Rule 212 states that during the posting of the tentative eligible list, those who participated in the test are allowed to inspect their scores, and the list itself. The test questions and answer key are not available for inspection.

Eligible List

After any protests to the tentative eligible list have been resolved, the eligible list is adopted and becomes official. When vacancies occur, the Chief will consider the names on the list to make a selection based on the certification rule (copied below), secondary criteria specified in the announcement (copied below), and the needs of the Department.

Certification Rule In accordance with the Civil Service Commission Rule 213.7:

“For each referral from promotive eligible lists, the Certification Rule shall be the Rule of Ten Scores.”

213.3.3 Rule of Ten Scores

“1) The Department of Human Resources shall certify to the appointing officer the names of eligibles with the ten (10) highest scores on the list of eligibles for the position who are

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available for appointment.

2) Except as otherwise may be provided, when there are two (2) or more approved personnel requisitions on file for the same class, the number of scores certified shall be equal to the number of positions to be filled plus nine (9) scores. An eligible list adopted under the Rule of Ten Scores shall in all cases be exhausted when eligibles standing at less than three (3) scores are available. Use of the eligible list when there is less than the minimum certification available shall be at the discretion of the appointing officer.”

Secondary criteria specified in the announcement:

When making appointments, the Appointing Officer will consider the following secondary criteria: assignments, training, education, community involvement, special qualifications, commendations/awards, bilingual certification, and discipline history.

Test Security and Confidentiality

Confidentiality Agreement

Prior to the situational interview and tactical exercises, each candidate will be required to sign a copy of the following copyright and nondisclosure agreement stating that you have not and will not violate test security. The confidentiality agreement does not apply to forming study groups or sharing of this test preparation guide or other study materials. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Copyright and Nondisclosure Agreement

I understand that I am being exposed to confidential information and/or material and that absolute confidentiality is required. Improper use of these materials may permanently compromise the value of tests and is strictly prohibited. Any person who attempts to violate the copyright or confidentiality of these tests and all associated information and materials may be subject to civil damages.

I understand the copyright and nondisclosure requirements and the necessity for confidentiality of these materials and agree not to discuss or otherwise disclose information about them with anyone, or reproduce them in any way, either from memory or otherwise during or following this exam.

I certify to the truth of the above statements, and I certify that I have no knowledge of the content of the test components beyond what was contained in the Preparation Guide.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (*Please Print*): _____

Breach of this agreement is subject to prosecution under federal copyright law and would be viewed as an unacceptable integrity failure for an employee, particularly a management candidate. Additionally, to maintain test security, there are specific devices not allowed in the test session due to test security, confidentiality and laws associated with this testing. These include cellular phones, pagers, audio/radio headsets, cameras, recording devices, smart watches or other electronic recording devices.

The loss or disclosure of examination information or material, unintentional or otherwise, is a very serious matter as it can render a test invalid and useless. Because examinations represent a

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significant investment in time and money to develop and administer, and in candidate time spent preparing, any loss of test security can be very costly, disruptive and harmful to the operations of the Police Department.

Sec. 210.4 of the Civil Service Rules states that: *[...] Any person cheating, attempting to cheat or assisting other persons in cheating in any phase of the examination process shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the Charter and other laws. Actions to be taken include elimination from the examination process, dismissal and ineligibility for future employment.*

Charter Sec. 10.101 notes that: *The [Civil Service] Commission shall have power to institute and prosecute legal proceedings for violations of any civil service merit system or Department of Human Resources provisions of this Charter. [...] In any hearing conducted by the Commission or by any hearing officer it appoints pursuant to this section, the Commission or the hearing officer shall have the power to subpoena and require the attendance of witnesses and the production of records.*

How You Can Help

You can help contribute to a professional testing program by avoiding situations that might be misinterpreted by other candidates. Forming study groups with other candidates is considered acceptable, but otherwise refrain from discussing the test as this type of communication can be misinterpreted by others as unethical behavior. Additionally, refrain from asking questions of those experts who participated in the development or validation process, even if they are general questions. All participating experts signed a detailed confidentiality agreement and it is inappropriate to ask questions of them as it places the expert in a difficult conflict of interest situation.

