



## **HOW TO PREPARE GUIDE**

# **CORRECTIONAL SERGEANT 60712 WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

A written, multiple-choice examination is being given in order to establish a register for the classification of Correctional Sergeant. The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare for the written exam. Since all the material you will need to take the exam will be provided at the test administration, you will not be allowed to bring this booklet to the exam with you.

## **II. JOB PREVIEW**

Correctional Sergeant positions are with the Alabama Department of Corrections located statewide. Employees in this class supervise a small unit of correctional officers. Employees in this class are responsible for scheduling and leading a unit of correctional officers in the security coverage of an assigned area. Employees also perform as relief for higher level supervisors. Work is performed under direct supervision of higher level correctional officers and is reviewed for compliance with specific security rules and practices and with institutional policies and procedures. Performance is checked through inspections, conferences, and reports.

## **III. THE EXAMINATION**

The examination for this classification is a written, multiple-choice exam. The exam is designed to measure specific knowledges and abilities. The test is divided into six sections with each section measuring a different knowledge or ability. Applicants are presented with a test question and four possible responses to that question. Applicants then select the BEST possible response to the question. You will have 3 hours to respond to the items.

## **IV. HOW THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION WAS DEVELOPED**

A study of the Correctional Sergeant classification was conducted prior to developing the examination. A number of employees who work in this job and their supervisors participated in this study. The study showed that the following knowledges, skills and abilities are associated with the above duties. These knowledges, skills and abilities are needed on the first day of work before training:

- Knowledge of ADOC rules and regulations, policies and procedures as needed to adhere to them, enforce them, and train subordinates.
- Knowledge of Institution SOPs as needed to pre-determine appropriate actions in possible circumstances and for uniformity of response within facility.
- Knowledge of ADOC Administrative Regulations (AR) as needed to perform uniformly, understand programs and to educate self and subordinates on appropriate behavior and standards.
- Knowledge of ADOC AR's 206, 208, 213, 220, 307, 313, 403, and 409 as needed to understand proper decorum among inmates and staff, and disciplinary/grievance handling procedures.
- Knowledge of Risk Management as needed to prevent and report injuries.

- **Knowledge of employment law to include FLSA, ADA, FMLA, and harassment/discrimination guidelines as needed to assign tasks, leave, schedule, and monitor treatment of subordinates.**
- **Knowledge of the 4<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a person's rights against illegal search and seizure as needed to investigate inmate's beds, trunks, and clothing, search visitors and employees, their cars, and possessions.**
- Knowledge of the 5<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a person's rights against self-incrimination as needed to investigate incidents.
- **Knowledge of speedy hearing regulations as needed to meet ADOC and civil rights' due process regulations.**
- Knowledge of fire codes for the institution as needed to maintain safety and to evacuate personnel.
- **Knowledge of laws that are related to inmate rights and treatment.**
- **Knowledge of OSHA-like safety regulations as needed to protect facility personnel to include inmates, comply with laws, and for inspection.**
- Knowledge of environmental and health regulations as needed to protect facility personnel to include inmates, comply with laws, and for inspection.
- Knowledge of facility layout as needed to schedule posts and inmate movement and determine security blind-spots (hiding areas).
- Knowledge of techniques used to calm inmates and to entice them to behave and rehabilitate.
- **Knowledge of ADOC Inmate Handbook as needed to know their rights, privileges, and duties.**
- **Knowledge of "10" codes as needed for radio communication and to alert coworkers to your status.**
- Knowledge of ADOC radio procedures as needed for security checks and responses.
- Skill to operate firearms in a safe and accurate manner as needed for continued APOST certification, stopping fleeing or unruly personnel and to protect facility personnel and society
- Skill to obtain and maintain a valid Alabama Driver's License as needed for continued APOST certification, to transport inmates, personnel, and equipment, pursue escapees, and to patrol facility grounds.
- Ability to communicate orally as needed to give/receive information/instructions and solicit potential employers.
- Ability to communicate in writing using proper grammar and sentence structure as needed to complete forms and writes reports, policies, and correspondence.
- Ability to read and understand documents written at various technical and legal levels such as departmental regulations, operating instructions, correspondence, administrative rules/procedures, and forms as needed to receive information/instructions.
- **Ability to perform simple mathematical calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and percentages for Performance Appraisal, duty logs, staffing needs, and room organization.**
- Ability necessary to pursue or subdue an inmate as needed to protect self or others and to regain/maintain order.
- Ability to keep legal and personal information confidential as needed to not violate civil rights, exacerbate potential problems or impede investigations.

