



## **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 five 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 institutional standard operating procedures (SOP's) 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, enforce them, understand programs and to educate self and inmates on appropriate behavior and standards.
- **Knowledge of Alabama Department of Corrections Administrative Regulations (DOC ARs) regarding personnel management and training (200 series) such as Harassment and Discrimination Policy (206), Employee Standards of Conduct and Discipline (208), Overtime (212), Departmental Leave Policy (220), Social Media (234), etc. to include proper affirmative action plans, sexual harassment complaint procedures, proper**

standards of conduct for DOC employees, positive progressive employee discipline procedures, procedure for reporting and resolving grievances as needed to recognize violations, provide guidance to employees and ensure compliance, respond to questions, approve/disapprove leave and recognize abuse of leave.

- **Knowledge of Alabama Department of Corrections Administrative Regulations (DOC ARs) regarding security (300 series) such as Law Enforcement Services (300), Visitation (303), Trade School (305), Accidents Involving ADOC Vehicles (310), Employee/Inmate Relationships (318), Searches (336), Inmate Property (338), etc. as needed to determine appropriate course of action, ensure compliance and maintain the security of all parties involved.**
- **Knowledge of Alabama Department of Corrections Administrative Regulations (DOC ARs) regarding inmate, institutional and treatment programs (400 series) such as Disciplinary Hearing/Action for Inmates (403), Inmate Emergency Visit, Pass, and Leave Program (405), Work Release Organization and Function (AR 410), Disciplinary Segregation (434), PREA (454), Inmate Drug Screening (440), etc. to include behavior citations, and disciplinary hearing procedures for inmate rule violations, selection of inmates, transportation, job employers and disbursement of earnings as needed to govern the day to day operations of work centers, determine if a charge is appropriate and ensure programs are in compliance with policy and procedure.**
- Knowledge of the structure of the ADOC to include general administration and maintenance administrative regulations (00(x) series), chain of command, and institutional organization, as needed to communicate with appropriate persons and ensure compliance with regard to public information and unusual incidents.
- Knowledge of American with Disabilities Act (ADA) to include reasonable accommodations as needed to monitor an inmate's working conditions, assign tasks and determine the appropriate employment of an inmate.
- Knowledge of employment law to include FLSA, ADA, FMLA, and harassment/discrimination guidelines to include knowing policies and regulations as needed to assign tasks, approve leave, compile a schedule, determine fair, compliant job characteristics and working conditions and monitor treatment of subordinates.
- Knowledge of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and a person's rights against illegal search and seizure as needed to investigate inmates' beds, trunks, and clothing, and search visitors/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 fire codes for the institution as needed to maintain safety and to evacuate personnel during an emergency.
- Knowledge of laws that are related to inmate rights and treatment.
- Knowledge of safety regulations as needed to protect the health of facility personnel to include inmates 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 techniques used to calm inmates and to entice them to behave and rehabilitate as needed to maintain order.
- **Knowledge of Inmate Handbook to include inmate rights, privileges, and duties as needed to direct staff and ensure compliance.**

- **Knowledge of “10” codes as needed for radio communication and to alert co-workers to your status.**
- Knowledge of ADOC radio procedures as needed for security checks and responses.
- Knowledge of emergency procedures for situations such as escapes, fires, natural disasters, outbreaks of illness, riots, and hostage situations to include procedures, notifications, evacuation routes, documentation, and securing medical treatment as needed to ensure the appropriate responses and to ensure compliance with regulations.
- Knowledge of security measures such as solitary confinement, physical restraint, and customary security measures to include appropriate use of security measures, documentation of use, and justification for use as needed to ensure that facilities are using current, legal, and effective measures.
- **Knowledge of laws that are related to an inmate’s civil rights and treatment as needed to ensure compliance and rights are not violated.**
- Knowledge of the laws and policies regarding use of force to include use of deadly force; minimal physical force; and review committee for use of force incidents/reports as needed to ensure compliance, investigate excessive use of force complaints against subordinates, determine appropriate level of force that was necessary in a situation, and review case findings or investigative reports.
- Knowledge of rules of evidence to include Miranda warnings, confidentiality of information, hearsay, and compulsory testimony, securing the scene, handling evidence, and maintaining chain-of-command as needed to ensure compliance and ensure evidence is admissible in a court of law.
- Knowledge of investigative procedures to include remaining impartial, collecting all the facts, and chain of evidence as needed to perform/monitor investigations and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Knowledge of State property inventory to include procurement system and liability as needed to account for all state property as required by law and to eliminate personal liability.
- Knowledge of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to include notifications and training, inmate/inmate affairs and inmate/officer affairs as needed to ensure the proper procedures are followed regarding potential sexual acts.
- Knowledge of the signs and symptoms that may result from substance abuse such as bloodshot eyes, etc. to include recognizing the signs as needed to take appropriate disciplinary action, recommend the inmate for the SAP, and ensure the safety and security of the facility.
- Knowledge of risk group/gang behavior to include language, symbols and dress as needed to make appropriate employments, security and classification assignments, and determine appropriate course of action to ensure the safety of the facility and public.
- Skill to operate firearms in a safe and accurate manner as needed for continued APOSTC Certification, stopping, fleeing, or unruly personnel and to protect facility personnel and society.
- Skill to obtain and maintain a valid Alabama Driver License as needed to for continued APOSTC Certification, to transport inmates, personnel, and equipment, pursue escapes, and to patrol facility grounds.
- Ability to communicate orally with peers, subordinates, supervisors, inmates, facility staff, other facilities, other agencies, businesses, families and the public one-on-one or in a group, in person, on the telephone, or over the radio 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 write reports, policies, and correspondence.**
- **Ability to read and understand documents written at various technical and legal levels such as administrative regulations, SOP's, correspondence, administrative policies/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, room organization, and counts.**
- Ability 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 and decision-making authority.
- Ability to compose policies on issues such as leave and scheduling requests as needed for documented fairness.
- Ability to remain calm and clear-headed in a crisis as needed to make decisions and maintain/regain order.
- **Ability to solve problems as needed to supervise and counsel subordinates, maintain and safety, and ensure unity of command.**
- Ability to handle harassment complaints such as race, gender, religion, age, gang, and seniority as needed to conform to law and ensure pleasant and fair living conditions.
- Ability to make decisions such as lockdowns or relaxing security as needed to protect, discipline and motivate inmates.
- Ability to supervise support services such as dining room, recreation, medical, business office, and canteen 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 such as batons, handcuffs, leg irons, waist chains, shock devices, chemical agents and electronic doors in accordance with ADOC regulations, SOP's, and manufacturer operating instructions as needed to transport and control inmates and to protect self, staff, inmates, and society.
- Ability to stand for long periods of time as needed to monitor a post/dorm.
- Ability to determine appropriate response to emergency situations such as riots, fires, or natural disasters.
- **Ability to analyze information and reach logical conclusions as needed to assign tasks, assess guilt, discipline and analyze current policy, and maintain safety and security of the facility.**
- 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 work alone in an area of the facility as needed to cover required posts for observing, controlling, or separating inmates.
- Ability to perceive mood and actions of inmates as needed to predict potential problems and take counteractive action.
- **Ability to handle staff management as needed to determine necessary posts to cover in the event of shortages or emergencies.**
- Ability to operate motor vehicles as needed to patrol and transport inmates, ADOC personnel, and equipment.
- Ability to prioritize various responsibilities as needed to manage one's own time.
- Ability to de-escalate hostile inmates as needed to maintain order, minimize the need for use of force, and calm inmates.
- Ability to adhere to and enforce decisions made by supervisors as needed to avoid corrective action and maintain safety and security of the facility.
- Ability to operate a computer as needed to send and receive emails, use word processing and spreadsheet software to complete forms and reports, and utilize IMAS and KRONOS.