General Test Information

- There will be countdown timers on the computer screen for each of your test response periods. You may wear a watch, but please be sure your watch does not contain any prohibited features.
- Candidates are prohibited from receiving/sending pages, texts or phone calls during any part of the promotional process. **No electronic recording devices are allowed** at the testing site.
- Get rest and a good night's sleep prior to your exam.
- Arrive early. This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to minimize stress.
- Candidates are prohibited from removing any material from the test site.

Questions and Requests for Additional Information

Ergometrics and DHR are committed to providing as much information as is feasible and appropriate to candidates. As such, you will be able to submit questions regarding the contents of this prep guide to DHR. However, DHR cannot answer one candidate's question without sharing the information with everyone -- the goal is to share the same information with all candidates at the same time. Therefore, phone calls, e-mails, and any other forms of inquiry from individuals will not be answered to the individual. Rather, information will be shared with all candidates using parallel channels, such as an e-mail notification, Department Bulletins, postings on the intranet, or group announcements.

Some information cannot be shared due to the following reasons: (a) providing the information would jeopardize test security or the confidentiality of results, (b) continued work on the test or on the scoring of results is occurring, (c) the information will be shared only when it can be shared with all candidates, or (d) an answer is not available at that time. Due to the sensitivity of the information, Ergometrics and DHR are reluctant to speculate, offer an opinion, or answer hypothetical questions.

Please submit your questions regarding the prep guide to dhr-publicsafety@sfgov.org by **1600 hours on Friday, April 23, 2021**. Responses to all relevant questions will be e-mailed to you and posted on the DHR web site (<http://www.sfdhr.org>) no later than Monday, May 3, 2021. For obvious reasons, we cannot answer questions that might compromise the security or validity of the test.

It is important that we have a current valid e-mail address to which to send all official notifications. If you change your e-mail address or name after filing your application, be sure to visit www.jobaps.com/sf and select "Update My Contact Info."

Assessment Center Overview

The assessment center will be comprised of two exercises: 1) critical incident and 2) situational interview questions. The assessment center has been developed and prepared by Ergometrics and Applied Personnel Research, Inc., a human resource consulting firm that specializes in the development of public safety promotional examinations. The assessment center exercises have been developed and reviewed by a panel of San Francisco Police Department subject matter experts (SMEs). Following is some information that will assist you in preparing for the assessment center.

Knowledge, Abilities, and Skills

The assessment center exercises are based specifically on Department General Orders, Department Bulletins, or Department Manuals and to the extent necessary the experience of the SMEs. The knowledge, abilities, and skills *which may be* evaluated in the assessment center are listed below:

Arrest: Knowledge of legal requirements (e.g., elements of crime) and procedures regarding arrest, detention, and transportation of suspects. This includes knowledge of provisions related to the arrest and detention of different groups (e.g., adults and juveniles). This also includes knowledge of the procedures for notifying and acquiring information from other agencies or departmental units pursuant to an arrest.

Command Post: Knowledge of when and how to establish a command post, and command post roles and duties.

Complaints: Knowledge of policies and procedures regarding Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and citizens' complaints. This includes knowledge of rights and protections of complainants in administrative matters ("Whistleblowers" and EEO complainants).

Crime Scene Management: Knowledge of crime scene containment, preservation, and management techniques.

Critical Incident Procedures: Knowledge of what constitutes critical incidents, the procedures for handling critical incidents and the notification requirements for critical incidents.

Documentation: The ability to accurately, completely, and legibly provide the information requested on specific written or computerized forms and reports. This includes knowledge of Department guidelines for the completion, issuance, and use of departmental forms, reports, teletypes, Crime Bulletins, correspondence, and other written communications.

Emergency Call Response Procedures: Knowledge of established policies and procedures and the application of such knowledge when conducting an emergency call response (for example, using lights and sirens, navigating through traffic) to ensure safety of everyone involved.