- Ability to supervise officers as needed to ensure required duties are performed and to provide guidance.
- **Ability to lead meetings on disciplinary actions.**
- **Ability to compose a schedule for workers to include 40-hr schedule, coverage, and leave as needed to ensure security and orderly operations of facility.**
- **Ability to analyze information and reach logical conclusions as needed to assign tasks, assess guilt and discipline and analyze current policy.**
- Ability to work under deadlines to include multiple projects as needed to adhere to policy, maintain security and order, complete reports, occupy posts, and document actions.
- **Ability to handle staff management as needed to determine necessary posts to cover in the event of shortages or emergencies.**
- Ability to compose policies on issues such as leave and scheduling requests as needed for documented fairness.
- Ability to compose a schedule for inmate movement and shakedowns in accordance with ADOC regulations and SOPs.
- Ability to remain calm and clear-headed in a crisis.
- Ability to solve problems as needed to supervise and counsel subordinates, maintain order and safety, and ensure unity of command.
- Ability to handle harassment complaints as needed to conform to law and ensure pleasant and fair working/living conditions.
- Ability to make decisions such as needed to protect, discipline and motivate inmates.
- Ability to supervise support services as needed to ensure viable operations.
- Ability to be assertive as needed to calm inmates, assign tasks, correct subordinate performance and change policies.
- Ability to delegate as needed to cover the needs of the institution, train replacement, and for time management.
- Ability to lead training of subordinate officers as needed to ensure adherence to the rules and policies, and safe operation of equipment.
- Ability to operate restraint devices as needed to transport and control inmates and to protect self, staff, other inmates, and society.
- Ability to testify in court as needed to provide accurate account of actions and to explain procedures.
- Ability to stand for long periods of time as needed to monitor a post/cell.
- Ability to determine appropriate response to emergency situations such as riots, fires, or natural disasters.
- Ability to traverse uneven terrain as needed to watch work crews inspect facility and its grounds or trail fleeing inmates.
- Ability to work alone in an area of the facility as needed to cover required posts for observing, controlling, or separating inmates.
- Ability to remain objective as needed for investigations, disciplinary actions, grievances, and responses.
- Ability to perceive mood and actions of inmates as needed to predict potential problems.

The examination for Correctional Sergeant will measure the knowledges, skills and abilities above that appear in **bold print**. The remaining knowledges, skills and abilities must be demonstrated during the probationary period if you are hired into the Correctional Sergeant position.

## V. WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU COME TO TAKE THE EXAMINATION

Here are some suggestions for what to do before the exam and for getting to the testing place on time and with the proper things that you will need to take the test.

1. **Be well rested.** Get a good night's sleep for several nights in a row before the written examination.
2. **Get there early.** Allow plenty of time to get to the examination site. If you are rushed and late, you will be upset when you get there. Plan to get there before time for the examination to begin.
3. **Do not bring this booklet or any study materials with you to the exam location.** This includes notes and any manuals and source documents that you may have used to prepare for the examination. All test materials needed for the examination will be provided.
4. **Do not bring cell phones to the testing site.** Cell phones are not permitted in the testing room.
5. **Dress comfortably.** The total time provided for completion of this exam will be 3 hours.
6. **You should read and study this booklet.** You should practice the kinds of things that this booklet suggests that you practice.
7. **You must bring the test scheduling card/letter that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department.** This card lists the examination title, location of exam, and date, day, and time of examination.
8. **You must also bring picture identification to the exam location.** This may be your valid driver license, a military identification card, or a passport. You only need one valid form of identification.
9. **You must bring two sharpened #2 lead pencils.** You may also want to bring a highlighter and a calculator. Small solar powered or battery operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions) are not allowed. *Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted.* Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

### TEST TAKING TIPS

- ✓ **Listen** to the test monitors and follow their instructions carefully.
- ✓ If you are not sure of an answer, **go with your first choice.**
- ✓ Work through the test **without spending too much time on any one item.**
- ✓ If you cannot decide on the best answer to a question, **skip it and go back to it later.**
- ✓ Use your watch or the clock in the room to **keep track of your time** during the test.

- ✓ It is to your advantage to **answer as many questions as possible**, even if you must guess.
- ✓ **Mark your answers on the answer sheet and NOT in the test booklet.** Only answers clearly marked on the answer sheet can be given credit.
- ✓ If you have a question at any time before or during the exam, **ask the monitor for assistance.** Please note that test monitors can answer questions concerning exam administration issues only. They **will not** be able to interpret exam questions for you.

