

2018 EXAMINATION PREPARATION GUIDE

H-4 Inspector, Bureau of Fire Prevention



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This *Examination Preparation Guide* is intended to help you prepare for your upcoming H-4 Inspector promotional examination. It will cover the following:

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1. INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to help prepare you for your upcoming H-4 Inspector examination. A general description of the test is provided, along with sample test instructions and questions, so that you have a general idea as to what to expect on the day of the test.¹ The Department of Human Resources Public Safety Team (PST) has also included some suggestions, tips, and recommendations that have been known to help past examination candidates here in San Francisco and elsewhere. Of course, the PST cannot guarantee that following these suggestions and tips will automatically result in a high test score. Preparing for a test is ultimately each candidate's responsibility. In fact, many successful candidates often go well beyond what is suggested in this guide to prepare.

Candidates are reminded that the examination process is ultimately governed by the job announcement and official documents such as Civil Service Rules. Many of these regulations are available on the City's websites, www.sfdhr.org/ and www.sfgov.org/civilservice/.

If you have any questions after reading this Preparation Guide, please send them to dhr-publicsafety@sfgov.org. Your email should be received no later than 5:00 PM Pacific time on May 25, 2018. Please include "H-4 candidate question" in the email's subject line. Also note that, in order to be fair, the PST will not answer one candidate's question without sharing the answer to the question with everyone. The PST responses to relevant questions will be emailed to candidates and also posted on the DHR website no later than 5:00 PM on June 8, 2018. For obvious reasons, we cannot answer questions that might compromise the security or validity of the test.

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

We wish you the best of luck as you prepare for and participate in the promotional process.

¹ The PST reserves the right to make changes to this guide, if necessary. If modifications are required at a later date, the PST will notify you of the revision(s) as soon as possible prior to the test.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE 2018 PROMOTIONAL PROCESS

The primary focus of this guide is to help you prepare for the first test component, the Performance Exercise (PE), and the second component, the Role Play Exercise (RP). In this guide, you will learn about the PE and RP test format and instructions, and tips that could help you to do your best on the day of the assessment.

Read through the entire guide carefully. By learning the process through which your assessment is being developed and conducted, as described within this study guide, you can better understand how to use the remainder of your pre-assessment preparation period to prepare for this process.

2.1 The Promotional Examination Components

As indicated above, the H-4 Inspector promotional examination process will include two components: 1) Performance Exercise; and 2) Role Play. The exam component weights are as follows:

Performance Exercise = 60 %

Role Play Exercise = 40 %

Component 1: Performance Exercise

The first component is a Performance Exercise that will be used to measure basic knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary to perform the tasks required of an H-4 Inspector. All H-4 candidates will be scheduled to take the PE on the same day. It is tentatively scheduled for June 19, 2018.

Component 2: Role Play (RP)

The second component of the process is a role play. The RP is a method that is often used in the public sector to determine which candidates possess the requisite KSAs necessary to perform effectively for the position of interest. All H-4 candidates will complete the RP on the same day. The RP is tentatively scheduled for June 27, 2018.

3. TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

3.1 Job Analysis

Job analysis is the process of studying a job to determine the specific tasks that employees in that position perform, as well as the competencies (i.e., KSAs) needed to perform those tasks. Results from job-analysis studies often yield job descriptions and lists of KSAs and other attributes that may be required of individuals who perform the job being studied. For the current H-4 Inspector promotional process, information gathered from the most current job analysis completed in late 2016 was used to identify the tasks, KSAs, and behaviors that served as the foundation of the testing process.

3.1.1 Results

The following sections present tasks (organized by major duty area), knowledge areas, and ability areas that were determined by the job analysis to be important to the H-4 Inspector position.

3.1.1(a) Task Statements

Tasks
Inspects buildings such as day care centers, offices, stores, apartments, and other multiple-use dwellings, hotels, factories, restaurants, and theaters for life safety issues.
Inspects occupancies for fire clearance at request of other agencies (e.g., SFPD, Planning Department, DPH, etc.) who are issuing permits.
Inspects fire protection equipment associated with food preparation equipment (e.g., commercial food cookers, hood and duct systems, and hood fire suppression systems) to determine if they are in compliance with fire codes.
Visually inspects buildings for those factors that impact life safety to ensure that fire codes are met, there are no obstructions, egress is protected, and rated hardware and assemblies are appropriate.
Visually inspects public assembly sites in response to reports of violations to determine whether fire safety problems exist.
Checks occupant load permit during inspection of public assembly structures for possible fire code violations.
Inspects and monitors fire safety compliance at public assembly events.
Inspects portable fire extinguishers for type, appropriate tags, capacity, location distribution, and maintenance.
Effectively plans and prioritizes daily activities.

Observes housekeeping of building (facility) to ensure no hazardous conditions (e.g., oily floors) exist.
Informs building representative if additional life safety equipment is required to meet fire codes.
Informs fire officers of special conditions that were noticed during inspections.
Discusses with property owner, developer, contractor or other representative the fire code requirements and required fire safety devices to be installed, maintained, and operated.
Reviews plans and blue prints of new construction or alternations to reconcile differences between actual construction and the approved building plans for fire code compliance.
Informs building representative of process to follow to obtain approval for alternate forms of fire protection.
Determines during inspections whether hazardous materials are properly stored.
Discusses complaints with complainant in person or by phone in order to determine the exact nature and description of the problem.
Visually inspects building for which complaint has been received to determine if there is a fire code violation.
Redirects complainant concerning non-fire safety problems on phone or in person to appropriate agency.
Handles phone or written referrals from fire department officials or other agencies (e.g., DBI, SFPD, DPH) regarding complaints that need to be investigated.
Explains to owner or building representative the life safety problems encountered during the inspection, how to comply with fire code, and when the problems must be abated.
Answers questions from a complainant (e.g., a tenant) regarding whether a particular problem is a fire code violation and determines whether a site visit is necessary.
Assesses seriousness of a fire code violation in order to determine how much time should be given to correct the problem.
Re-inspects fire safety violations, as required, in order to determine whether required repairs have been completed.
Determines whether fire safety violations/citations that have not been corrected should be referred to supervisor.
Assesses nature of complaint to determine if a Notice of Violation or citation should be issued.
Writes letters to individuals responsible for fire code violations describing the exact code violations and the actions that are required to abate the violation.

