

NC BLET Field Interview and Interrogation Comprehensive Review

Core Concepts and Fundamentals

Essential Categories of Law Enforcement Questioning

Law enforcement officers must focus on six fundamental questions during any interview:

Who

What

Where

When

Why

How

Types of Interviews

Field Interview

Officer-initiated and broad in scope

Deals with multiple parties: victims, witnesses, suspects, and suspicious persons

Generally quick, focused on gathering preliminary information

No Miranda rights required unless suspect is taken into custody

Canvass Interview

Rapid questioning of multiple people near a crime scene

Specifically focused on gathering information about a particular incident

Aimed at identifying potential witnesses

More narrow in scope than field interviews

Interrogation

Formal, detailed questioning of suspects

Miranda rights required

Suspect is in custody

Focused on gaining cooperation and revealing truth

Question Types and Techniques

Open-Ended Questions

Promote natural conversation

Gain descriptive information

Allow for narrative responses

Help avoid leading the interviewee

Typically answer how, why, or what

Example: "What happened?"

Closed-Ended Questions

Begin with words like "Do," "Is," "Are," "Did"

Restrict conversation opportunities

Require specific responses

Used to clarify particular points

Example: "Did you go to the bar on Friday night?"

Special Interview Situations

Domestic Interviews

Considered one of the most dangerous interview situations

Key protocols:

Have multiple officers present when possible

Maintain high safety awareness

Separate involved parties

Allow time for emotions to cool

Engage outside agencies when necessary

Child Interviews

Use open-ended questions

Avoid leading questions

Use closed-ended questions only for clarification

Consult specialists when possible

Exercise extra care and sensitivity

Medical Personnel Interviews

Establish and follow proper protocols

Avoid interfering with life-saving efforts

Question during breaks

Respect patient confidentiality

Obtain court orders for medical records access

Traffic Crash Interviews

Search for witnesses in a 360-degree radius

Be aware that witnesses may leave the scene

Compare involved party statements with uninvolved witness accounts

Cross-reference statements with physical evidence

Locate and interview the initial reporting party

Advanced Interview Techniques

Cognitive Interview Approach

Explain desired thinking process to interviewee

Provide ample response time

Communicate officer's needs clearly

Minimize distractions

Use primarily open-ended questions

Consider altering recall order to enhance memory

Deception Detection

Have interviewee recant events backwards (deceptive individuals struggle with this)

Watch for inconsistencies in statements

Be aware that interviewees may lie due to:

Family relationships

Personal friendships

Being the actual suspect

Best Practices and Important Considerations

Interview Contamination Prevention

Avoid revealing case details

Don't share crime information during questioning

Maintain information control

Victim Interview Considerations

Personal crime victims require compassion and sensitivity

Property crime victims need understanding and patience

Don't interfere with medical services for injured victims

Officer Conduct

Maintain professional demeanor

Be aware that officer mood can negatively impact interview success

Remember dual responsibility to both prove and disprove suspect involvement

Documentation

Maintain centralized records of field contacts

Document all relevant information gathered

Keep clear separation between different types of interviews

Safety and Legal Considerations

Always maintain situational awareness

Be prepared for sudden changes in interviewee behavior

Know when Miranda rights are required

Understand the legal differences between interviews and interrogations

Protect both officer and interviewee rights throughout the process

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