## VI. HOW TO PREPARE USING THIS GUIDE

The questions contained in the guide are a representation of questions that will be on the actual examination. Familiarize yourself with the sample questions that begin on page 11. You would be well-advised to read the instructions and answer each question carefully. Like the examination questions (all of which are multiple-choice), the sample items are presented in the following categories:

Section I. Radio 10 Codes

Section II. Alabama Department of Corrections Policies and Procedures

Section III. Legal Issues Related to Inmate Treatment and Rights

Section IV. Legal Issues Related to Staff and Facilities

Section V. Reading and Analyzing Information

Section VI. Resource Management and Organization

The sample items are representative of each type of item that will appear on the exam. They are not necessarily based on the same information as the actual exam. All questions will be multiple-choice.

In addition, please review the General Instructions to Candidates Taking Written Examinations provided at the exam site on the day of the test.

## VII. BANDED SCORING

When the written exam for Correctional Sergeant is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you performed on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (i.e., 67 out of 80, 93 out of 100). Rather, you will be informed into which band (i.e., 1, 3, 6, 10) your score fell. The following information is provided to help you understand the banding procedure.

## **What is banding?**

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to perform the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and statistically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

### **Misconceptions about banding.**

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

**Misconception:** *Each band should have the same number of people.*

Bands are not forced to be a certain size. The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large, and at other times it may be small. Scores on the exam determine the size of the bands.

**Misconception:** *Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.*

Band numbers do have meaning. Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Consider that in school two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into the same band. Just because one student made a 94.5 and one student made a 94.3, the teacher cannot be sure that 0.2 of a point means that the student who scored 94.5 is smarter or is a better student. The scores are so close to each other that they are basically the same.

For example, think of the achievement tests that children take in school. The fine print on these tests always informs you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score, which uses some type of grouping technique such as percentiles, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding. Banding compares your performance on the test to the other test takers' performance and groups your score with others that are statistically the same.

**Misconception:** *Band numbers are the same as letter grades.*

Band numbers are not the same as letter grades. Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," and so on. In school, a predetermined numerical range of scores (i.e., 90-100, 80-90, 70-80) equals an alphabetical value (i.e., A, B, C). This grading system is a form of banding. In this case, unlike grade school, the width of bands is not set in advance. Scores are banded only in relation to one another, so you compete against other test takers. The scores of all test takers determine the width of the bands, and your score is set in relation to the scores of your peers.

**Misconception:** *A banded score on one test has the same value as a banded score on another test.*



Banded scores are test-specific and cannot be compared from test to test. Consider that a test taker scored 88 on one test, and the highest score of all test takers was 89. It is likely for this exam that the test taker who scored 88 would be in Band 1. However, if the same person scored the same grade on another test, and the highest score of all test takers was 100, the person may be in Band 2 or Band 3. Candidates' scores vary on each test, and since candidate scores determine the width of bands and into which band test takers fall, the value of a banded score varies from test to test.

***Misconception: People with the most seniority who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.***

People with the most experience do not always fall into the top bands. Time spent in a job may not be the same as possessing a knowledge, skill, or ability needed to perform the job. The people with the strongest knowledges, skills, and abilities (or who did best on the exam) will be in the top bands. Some of the people in the top bands will have been in similar jobs for a long period of time, and others will have been in similar jobs for a short period of time. Years of service do not always equal proficiency. Candidates with seniority or experience do not automatically perform best on the test. Regardless of seniority, candidates who display the appropriate knowledges, skills, and abilities perform best on the test.

***Misconception: A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.***

A band number of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. For one test, there may only be 4 bands, and for another test, there may be 14 bands. So, your success on the test based on your position in a band varies from test to test. Your standing in a band does not indicate whether or not you pass or fail the test. The true test of success in your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

***Misconception: Banding replaced the "Rule of 10."***

Banding did not replace the "Rule of 10." The "Rule of 10" determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

***Misconception: People in a band do not differ.***

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ at all. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

## VIII. GENERAL QUESTIONS

### **Are there any vacancies for the Correctional Sergeant?**

You may contact the Alabama Department of Corrections to receive information on current or future vacancies.

### **How are vacancies filled for the Correctional Sergeant?**

The top ten applicants on the register are sent to the hiring authority for consideration. Since the banded scoring process is used, all of the scores within a band are considered tied. Therefore, all names within a band are certified out to the agency, which may include more than 10 names. The names of people not selected stay on the register to be considered for future jobs. Persons are usually hired at the minimum of the pay range.

### **What is a register?**

A register is a list of all individuals who have successfully completed the selection procedure for a State Merit System job. The register is a complete list of individuals who are eligible for employment in a certain job classification.

### **Test Results**

Approximately four to six weeks after completing the exam, you will receive a Notice of Examination Results postcard in the mail. This postcard will identify your score, or band placement, for the written exam. If you have not received your score within four to six weeks, you should call the State Personnel Department.