Fills out forms and reports necessary for alerting other agencies (e.g., local building department, State Fire Marshal's Office, and HSA) regarding needed actions.
Issues notices of violation and/or citations for fire code violations.
Gathers information from complainant, building representatives, and tenants to assess whether a complaint is warranted.
Researches San Francisco Fire Code, Uniform Building Code with San Francisco Amendments, NFPA Guidelines, state codes, housing code, etc., in the process of conducting inspections and writing reports.
Researches building history information on computer, microfilm, and in paper files to determine previous violations, building records and current activities.
Discusses fire codes with other public safety officials to determine which codes apply to a particular fire safety problem.
Confers with appropriate city and state agencies to ensure the validity of licenses and permits.
Seeks advice when necessary from coworkers and supervisors regarding life safety issues.
Provides information on the history of a building, fire violations, complaints, and other such information for input into the computer system.
Refers questions that they are unable to answer to specialists (e.g., hazardous and flammable materials, permits, high-rise, hospitals, jails, or day care centers).
Communicates verbally the purpose of inspections to owners and tenants in order to educate the public on safety issues.
Responds by phone or in person to requests from members of the public regarding fire code information.
Verbally explains the Fire Code regulations to members of the public.
Responds to the public verbally or in writing with information regarding federal, state, and City fire codes.
Trains newly-appointed fire inspectors in the procedures of the prevention division and in the interpretation of the various codes and bureau policies as requested by immediate supervisor
Reads and becomes familiar with applicable building and fire codes, such as Uniform Building Code as modified for San Francisco, State Fire Marshal Handbook, and Housing Codes.
Reads technical documents pertaining to fire safety in order to maintain current job knowledge.
Reads SFFD administrative bulletins to maintain current knowledge of code changes and code interpretation.

Attends classes, conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. to further develop and expand scope of knowledge.

3.1.1(b) Knowledge Statements

Codes and Standards
Knowledge of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations State Fire Codes.
Knowledge of Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations State Building Codes.
Knowledge of local building code.
Knowledge of State and local fire codes.
Knowledge of the Fire Code and Building Code regarding types of standpipe systems.
Knowledge of the Fire Code and Building Code regarding types of sprinkler systems.
Knowledge of the Fire Code and Building Code with regard to the occupancy associated with various types of buildings.
Knowledge of building materials, in order to determine if structure complies with applicable fire codes.
Knowledge of building construction, in order to determine if structure complies with applicable fire codes.
Knowledge of the Building Construction manual and Building Code with regard to the types of construction of various types of buildings.
Knowledge of fire codes regarding fire suppression systems.
Knowledge of fire codes regarding fire protection systems.
Knowledge of the building code with regard to standpipe systems and the occupancy associated with various types of buildings.
Knowledge of the material contained in the California Building Code.
Knowledge of the material contained in the State Amendments to the International Building Code.
Knowledge of the material contained in the San Francisco Building Code.
Knowledge of the material contained in the California Fire Code.
Knowledge of the material contained in the State Amendments to the International Fire Code.
Knowledge of the material contained in the San Francisco Fire Code and amendments.
Knowledge of the Fire Code and Building Code regarding types of building construction.
Knowledge of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards 13, 13R, and 13D Sprinkler Installation
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 20 Centrifugal Pumps.

Knowledge of NFPA Standard 14 Standpipe Hose Systems.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 72 National Fire Alarm Code.
Knowledge of California Edition of NFPA Standard 25, Water-Based Fire Protection Systems.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 231, General Storage.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 231 C, Rack Storage of Material.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 201, Clean Agent System.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 17, Dry Chemical Extinguishing System.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 17A, Wet Chemical Extinguishing System.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 92A, Smoke Control System.
Knowledge of NFPA Standard 30, Flammable Liquids Code.
Knowledge of State Fire Marshal Code Interpretations.
Knowledge of the material contained in the California Building Code Handbook.
Knowledge of DBI bulletins related to code interpretations.
Knowledge of the material contained in building and fire code and commentary books.
Department General Orders, Guides, Handbooks and Manuals
Knowledge of the SFFD General Orders.
Knowledge of Bureau of Fire Prevention administrative bulletins related to code interpretation and procedures.
Knowledge of the SFFD Rules and Regulations.
Knowledge of the Building Construction manual regarding the manner in which fire affects various types of building construction.
Knowledge of the material contained in the National Fire Alarm Code Handbook.
Knowledge of the material contained in the Sprinkler Systems Handbook.
Knowledge of the Department's High-Rise manual regarding operational procedures for high-rise buildings.
Knowledge of the SFFD Building Construction Manual.
Knowledge of the SFFD Hazardous Materials Operating Guide.
Knowledge of the SFFD High-Rise Manual.
Knowledge of the SFFD R-1 Inspection Operating Guide.
Knowledge of the Water Supply Manual regarding how low-pressure systems in San Francisco operate.
Knowledge of the Department's Truck and Ladder Manual regarding capabilities of trucks and engines.
Knowledge of the Department's Hose Appliance Manual regarding types of standpipe systems.
Knowledge of the SFFD Water Supply Manual regarding different types of water supply (e.g., hydrants, water flow, availability).
Knowledge of the Ventilation Manual regarding ventilation procedures.