Evidence: Knowledge of what constitutes physical evidence and when and how evidence should be collected and analyzed. This includes knowledge of the rules of preserving evidence in order to ensure correct documentation of an incident and secure physical evidence related to incidents and accidents. This also includes the ability to objectively distinguish between incriminating and exculpatory evidence.

Interviews and Interrogations: The ability to plan for interviews and conduct interviews and interrogate persons as needed. This includes knowledge of guidelines and methods for conducting and documenting interviews and interrogations in investigations (includes criminal, administrative, etc.).

Peace Officer Bill of Rights: Knowledge of rights and protections defined in the Peace Officer Bill of Rights.

Search and Seizure: Knowledge of laws, regulations and procedures regarding search and seizure.

Special Victim Procedures: Knowledge of procedures related to situations such as domestic violence, elder and child abuse situations, hate crimes, sexual assaults. This includes knowledge of the correct agencies to contact in response to these situations.

Suspect Rights: Knowledge of legal rights of suspects and prisoners. This includes knowledge of Miranda Admonition and when it needs to be given.

Vehicle Pursuit: Knowledge of guidelines, regulations and procedures for emergency response and pursuit driving as prescribed by Department policies and procedures and the Vehicle Code.

Ability to Supervise Subordinate Personnel: Ability to: recognize when subordinates' actions are not in compliance with laws, orders, policies, and procedures (e.g., use of force, arrest powers, time and attendance).

Ability to Effectively and Ethically Deal with Others: Ability to: maintain a professional attitude when carrying out duties and complying with departmental policies, even when they involve emotionally charged situations.

Ability to Plan, Organize, and Manage Events, Incidents, And Crime Scenes: Ability to: determine when it is appropriate for weapons to be drawn and/or discharged; solve problems and make decisions where there is no standard training or procedure, using experience and good judgment; take appropriate action in a crisis (e.g., in a rapidly unfolding and/or dangerous situation).

Ability to Conduct Effective Investigations: Ability to: calm, placate, and reassure witnesses and victims in order to maintain their cooperation at the scene of an incident, during the course of an investigation, and/or during court proceedings; recognize and pursue leads in an investigation until fully explored.

Ability to Collect, Manage, and Analyze Information: Ability to: prioritize tasks, issues, or problems to manage own work time efficiently and effectively, when conflicting demands/issues arise; apply provisions of laws, regulations, departmental orders and legal documents to clarify issues, solve problems, and answer questions on the job; identify and gather information from a variety of sources, including observation and listening, and review law enforcement information resources.

Ability to Effectively Communicate Orally: Ability to: verbally explain or respond to questions from others appropriately, giving essential facts, opinions, and/or direction, so that the information will be understood and accepted.

Critical Incident Exercise

Overview

For this exercise, you will be presented with a critical incident that has been developed by SFPD subject matter experts and asked to operate as the Field Supervisor at the scene. You will be provided with instructions which will provide you with updates on resources, locations, suspects, and victims. Your response through the scenario will be video recorded. It is anticipated that you will have two minutes for each response period. Your recorded responses will be evaluated after the assessment center by a panel of assessors. You will be evaluated on your strategic and tactical skills and your communication skills during this critical incident. You will be informed of the critical incident situation and duration at the time of the assessment center.

Sample Instructions

During your time in this exercise, you will assume the role of the on-duty Sergeant. You will first be read an introduction to the scenario. After you are given the introduction to the scenario, you will be asked to respond with the actions you would take based on the information provided. There will be a countdown timer on the computer screen for each response period.

Following the scenario introduction, several contingencies will follow that will provide you with additional information and updates as the scenario unfolds. Please respond to each contingency as if you were the Field Supervisor, and explain any action you would take as the Field Supervisor given the information you are receiving.

For this exercise, please direct your communication towards the cameras. A packet of note paper has been provided for you to use. You may write and take notes throughout the exercise. The assessors will not see or evaluate your notes.

Test Tips

[Preparation strategies below are suggestions only. Each individual is personally responsible for determining which preparation strategies and tips are appropriate for him/her.]