In addition to your Band placement, you may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at [www.personnel.alabama.gov](http://www.personnel.alabama.gov). From the home page, you should click on “My Profile” and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

### **How long will I remain eligible for appointment?**

If you pass the examination, your name will remain on the employment register for two years. You will be notified by mail when to reapply.

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

If you would like to request special testing accommodations or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334) 242-3389.

### **Rescheduling a Written Examination**

If there is a conflict in your schedule, and you are unable to attend the written exam at the time and date for which you have been scheduled, you must resubmit your Application for Examination. The State Personnel Department will schedule you for the next available administration of this written exam.

### **Administrative Questions**

If you have any administrative questions or concerns about the exam or questions about any of the information presented in this booklet, you should contact the State Personnel Department. Exam administrators are not allowed to provide specific information about the content of the exam.

## IX. SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

### Section I: Radio 10 Codes

“Code 10-5” means “Relay”. Which of the following is the correct explanation of this code?

- A. J1 – Personnel; J2 – Property; J3 – Prisoner; J4 – Papers.
- B. J1 – Property; J2 – Personnel; J3 – Prisoner; J4 – Papers.
- C. J1 – Personnel; J2 – Property; J3 – Papers; J4 – Prisoner.
- D. J1 – Personnel; J2 – Papers; J3 – Prisoner; J4 – Property.

Answer (A) is correct.

### Section II: Alabama Department of Corrections Policies and Procedures

According to the EEO complaint procedures, an employee alleging discrimination must initiate Step One of the complaint process to his/her immediate supervisor within how many days of the occurrence causing the complaint?

- A. 7 employee work days
- B. 5 employee work days
- C. 5 calendar days
- D. None of the above

Answer (B) is correct.

### Section III: Legal Issues Related to Inmate Treatment and Rights

According to Alabama Department of Corrections rules and regulations, which of the following statements is **TRUE**?

- I. Visiting law enforcement officers, employees, or other persons authorized by statute to bear firearms are required to maintain possession and control of their firearms at all times.
  - II. No employee-owned firearms will be stored in institutional weapons storage.
- A. I only
  - B. II only
  - C. Both I and II
  - D. Neither I nor II

Answer (B) is correct.

#### Section IV: Legal Issues Related to Staff and Facilities

According to Alabama Department of Corrections rules and regulations, which of the following statements is **TRUE**?

- I. The employee's immediate supervisor should give oral reprimands to the employee with a witness present.
  - II. During an oral reprimand, the employee should be allowed to explain his or her side of the controversy.
- A. I only
  - B. II only
  - C. Both I and II
  - D. Neither I nor II

The correct answer is (B).

#### Section V: Reading and Analyzing Information

##### Reading Passage

**RESPONSIBILITY:** The On-duty Shift Commander is responsible for insuring that all officers under his/her supervision have knowledge of this procedure and that evidence and contraband are properly handled. The Shift Commander will insure that the discovering officer in all incidents involving physical evidence maintains security, custody, and control of the item until it is properly secured. The discovery officer will place an identification mark on the evidence, whenever possible in order that the item can be later identified.

The item will be placed in a container, envelope, folder, plastic bag, etc. which can be properly sealed. Body fluids (blood, etc) should never be sealed inside a plastic container bag, as it will destroy the evidence. The officer will seal the container and will attach to the container the following information: date, time, discovering officer's full name, location where evidence was found and if applicable the suspected inmate's name and AIS number. An original and one copy of the Evidence form will be properly filled out and attached to the container, which contains the evidence. The Shift Commander will review the Evidence Form to insure that it has been properly filled out.

Which of the following pieces of information is **NOT** needed on a container holding evidence?

- A. date and time
- B. location where evidence was found
- C. discovering officer's full name
- D. description of evidence

The correct answer is (D).

## Section VI: Resource Management and Organization

At XYZ correctional facility, it is policy to have 5 Correctional Officer I's for every 50 inmates and 1 Correctional Sergeant for every 15 Correctional Officer I's. If there are 300 inmates, there should be

- A. 6 COs and 10 SGTs
- B. 20 COs and 4 SGTs
- C. 30 COs and 2 SGTs
- D. None of the above

The correct answer is (C). 50 goes into 300 a total of 6 times. If 5 COs are needed for every 50 inmates, then 30 COs are needed (since  $6 \times 5 = 30$ ). 15 goes into 30 a total of 2 times. If 1 SGT is needed for every 15 COs, then 2 SGTs are needed. The final answer is 30 COs and 2 SGTs.