Rules, Regulations, and Policies
Knowledge of racial and sexual harassment preventions policies and reporting requirements.
Knowledge of SFFD procedures for hearing complaints of racial and sexual harassment.
Knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
Knowledge of the Department's policies regarding personal appearance.
Knowledge of the Department's policies regarding uniforms and protective clothing.
Knowledge of the Department's rules and regulations regarding absenteeism.
Knowledge of the Department's rules and regulations regarding failure to report.
Knowledge of the Department's rules and regulations regarding vacation, sick, disability, and other authorized leave.
Knowledge of Civil Service rules and regulations regarding vacation, sick, disability, and other authorized leave.
Knowledge of the Department's rules and regulations regarding tardiness.
Knowledge of where to refer questions from the public to different agencies within the City and County
Knowledge of reports that need to be completed and when for each event.
Knowledge of who to inform and contact for emergency or routine events.
Knowledge of SFFD hierarchy in relation to how information must be forwarded through the chain of command.
Knowledge of SFFD rules and procedures regarding journal entries and documentation of incidents.
Knowledge of Departmental staff and their functions.
Knowledge of computer software programs such as Outlook, PeopleSoft, and Microsoft Word.
Knowledge of SFFD organization in order to provide information to those outside of the Fire Department.
Knowledge of common, prevalent violations that are likely to exist in building to facilitate inspections.
Knowledge of testing and resetting fire alarm systems.
Knowledge of operation of sprinkler systems and how to operate shut-off valves.
Knowledge of how smoke and heat travel in buildings.
Knowledge of sprinkler supply and operation.
Knowledge of common electrical hazards.
Knowledge of general principles of hydraulics, water supply system friction loss, back pressure, and hose equipment to deliver fire stream.
Knowledge of the Department's radio procedures.

Knowledge of BFPI Oracle Management Information System (MIS) to monitor inspection activities and/or retrieve information on violations and citations issued.
Knowledge of the types of buildings and occupancies that are regulated by SFFD.
Knowledge of building code occupancy classifications and the life safety requirements of each.
Knowledge of how to read standard blueprints.
Knowledge of codes regarding fire safety requirements at public events and assemblages.
Knowledge of the procedures to be followed when there is a fire code violation.
Knowledge of operation of fire suppression equipment such as fire sprinklers, extinguishers, standpipes, fire and life safety systems, and elevator systems.
Knowledge of hazardous materials that could cause danger to firefighters or inhabitants of buildings or structures.
Knowledge of which reference sources are applicable to a particular fire safety prevention problem or concern.
Knowledge of where to obtain information regarding approved testing procedures
Knowledge of R-1 inspections and home safety procedures.
Knowledge of SFFD policies and procedures for training and instruction during drills.
Knowledge of procedures for completing applications for fire permits in order to answer citizen questions and review submitted permit applications.
Knowledge of fire extinguishers, their appropriate use, and capabilities.

3.1.1(c) Ability Statements

Enforcement Procedures
Ability to determine what procedures should be used to correct a fire code violation.
Ability to evaluate seriousness of a hazardous situation and when it should be corrected.
Ability to organize information from code books so that it useful in determining whether fire code violations exist.
Ability to recognize and analyze situations that might result in fire code violations at a later time.
Ability to apply the correct code and ordinance information to a particular safety problem or concern.
Ability to explain issues that give violators an opportunity to resolve their problems.
Ability to research statutes and regulations to identify legal sources that are relevant to the complaint.
Ability to recognize situations that should be referred to other agencies for the welfare of the public.
Ability to research existing problems to determine why violations have occurred.
Ability to compare a set of plans with the physical construction to determine whether they are in agreement.
Ability to determine if plans are in compliance with applicable building code and fire safety code requirements.
Ability to use basic arithmetic operations in order to calculate occupant load calculations, floor areas, voltage drop, water flow, etc.
Ability to explain technical information concerning fire code violations to a complainant.
Ability to understand implications of technical information being presented by architects, contractors, building inspectors, or engineers.
Ability to recognize building code violations that have to be referred to other agencies.
Ability to recognize a potentially hazardous situation during inspection and how it could be dealt with during a fire.
Ability to recognize misrepresentations on the part of occupants and/or building managers/owners.

Analyzing Information
Ability to select, organize, and present pertinent information in logical order.
Ability to gather information, develop plans and recommendations, and present arguments for particular options.
Ability to read and interpret written material from letters, reports, NFPA standards, and building and fire code sections.
Ability to collect and combine information from various sources for the purpose of providing summaries, interpretations, drawing conclusions, or recommending actions, policies, or procedures.
Ability to recognize violations of rules and regulations and policies and procedures.
Ability to sense cues that indicate that potential personnel problems may arise.
Ability to determine which situations should be referred to a supervisor.
Oral Communication
Ability to communicate verbally with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.
Ability to understand verbal communications from others.
Ability to effectively communicate his or her understanding of information provided orally by superiors, subordinates, peers, and citizens.
Ability to explain technical information so that it is understood by others.
Ability to explain information and procedures in manuals and books to others.
Ability to speak clearly at all times, including in an emergency situation.
Ability to transmit messages clearly, concisely, and according to proper procedure using equipment such as Department radios, telephone, etc.
Ability to verbally explain or present arguments in support of actions, conclusions, or recommendations for the purpose of gaining agreement, acceptance, or cooperation.
Ability to question a caller or complainant in order to collect the necessary information.
Ability to interact with public to explain hazards so that they know why correction is needed and how they will benefit.
Ability to communicate why a fire code violation is a problem for the violator as well as the BFP.
Ability to obtain information from a caller or complainant who may be emotionally upset.
Ability to speak in a polite and courteous manner when a caller or complainant is upset.
Ability to calm a caller or complainant by providing information to find a resolution of the problem.
Ability to communicate appropriately with distraught persons and to calm them.

Written Communication
Ability to describe fire inspection issues succinctly in writing.
Ability to write a report that describes in concise and objective terms what was learned during an inspection.
Ability to write a report that describes in concise and objective terms what was learned during an inspection related to a citizen complaint.
Ability to write a report that presents data in a clear and logical manner, and explains reasons for recommendations.
Ability to present information clearly and accurately in a written report or letter.
Ability to recall and record events accurately for making journal entries, preparing inspection reports, documenting personnel actions, and completing other Departmental reports and forms.
Ability to write accurate descriptive narratives.
Ability to complete required paperwork in a timely and accurate manner.
Ability to follow instructions and complete forms, supply orders, and reports in a timely, concise, and accurate manner.
Ability to write recommendations and opinions with proper grammar, spelling, and structure.
Ability to determine whether reports have been completed correctly.
Ability to select, organize, and present information in writing in a logical order.
Ability to enter and retrieve information via computer.
Ability to keep others informed of developments at the work site that affect them.
Ability to read and interpret written material in fire codes, building codes, and manuals.
Ability to read and interpret written messages.
Ability to read and interpret floor plans.
Ability to read and interpret maps in order to locate addresses, cisterns, etc.
Resource Management
Ability to allocate resources according to the needs of the situation.
Ability to organize inspection work schedules in a way that maximizes the amount of work completed.
Ability to plan several schedules that do not conflict with one another and that are all accomplished within the time constraints.
Ability to adjust schedules and coordinate them with the activities of other units.
Ability to prioritize and determine which issues need to be addressed immediately and which can be deferred.