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 this guide are a representation of questions that will be on the actual examination. Familiarize yourself with the sample questions that begin on page 13. 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. Technical Knowledge
- Section II. Written Communication
- Section III. Reading Comprehension
- Section IV. Mathematical Ability
- Section V. Management and Supervision

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

## **VII. SCORING INFORMATION**

Scores from the selection procedure will come from the written test and an evaluation of your education and experience as well as an average of your service ratings for the last three years. The written test and evaluation of education and experience will comprise 95% of your score, while an average of your service ratings for the last three years will comprise 5% of your score. These scores will be banded. The score that you receive from State Personnel at the conclusion of the process will be a band score. The following information describes banded scoring.

### **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: Technical Knowledge

Chemical aerosol agents may be used in which of the following situations?

- A. self-defense against physical assault
- B. to prevent an inmate from escaping
- C. to quell a disturbance or a riot
- D. all of the above**

Answer (D) is correct.

### Section II: Written Communication

#### Fill in the blank

When checking inmates for contraband, it is important and necessary to conduct \_\_\_\_\_ in a proper and lawful manner.

- A. searching
- B. search
- C. searches**
- D. searched

Answer (C) is correct.

### Section III: Reading Comprehension

A cell extraction is not an uncommon procedure in a correctional facility. Its purpose relates to the forced removal of inmates from their cells, for valid reasons like violent behavior. Cell extraction is not a simple task, and not all corrections officers are called upon to conduct it. In fact, those who undertake cell extractions undergo a high-level training, which includes the proper use of safety devices to ensure that they are not harmed while doing it. More importantly, cell-extraction elements are organized into teams that are well-coordinated, alert, and efficient.

The main purpose of a cell extraction is to \_\_\_\_\_

- A. safely remove an inmate from their cell.**
- B. punish inmates for misbehaving.
- C. exhibit force so the inmate being removed is overpowered.
- D. all of the above

The correct answer is (A).

#### Section IV: Mathematical Ability

Correctional Officer George Hall had 45 hours of sick leave and 128 hours of annual leave at the beginning of the year. Officer Hall used 12 hours of sick leave and 60 hours of annual leave during the year. What is Officer Hall's remaining combined leave balance?

- A. 68
- B. 72
- C. **101**
- D. 113

The correct answer is (C).

#### Section V: Management and Supervision

	Minimum Staffing Level	Currently Staffed
<b>Laundry</b>	2	2
<b>Grounds</b>	6	6
<b>Medical</b>	2	4
<b>Visitation</b>	1	2
<b>Tower #1</b>	1	1

	Current Staff	Description
<b>Correctional Officer Seniors</b>	3	Requires Warden approval to work the Tower
<b>Correctional Officers</b>	5	No restrictions on facility assignments
<b>Correctional Officer Trainees</b>	4	Cannot be assigned to the Tower
<b>Basic Correctional Officers</b>	3	Cannot be assigned to the Tower or Medical

One of your subordinates, Correctional Officer Pamela Cedar, just notified you that she will have to leave work due to a family emergency. Officer Cedar is currently assigned to Tower #1. Who would you have to replace Officer Cedar's assignment on short notice?

- A. a Correctional Officer Trainee
- B. **a Correctional Officer**
- C. a Correctional Officer Senior
- D. a Basic Correctional Officer

The correct answer is (B).