- Speak to the camera as if it is the assessor panel [It will be positioned right over the computer monitor].
- Speak loud enough for your responses to be heard by the assessors. Make sure that you speak clearly.
- Communicate everything you are thinking. If you don't say it, it can't be scored.
- It is important to monitor your time during the critical incident.
- Think about the totality of the incident.
- Consider all resources available to you and how can use them.

Situational Interview Exercise

During the situational interview exercise, you will be presented with a number of scenarios relevant to the rank of Sergeant, and asked how you might respond to each scenario. You will be informed of the number of situational questions and the amount of time you will have to complete the exercise during the assessment center. The situational questions will be delivered via video on a computer screen and your responses will be video recorded. It is anticipated that you will have two minutes for each response period. Your recorded responses will be evaluated after the assessment center by a panel of assessors. You will be scored on the content of your responses, as well as your oral communication skills.

Sample Instructions

You will be read a series of five interview questions related to the position of Sergeant. Remember to manage your time while providing your responses. If you complete your response before time is over, please state so to the camera and wait for the video to prompt you to the next portion of the assessment.

Sample Situational Question

The chief has recently made policy changes that you personally don't agree with. You suspect your subordinates will have a problem with the changed policy as well. As a newly-promoted Sergeant, how would you handle this situation?

Test Tips

[Preparation strategies below are suggestions only. Each individual is personally responsible for determining which preparation strategies and tips are appropriate for herself/himself.]

- Speak to the cameras as if they were the assessor panel [It will be positioned right over the computer monitor].
- Speak loud enough for your responses to be heard by the assessors. Make sure that you speak clearly.
- Ensure your response is clear and concise; fully present all necessary information.

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- It is important to monitor your time while responding to each question.
- You do not have to use the entire time given for the exercise.
- Ensure your response follows a logical sequence. Keep your audience in mind.

Test Preparation Strategies

The information below is meant to be a brief general overview to help you prepare for assessment center components that will be video recorded. Your responses will be recorded to each exercise, and assessors will review footage of your performance.

As you approach a promotional competition, the most important thing is your own personal readiness for assuming a higher-level position and how that compares with the readiness of others. That does not mean formal preparation only, such as education and study. It also means your mental, intellectual and developmental readiness.

In the assessment center, there is nothing to be gained, and much to be lost, by trying to pretend you are someone other than who you are. You do, however, want to show yourself to your best advantage.

Arrive early

This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to minimize stress.

Prepare

You may be able to do well without preparing, but you can always do better with preparation. Remember, you are competing against others who are also very good and you need to do your best to stand out as excellent. The more prepared you are, the more relaxed and confident you will be. There are many ways you can prepare:

- **Understand the job.** Understanding the job itself is the most important way to improve your competitiveness for promotion. The more you understand about supervision, management, department practices and organizational goals, the better you will be able to answer potential questions relating to the job and organization. Expand your understanding of management issues and solutions through study and seeking mentors. Even reading a management book can give you more depth.
- **Familiarize Yourself with Instructions and Type of Exercises:** Carefully read and become familiar with the instructions and the type of exercises that are described in this guide. You will feel more comfortable during the examination if you are familiar with the instructions and exercises prior to the actual test administration. Try to imagine what scenarios may be presented to you. Practice how you would respond to these scenarios on your own and with others. Becoming familiar with the mechanics of taking the test will save time and ease anxiety on test day.
- **Minimize how much you will need to “wing it.”** An assessment center is like an emergency response. You never know precisely what the demands will be, but the more

you have practiced what you can, the easier it is to improvise and adapt. You will always have to demonstrate flexibility and on-the-spot thinking. Try to develop your thinking as much as you can in advance. Study your handouts. Learn as much as you can about the job. Think about how you would handle management challenges like those you have observed during your employment.

Don't pretend

Represent yourself honestly and don't try to fake it. Don't spin your experience to sound like something it's not. Don't use words you don't know as that is a quick way to cast doubt on your credibility, intelligence and integrity. It is easy for assessors to identify candidates who have memorized answers to questions that they don't really understand or believe. Respond to the specific situation, rather than regurgitating a prepared list of actions that may not apply.

Display confidence

You are applying for a position of greater responsibility. You will need to be a role model of confidence and credibility. Imagine the most effective supervisor you can think of and embody that demeanor.