Training
Ability to explain procedures clearly in training, eg. SROs, SFISE
Ability to control and direct a training session so that all are involved and participate.
Ability to extract information from manuals and to apply it to training activities.
Ability to demonstrate procedures in training so that all participants understand.
Maintenance of Equipment
Ability to apply general electrical principles to maintenance, training, and prevention activities.
Ability apply general principles of mechanics to maintenance, training, and prevention activities.
Emergency Response
Ability to recognize a hazardous material spill.
Ability to determine, from the information provided by a complainant, the severity/priority of the potential hazard.
Ability to coordinate emergency response activities with personnel from other departments (e.g., police, ambulance, Highway Patrol, or Red Cross).
Ability to assess the safety characteristics of the roof structure.
Ability to apply information gathered from floor plans in one location to a different location in the same building.
Interpersonal Relations
Ability to present and promote a professional image of the SFFD.
Ability to avoid situations that may compromise the ethical standards of fire inspectors.
Ability to carry out activities in a manner that serves as a model for other personnel.
Ability to demonstrate respect for the opinions of others.
Ability to control personal feelings and demonstrate respect for others involved in Fire Department activities.
Ability to remain calm in stressful situations.
Ability to accept responsibility when his or her work needs improvement.
Ability to recognize when his or her work may be deficient and require additional resources.
Ability to accept constructive criticism in an appropriate manner by superiors or peers.
Ability to recognize limitations of authority and act accordingly.
Ability to work effectively with persons from different cultures or backgrounds.
Ability to place his or her individuality secondary to achieving team objectives.
Ability to recognize individual differences in others in order to get maximum effort and productivity.
Ability to get along with others in a community work environment.

Ability to share work information that may be of value to peers.
Ability to take initiative in making decisions in the absence of a superior officer.
Ability to explain reasons for actions to gain cooperation.
Ability to recognize the legitimacy of the viewpoints of others.
Ability to work as part of a team and carry one's load.
Ability to overcome obstacles or problems that may occur while carrying out an assignment.
Ability to communicate effectively with superiors and peers from different cultures and backgrounds.
Ability to solve conflicts among peers.
Ability to support peers during training.
Ability to support peers during the course of their duties.

3.1.2 How does this help you?

As mentioned above, job analysis information is used to support the development of assessments used in the selection process. That is, the development of the actual assessments is intended to approximate behaviors that H-4 Inspectors currently perform. Therefore, to help better prepare the upcoming test components, you may want to first review and familiarize yourself with the job tasks, knowledge areas, and abilities identified in the above sections.

For example, you may want to carefully read through the tasks associated with the various duty areas and then assess your personal level of comfort and understanding of the behaviors that would be required of you if you were to perform those job duties. Such a review may help you to identify those job tasks for which you may need further preparation. Similarly, review the knowledge and abilities to identify areas where you may wish to improve. [See 4.6 Suggested Reference List for possible source material associated with relevant knowledge areas.] Then, create a study checklist of the subjects or topics that you feel you should learn or “brush-up” on. Mapping out a schedule or plan as to when you can review each of these areas prior to the exam can be reassuring to you, as you will have given some thought to how to best maximize your time to study subjects for which you might most benefit in mastering. Some subjects may just require your quick review and other subjects may require that you devote more time to learn. Your studying schedule should take these differences into account. As you approach the test date, check off the subjects that you had originally identified in your personal checklist of subjects to review. It is also recommended that you familiarize yourself with the test component descriptions below to help identify that part of the job that we will be measuring in the exam. For example, although “Emergency Response” is an important part of the job from a job analysis standpoint, we will not be measuring that in the exam.

3.2 Test Content Development and Review

Although the content of a test may not be known in advance, how tests are created should not be altogether mysterious. Test content is derived from the job's major or important work areas. These work areas are often conceptualized from the task groups that are created in association with the job analysis questionnaire.

In the development of test components, the PST works closely with subject matter experts (SMEs) at the rank of Lieutenant or higher to identify scenarios and other work behaviors that can be simulated in the assessment. PST and the SMEs work collaboratively to refine the scenarios, add information, remove information, and otherwise make the scenarios appropriate for use in the assessment. With complete and accurate scenario information for each test item, PST and SMEs, then work again collaboratively to identify the response options (e.g., "positive courses of action" to be taken) for each test item.

4. YOUR TEST COMPONENTS

Take time to familiarize yourself with the information presented below regarding the Performance Exercise (PE) and Role Play (RP).

4.1 Overview of the Performance Exercise

In the examination, candidates will be asked to assume the role of an H-4 Inspector, "Chris Candidate." Chris Candidate will have a variety of different inspection and plan check scenarios to address. Candidates will be given a fixed amount of time to prepare their responses to these scenarios. When this allotted time expires, they will be escorted to another room at the test center where they will be asked to verbally respond to the inspection/plan check items. Their verbal responses will be audio-recorded by a camera. However, the camera will not be recording anything visual except for your randomly assigned candidate number. In other words, the raters who assess your performance will only be hearing your verbal responses. Since the raters will not be watching you as you deliver your responses, please feel free to dress casually and comfortably for this particular test component. Also, please note that the raters will not see your notes or any of your documents during their assessment of your performance during this exercise.

You will be allotted three (3) hours to review the materials and formulate your responses. You will be allotted twenty (20) minutes to record your response to all parts of the exercise. You are not required to use all of the time allotted to record your response. If you finish your response before the 20 minutes expires, simply say "I have finished my response," and then open the door to your test room to notify the proctor that you are finished. Remain in the room until the proctor arrives and provides further instruction.

