

Guidelines for Interview Questions

Note: The purpose of these general guidelines is to assist the interviewer when approaching areas of sensitivity with regard to protected classes and privacy, and to avoid discrimination issues. The guidelines do not address all possible interview questions. When interviewing, as a general rule, the interviewer should keep the questions focused towards the position for which the applicant is interviewing.

These Guidelines are a product of the NMFS, Southwest Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (SW EEOAC).

SUBJECT	ACCEPTABLE/BEST WAYS TO ASK QUESTIONS (Examples)	UNACCEPTABLE WAYS TO ASK QUESTIONS (Examples)	SOURCE
General Information	What is your: Name; mailing address; SSN; day and evening phone numbers; and email address, if any?	Do not ask questions related to sexual orientation, height, weight, maiden name, etc.	Optional Form 612 & Stephanie Hall – 9th Annual HR/EEO Forum held in San Diego, 9/20/04; presented by FPMI Solutions.
Former Federal Service	None	If transferring within or reinstating back into federal service, what are your leave balances? (This could disclose situations like pregnancies; family care; temporary disability condition, etc.)	Stephanie Hall – 9th Annual HR/EEO Forum held in San Diego, 9/20/04; presented by FPMI Solutions.
Criminal Record	None	Have you ever been arrested? Have you been convicted of a criminal offense other than minor traffic violations?	Stephanie Hall – 9th Annual HR/EEO Forum held in San Diego, 9/20/04; presented by FPMI Solutions.
Religious Beliefs	This job requires you work on Saturdays. Do you know of anything that would keep you from working on Saturdays?	What religious holidays do you observe?	Stephanie Hall – 9th Annual HR/EEO Forum held in San Diego, 9/20/04; presented by FPMI Solutions.
National Origin/Citizenship	Are you a U.S. citizen? If no, can you provide the necessary documentation to authorize your employment within the United States?	Do not enter into casual conversation that could divulge personal information (i.e., "That's an interesting name [or accent], what is its origin?")	Optional Form 612 Stephanie Hall – 9th Annual HR/EEO Forum held in San Diego, 9/20/04; presented by FPMI Solutions. http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/hiring/foreign.htm
Veteran Status	Do you claim veterans' preference?		Optional Form 612
Age	None	How old are you? When did you graduate from college? How long do you plan to work before retiring?	Todd Buccholz, former EEOAC Personnel Sub Committee member.
Affiliations	Do you belong to any clubs or social organizations that would be pertinent to this job?	To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?	Todd Buccholz, former EEOAC Personnel Sub Committee member.

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Qualifications	<p>What college degrees have you obtained?</p> <p>What job-related training courses have you taken?</p> <p>What job-related skills do you have (other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, machinery, typing speed, etc.)? -----</p> <p>What job-related certificates and licenses do you have (current only)?</p> <p>What job-related honors, awards, or special accomplishments (publications, memberships in professional/honor societies, leadership activities, public speaking, and performance awards) have you received?</p> <p>Do you know how to _____? (Perform a specific function that is necessary to qualify for the position. This would indicate to the interviewer whether or not the applicant's skill level is adequate or outdated.)</p> <p>Ask to demonstrate that they can perform the physical requirements of the job. You can also ask specific questions as to job requirements (i.e., lifting; passing a swift water test). (Another example is: A restaurant usually has low lighting, so you can offer a flashlight pen to the applicant to assist them.) Employers must distinguish between essential and marginal duties (must perform vs. might need to perform).</p>		Optional Form 612

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Disabilities		<p>Do you have any disabilities? -----</p> <p>What makes you think you can really do this job if you're drawing disability?</p> <hr/> <p>Do you have _____ (ex., diabetes)?</p> <p>Do you use prescription drugs (ex., insulin)?</p>	<p>Natalie Huff, from Sexual Harassment training in 2004 and http://www.eeoc.gov/press/10-10-95.html. OEDCA DIGEST, Vol. VII, No. 2, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC, Spring 2004 Summaries of Selected Decisions Issued by the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication From the Director (Case Summaries, Article: Q&A's: Diabetes in the Workplace, 10 OEDCA DIGEST 31.)</p>
Work Experience	<p>If currently employed, describe your current duties and accomplishments. -----</p> <p>What were your duties and do you have notable accomplishments from past jobs? -----</p> <p>Can we contact your current/past employers?</p>		Optional Form 612

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