- **Show that you can communicate openly.** Answer questions directly. You do not need to repeat the question. Speak directly into the camera so assessors can hear you.
- **Don't act confused.** Display confidence in your responses.
- **Don't self-deprecate or apologize for your answers.**

Think aloud

Whatever your answer to a question is, it is better if you think aloud. Considering options is an important part of management thinking.

Don't make assumptions

The assessors are considering large amounts of complex information about many candidates. Don't assume anyone has memorized or knows anything about you. If something is important for understanding what you are saying, just say it.

Be concise in your communication

Sufficient time is provided in the exercises to communicate the necessary answers to questions. Do not repeat information just to fill time. Time management is a critical management skill that requires preparation and organization.

Relax as much as you can

Try to maintain physical relaxation and use appropriate gestures. Smile - don't act like you are in pain and don't feel you have to fill every silence. Answer questions and then wait for the next question.

Do your best

Remember, the most important thing is to represent yourself honestly and do your best.

Examination Day

Examination Site Directions

The assessment center will be administered at the CCSF Test Center located at 1740 Cesar Chavez Street San Francisco, CA 94124 (just West of I-280).



At the site you will check in using your Driver license or SFPD identification card.

Exam Ground Rules

During the examination, the vast majority of candidates behave in a professional manner. However, it takes only one individual to disrupt an examination. Please understand the goal is to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all candidates.

As stated above, to participate in the assessment center, you will be required to review and sign the confidentiality agreement. You must bring the signed agreement with you to the Test. You will be expected to abide by the Ground Rules below.

As a reminder, if you require reasonable accommodation for this exam, you must contact DHR via e-mail at dhr-publicsafety@sfgov.org by **0800 hours on Monday April 30, 2021.**

Ground Rules

Electronic Devices. Possession of any electronic devices that transmit and/or store information are prohibited during the test in order to protect the security of the testing process. Therefore, you will be required to relinquish all such devices before taking the examination, including pagers. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Because we will not be responsible for these collected devices, we strongly recommend that you leave these devices at home or in another secure location. In line with virus mitigation protocol*, you must bring a clear plastic bag

labeled with your name in which to store any electronic communication device(s) that you bring. Such devices must be powered down.

Materials or Writing Utensils. In line with virus mitigation protocol*, you must bring writing implements of your choice such as pencils, pens, and hi-liters in a clear plastic bag. Do not bring paper, calculators, stopwatches, or any other devices or materials to the test site.

Standard Watches. A regular wristwatch is okay to wear, but you may not use any “smart” watch or watch which has an audible alarm or tone which could distract others.

Assigned Seating / Testing. You will be directed to specific seats and test rooms. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, you may not change your assigned seat or test room.

Dress Code: The dress code will be Court attire.

Leaving the Test Site. If you leave the building during the examination process, you will not be allowed to return. No one will be allowed to leave the test site to smoke, eat, or “get some fresh air.”

Food. No chewing gum, food, or drinks of any kind will be allowed in the examination facility. You may bring bottled water.

Talking. During the brief orientation, silence is required so all candidates can concentrate. The only exceptions to this rule are during any questions period. To ask a question, raise your hand. Anyone disrupting the test environment will be subject to disqualification from the selection process.

Restroom Breaks. You will be given an opportunity to use the restroom just prior to registration. Thereafter, there will be no opportunity to use the restroom until you have finished the test. There will be no formal restroom breaks. Candidates are not allowed to discuss any aspect of the test during restroom breaks. The restrooms will be monitored.

Illness or Emergency. In the event of a medical emergency, medical assistance will be called. In the unlikely event of an evacuation notice, please remain seated or in your test room. We have an established protocol to handle the situation and we will quickly provide specific instructions. The protocol will protect the integrity of the examination and ensure an orderly evacuation.

Do your best

Remember, the most important thing is to represent yourself honestly and do your best.

Good luck to you in the promotional process! If you have any questions about the process, please contact the San Francisco Department of Human Resources.

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* Candidates will be informed in their appointment notice if and how virus mitigation protocol changes by the dates of the test.