4.2 Sample Performance Exercise Instructions and Items

Performance Exercise

The PE is a simulation designed to measure your ability to apply knowledge that a BFP Inspector needs in order to complete his or her daily activities. In this exercise, you will be given a fixed amount of time [three hours] to review building floor plans, photos, and/or written narratives relative to code compliance and enforcement and to make appropriate notes to the questions. The exercise will be in three parts as described below. You will respond by answering questions and citing the relevant code(s) and/or standard(s). The codes and/or standards will be contained in the reference materials [see Section 7] provided to you on the day of the test.

When the allotted time expires, you will be escorted to another room at the test center where you will be asked to verbally respond to the questions. The verbal responses will be audio recorded by a camera, however the camera will not record anything visual other than your randomly assigned candidate number. In other words, the raters who assess your performance will only be hearing your verbal responses. Also, please note that the raters will not see your notes or any of your documents during their assessment of your performance during this exercise.

You have three (3) hours to review the materials and formulate your response. You will be allotted twenty (20) minutes to record your response to the exercise. You are not required to use all of the time allotted. If you finish your response before the 20 minutes expires, simply say "I have finished my response," and then open the door to your test room to notify the proctor that you are finished. Remain in the room until the proctor arrives and provides further instruction.

The PE will be in three parts:

1. **Plan Review** – reviewing a building plan and answering questions.
2. **New Construction Inspection** – reviewing a diagram and photos to identify items that may be non-compliant and must be corrected. There will also be code scenario questions. You will read narrative descriptions of scenarios and answer questions with regard to code compliance.
3. **Annual Inspection** – reviewing a booklet of photos to identify issues that may need correction to be compliant with code/standards.

On the day of the test, you will be provided with specific instructions and three answer booklets – one for each part of the PE. As indicated in the sample test materials in Section 2, you will write your notes in response to the test questions [which should include citing specific code

references to support your answers] in the Answer Booklets and use these notes when giving your verbal response.

Sample Test Materials for PE

Contained in this section is a sample question and response for the exercise. The sample test materials are *similar* to the materials that you will receive on the day of the test. The sample response is an example of the information that the candidate should provide when responding to test questions.

Sample Candidate Instructions for New Construction

You have been provided with the following materials:

- New Construction Booklet

You will do the following:

- Review each photo in the booklet, and do the following:
 - For Yes or No questions:
 - Check the appropriate Yes or No box
 - Provide an explanation in the space provided
 - Cite the appropriate code(s) and/or standard(s) from the reference materials to support your answer
 - For open ended questions:
 - Enter your answer and provide an explanation in the space provided
 - Cite the appropriate code(s) and/or standard(s) from the reference materials to support your answer

Please note that the number of lines provided for your response does not indicate the number of relevant references expected.

Sample Photo



Standpipe A Front View

Standpipe height from sidewalk = 14"



Standpipe A Side View

Sample Response:

Standpipe A: Is there a code compliance issue(s)?

Yes No

Explanation
<i>Fire Department connections shall be located not less than</i>
<i>18" above the level of adjoining ground, sidewalk or</i>
<i>grade surface.</i>
References
<i>NFPA 14, Section 6.4.6</i>

Sample Candidate Instructions for Plan Check

You have been provided with the following materials:

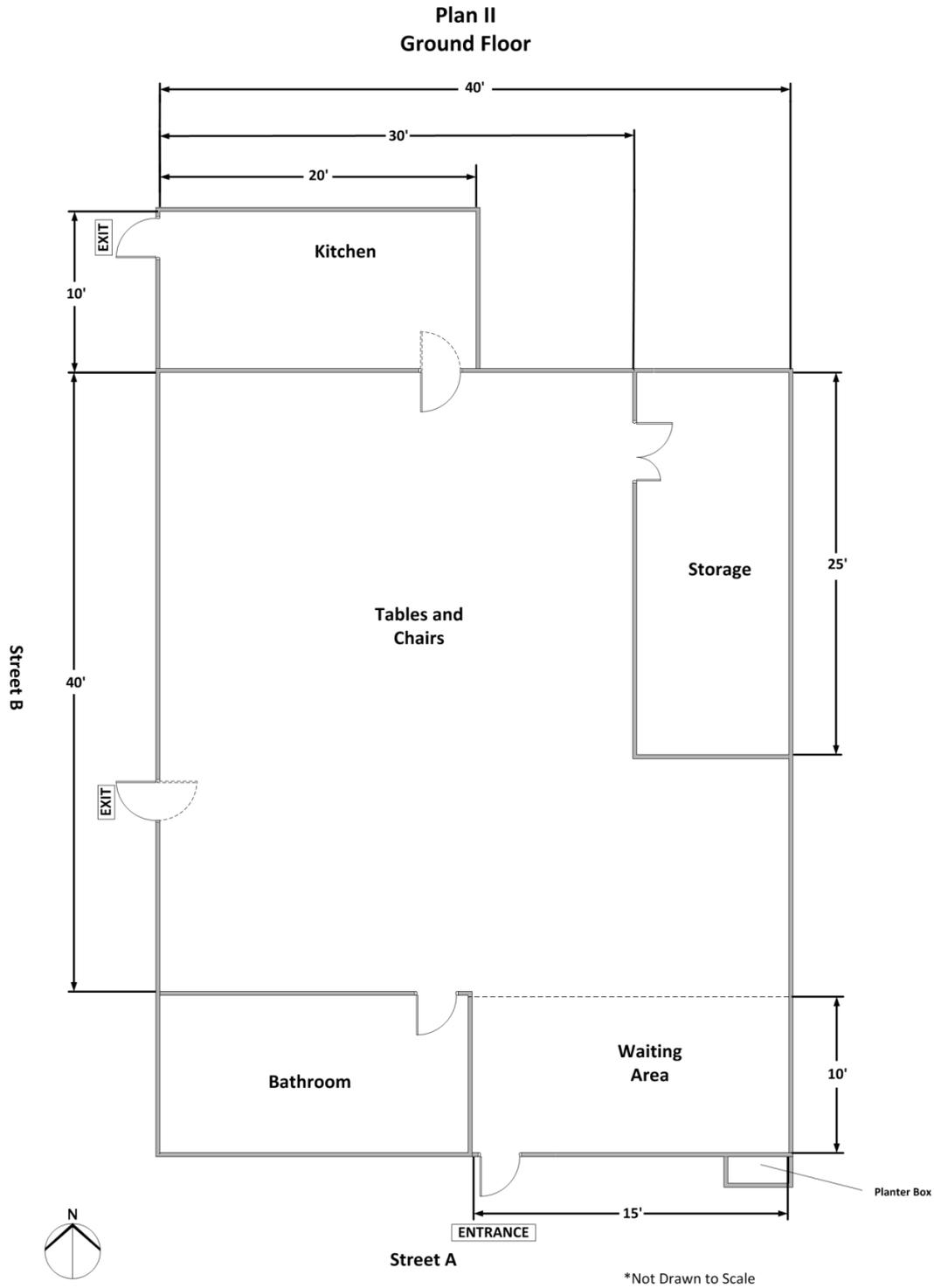
- Plan Check Booklet

You will do the following:

- Review the diagrams and background information in the booklet, and do the following:
 - For Yes or No questions:
 - Check the appropriate Yes or No box
 - Provide an explanation in the space provided
 - Cite the appropriate code(s) and/or standard(s) from the reference materials to support your answer
 - For open ended questions:
 - Enter your answer and provide an explanation in the space provided
 - Cite the appropriate code(s) and/or standard(s) from the reference materials to support your answer

Please note that the number of lines provided for your response does not indicate the number of relevant references expected.

Sample Diagram:



Background Information:

- **Ground floor of existing three story commercial building Type II- B**
- **Proposed change of use from retail to restaurant occupancy**
- **Building does not have a sprinkler system.**
- **A hood and duct system protecting the stove and deep fat fryer has been approved under a separate permit.**

Sample Response:

What would the occupant load be for the restaurant?

Answer and Explanation
Occupant Load is 121
Reference(s)
CBC 1004.1.2, CBC 1004.2, CBC Table 1004.1.2
CFC 1004.1.2, CFC 1004.2, CFC Table 1004.1.2

4.3 Overview of the Role Play Exercise

Contained in this section are sample candidate instructions, a sample letter of complaint, and sample inspection notes. These materials are *similar* to the materials that you will receive on the day of the test. There is no sample answer for this exercise.

These candidate instructions are similar to the instructions that you will receive on the day of the test.

Sample Candidate Instructions

You have twenty (20) minutes to read these instructions, review the letter of complaint and the inspection notes, and prepare for your meeting with the building owner.

In this exercise you will play the role of Chris Candidate, an Inspector with the Bureau of Fire Prevention. Your task for this exercise is to meet and discuss the complaint and result of your inspection of the building with the owner, Lee Parker. The inspection notes document the building inspection that you conducted yesterday. Lee Parker requested to meet with you regarding the letter of complaint. You should assume that the information contained in the inspection notes is accurate.

You should discuss with Lee Parker any issues that you feel are relevant. You will have 10 minutes to conduct the meeting with Lee Parker. You may make notes during the meeting on the notepaper that has been provided to you.

After meeting with Lee Parker you will be taken to another room, along with your test materials, to draft a letter of response to the complainant for the Fire Marshal's signature. You will have all of the materials provided to you, including your notepaper, for reference to draft your letter of response to the complainant. You will have thirty (30) minutes to draft the letter.

In summary, the exercise will be administered in the following format:

1. You will read these instructions, and review the letter of complaint, the inspection notes, and other relevant materials to prepare for your meeting with Lee Parker.
TIME LIMIT: 20 minutes
 - If you finish preparing before your 20 minutes expire, you must remain in the test room; you will be taken to the role-play room only after the timer has sounded.
2. You will meet with building owner Lee Parker regarding the complaint and the results of the inspection that you conducted.
TIME LIMIT: 10 minutes
 - This portion of the exercise will be video-recorded.

3. You will be taken to another room where you will draft a letter of response to the complainant for the Fire Marshal's signature.

TIME LIMIT: 30 minutes

- If you finish drafting your letter before your 30 minutes expire, inform the proctor. The proctor will print a copy of the letter and ask you to certify by signing that it is a true and correct copy of your work. When the proctor retrieves the signed letter and confirms that all of your test materials have been collected, you will be sent to reception to obtain your ID and any personal belongings, and then directed to leave the test site.

Important Notes:

- For the purpose of this exercise, today's date is June 27, 2018
- You may refer to the test materials at any time during the exercise.

Sample Letter of Complaint

This letter is similar to the one that you will receive on the day of the test.

May 17, 2018

Fire Marshal
San Francisco Fire Department
698 Second Street
San Francisco, CA 94107-2015

Dear Fire Marshal,

I am writing this letter to express concern over serious fire code violations that have not been resolved in spite of repeated reminders by me that the law is being broken. The subject of my complaint is the restaurant that is next door to the building in which I live. The owner of the building, Lee Parker, is a very difficult person to deal with, and is always unreasonable. I need the Fire Department to force this person into compliance before people start getting seriously hurt. The specific violations that I am concerned about are as follows:

- The restaurant always packs more people in than permitted based on the posted occupancy load, especially on Friday and Saturday nights.
- There is a strong smell of cigarette smoke in my home, caused by the restaurant's staff smoking in back of the restaurant.

Your prompt attention to these issues would be greatly appreciated. If you need more information, please feel free to contact me. If you are not able to address my concerns quickly, then the City and the Fire Department will be liable if anyone does get hurt. Also, if I can't get resolution from you, I will have to take legal action.

Sincerely,

Les Cone

Les Cone
3629 Brody Court, Apt. 204
San Francisco, CA 94119

cc: Mayor Mark Farrell

Sample Inspection Notes

These inspection notes are similar to those that you will receive the day of the test.

Recorded by:
Inspector Chris Candidate

Building Inspected:
Brody Court Steak Palace
3629 Brody Court
San Francisco, CA 94119

Description:
One Story, Type V Construction, A-2 Occupancy

Background

- Inspection conducted on May 18 at 1445
- Responsible party, Lee Parker, building owner, not available. Spoke to restaurant manager Jill Hafton.
- Jill Hafton had to leave to pick up supplies for the evening dinner crowd. Ms. Hafton granted permission to conduct the inspection.

Inspection Results

1. Number of seats and tables in dining area exceeded the approved occupant load.

4.4 What do the Exercises measure?

The goal of the test exercises is to evaluate candidates' abilities, including their ability to apply their knowledge of department policies, procedures, best practices, and operations. This hopefully will produce an eligible list that reflects candidates' relative abilities and readiness to perform if appointed to an H-4 position. Again, these knowledge areas and abilities were identified in the job analysis (see above section 3.1 Job Analysis) as important and required to perform the job of an H-4 Inspector. In other words, they link directly back to the job analysis information.

For example, the competencies that MAY be measured by the PE are linked to the following KSA clusters:

- Codes and Standards
- Inspection Techniques
- Enforcement Procedures
- Analyzing Information
- Written Communication

Similarly, the competencies that MAY be measured by the RP are linked to the following KSA clusters:

- Codes and Standards
- Rules, Regulations, and Policies
- Inspection Techniques
- Analyzing Information
- Communication
- Written Communication
- Interpersonal Relations
- Enforcement Procedures

4.5 Suggested Reference List

Many candidates find it helpful to study internal source material prior to an assessment. This foundational information can help to increase one's confidence in their performance and can contribute to one's ability to perform successfully in many of the promotional assessment components.

Candidates should, at a minimum, have a working knowledge of all Department Policies, Department Rules and Regulations, Department Manuals, and local, state, and federal laws related to Fire Inspection. Some additional references are cited below. Revisions, deletions, and additions to these documents by the Fire Department or other authorities may have

occurred after March 1, 2018. Candidates are not responsible for knowing these very recent revisions for purposes of this assessment process. That is, candidates are only responsible for content in these documents that existed prior to March 1, 2018.

California Code of Regulations: Title 19, 24
San Francisco Building Code
San Francisco Fire Code
California Building Code
California Fire Code
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards

Relevant excerpts from the codes and standards will be provided on the day of the test.

5. ADMINISTRATION OF THE H-4 INSPECTOR TEST

5.1 Location and Sign-in

The Performance Exercise is tentatively scheduled to be administered on Tuesday, June 19, 2018. The Role Play is tentatively scheduled to be administered on Wednesday, June 27, 2018. All H-4 candidates will be scheduled on the same day and will receive their test notifications/times via email approximately ten days before the component is administered. Both exercises will be held at:

City and County of San Francisco Test Center
1740 Cesar Chavez St.
San Francisco, CA 94124

At sign-in, your identity will be verified against your picture identification [either Driver License or Department ID]. Your picture ID will be collected, and returned following your participation in the test.

5.2 Applicants with Disabilities

Applicants with disabilities requiring a reasonable accommodation for this examination process must contact PST as soon as possible, but no later than June 4, 2018 by email to dh-publicsafety@sfgov.org or by phone at (415)551-8947 or, if hearing impaired (415)557-4810 (TDD).

5.3 Video Recorded

Your participation in each exercise will be video-recorded so that assessors can evaluate your performance at a later date. A proctor will be present in the test room during the RP to address

any technical difficulties involving the video equipment, should they occur. Remember that for the PE, the camera will not be pointed at you. At all times, ensure that your responses are sufficiently clear so that they will be recorded. In the event that there is a technical problem during your test administration, testing staff will investigate and attempt to resolve the matter as soon as possible. In some cases, the only reasonable remedy might be to re-record a candidate's performance immediately following discovery of the technical problem.

5.4 Prohibited Items

Certain items are prohibited during the assessment and any sequester period, including any and all electronic communication devices (this includes cellular phones, tablets, iPods, smart watches, recording devices, etc.), any large bags or portfolios (including backpacks and the like where paperwork or electronic devices could be hidden) and paperwork of any kind (e.g., policy manuals, previously prepared notes, notepads, etc.).

You are prohibited from videotaping, audiotaping or taking pictures as these methods capture test content and thus violate the integrity of the test. Please notify PST staff if you have any of these items as they can be stored until you are discharged from the test center. You must turn off your devices. You may place smaller devices in lockers. For larger devices, a note with your name will be attached via rubber band to the device. These items will be placed on a 'prohibited items' table that will likely be located at reception, and not in a secure area. For this reason, it is highly recommended **that you leave such items at home.**

The City and County of San Francisco will not be responsible for any lost or damaged devices. Anyone who is caught with a prohibited item during testing is subject to disqualification and other penalties up to and including departmental disciplinary action and ineligibility for future promotional opportunities. Having a device in one's possession that is "turned off" does not exempt a candidate from such consequences. You may not use any materials/devices during the test other than what is provided to you by PST, including any external documents or notes.

A regular wristwatch is okay to wear, but you may not use any watch that has an audible alarm or tone which could distract others. As indicated above, Apple Watches or other watches with advanced capabilities are **not allowed.**

5.5 Test Etiquette and Confidentiality

You should, of course, maintain silence with other candidates during the actual test to avoid the appearance of improper behavior. You should have nothing on your desk or table during the test except the materials you need to take the test (e.g., a writing tool, notepaper). If you have to leave the test room for any reason, obtain the proctor's permission. Do not bring any food or drinks (water is the only exception) into the test room unless you have received specific permission from the PST.

Since the content and nature of the assessment components are confidential, you will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the test in order to participate in the test. There will be no exceptions. By participating in the promotional process you must agree to keep the contents of the assessment confidential. Also, you may not take any of your notes or exercise materials with you when you leave the test. You must turn in all materials once you have completed your test. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

You should not discuss the contents of the assessment with anyone after the test, including other candidates (even those who have already participated) or individuals of a differing rank (whether they are participating or not). If any proctor, fire department employee or City employee observes you discussing the content of the assessment with another candidate, you may be disqualified from the current and future promotional opportunities.

5.6 Dress Code

Because you will not be on camera for the PE, no uniform is required. However, for the RP you will be on camera and must be in white shirt, black tie, and dark trousers.

6. PREPARATION MATERIAL

In addition to reviewing job areas important to the H-4 position and the reference material previously mentioned (as well as references or books relating to supervision, etc.), it also may be helpful for you to prepare by using one of the approaches discussed below.

6.1 Informal Study Group Method

Study groups are often helpful for this type of assessment because group members can brainstorm and create various types of “mock” or hypothetical test scenarios or incidents (involving various types of problems or challenges) that could be possible test material because they are highly relevant to the job in question. The study group could also create questions related to these situations/incidents and share their ideas as to how one should answer or respond to the situations/incidents. The benefit of group study is that it gives one an opportunity to explore perspectives that one might otherwise not consider when addressing a test question/situation. In other words, it often allows group members to compile the “best” available information since it is coming from multiple sources and discussed by individuals with different perspectives.

Sometimes such a study group might divide responsibilities among group members. For example, they might assign the creation of hypothetical test scenarios to particular group members who show an interest or skill in this type of thing. The person could also outline general questions related to the scenarios. The same person or other group members could be assigned to the task of researching and/or documenting appropriate answers or responses to

the hypothetical test scenarios/situations. These study group members, in turn, could then submit their scenarios and questions to an administrative lead whose job would be to compile the scenarios into a study guide.

The group then might meet to discuss the scenarios. This part of the process is critical. Individuals should share, discuss, and debate their responses. This is a process where real “learning” often occurs, as group members can gain the perspective of others in the group (e.g., regarding how they would address a given scenario).

Taking notes during these discussions is highly recommended. Leave plenty of room when taking notes so that you can fill in details or make comments later. The sooner you review your notes after meeting with your study group, the better. If possible, you should review your notes several times a week, as well as days before the test. This repeated review will help to ingrain in your mind the points that you have made in your notes so that you can better recall them during the actual test.

6.2 Individual Study Method

Some candidates may be good test takers or believe they have greater mastery of testable subjects than other candidates. Consequently, they may not want to engage in study groups because they believe that sharing what they know would only help their “competition.” Other candidates may simply not have the time or flexible schedule to meet with others for study test preparation purposes. Regardless of the reason, there is of course nothing wrong in deciding to study alone. In fact, many of the recommendations included in the study group method also apply to individual preparation. For example, one could brainstorm scenarios, outline responses related to the scenarios, research the appropriate responses to these scenarios, take notes, etc., in order to prepare for the test.

If you choose to prepare on your own but still want to network in some limited capacity (e.g., with others who might have prepared the same way as you did), that “hybrid” option also is a possibility. That is, you could share your notes or final study guide with others in advance of the assessment administration and review their material, in turn.

6.3 General Strategies

- Expectations of an SFFD H-4 Inspector. Familiarize yourself with the roles and responsibilities of an SFFD H-4 Inspector. Review the job analysis section presented earlier in this guide. Talk with current H-4 Inspectors and ask them about their job and main responsibilities. This will help you learn as much as you can about the position and what would be expected of someone working in this supervisory position.
- Reference List. Review the suggested reference list as this may help you learn proper ways to respond to various situations that may be presented in the test.
- Practice. Practice by creating hypothetical test scenarios/questions, either alone or with a group, and preparing your responses and answers to those questions/situations.

Diligent preparation for this assessment will help you succeed; however, there are other considerations that can affect your performance on the day of the assessment such as:

- Your Physical Well-being. If you can, do your best to eat right and get a good night's rest before the test. Avoid drugs, alcohol and sleeping medication the night before. In fact, physical exercise or physical activity can help take your mind off the test the day before and help to relieve some stress. Avoid conflicts or emotional upsets. In other words, you want to be in the best possible condition, both physically and mentally, on the day of the test. Unfortunately, candidates in public safety promotional processes across the country often must work the day before or even the day of a test. Therefore, plan accordingly and think how you can best prepare yourself if you will be facing such circumstances.
- Arrive Early. Make all necessary arrangements to ensure that you arrive early at the test site. It would be wise to anticipate traffic delays in traveling to the site and to allocate extra travel time to ensure an early arrival even with delays, especially due to the limited parking in the neighborhood of the test center.
- Controlling Anxiety and Stress. Many candidates experience anxiety as a result of the stress and pressure to perform well on the assessment. This is common and natural. Acknowledging your anxious feelings may help you to relax and put yourself in a better mindset for taking the assessment. As much as possible, try to have a positive attitude on the day of the test. Engage in positive self-talk and relaxation breathing. Get rid of excess body tension by tensing and relaxing your muscles. If at all possible, try to keep your mind clear, calm and uncluttered.

6.4 General Test Taking Strategies

There are several strategies and tips to keep in mind when taking the test that will ensure your test score is accurate and reflects your level of knowledge about the job.

1. **Listen carefully.** The exam administrator will provide you with complete instructions for taking the exam. Be sure that you pay close attention to all test instructions. It is extremely important that you completely understand the directions before the exam begins.
2. **Ask questions.** If there are instructions that you do not understand or if something is not clear, please feel free to ask for clarification before the exam begins.
3. **Keep track of time.** Budget your time and pace yourself. It is important that you keep track of your time so that you are able to pace yourself throughout the exam. You do not want to run out of time and leave parts of the test unaddressed. It is important that you allot a few minutes of time for one last review of your work at the end of the exam. The test administrator will make several announcements regarding remaining test time, but otherwise you are on your own.

4. **Remain calm.** It is important that you remain calm throughout this exam so that you are able to work most effectively. You can't allow yourself to become nervous or confused by a few difficult or challenging items.
5. **Review all written material carefully.** Scan all the material before you start. This may include the instructions, the test stimulus material and test questions. Then, read everything carefully. Underline key words and/or phrases. Be sure that you understand what you are being required to do.
6. **Extra time.** If you finish the exam before the time period is over, review your work and make any changes that are necessary. Be sure that you have attempted to address every question and/or issue.