Study Guide:
Public Safety Communications Exam

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Purpose of the Study Guide

This study guide is a tool to help you prepare for the computerized Public Safety Communications (PSC) exam which is used for Public Safety Communications Operator's and Public Safety Communications Dispatchers. It does not contain information that you must memorize. The exam measures your specific skills needed to work in PSC positions. You could take the exam and do well without reading this study guide; however, you will be better prepared if you review the information provided in this study guide before you take the exam.

About Montgomery City-County Personnel Examinations

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, Montgomery City-County Personnel takes steps to ensure that the exam content is job-related. Studies are conducted to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job. These studies assisted in developing the content of the examinations. Pre-employment testing provides an objective and cost-effective means to assess the qualifications of applicants.

Exam Administration Issues

Exam Administration Policies

Any person may be disqualified from further consideration if he/she is found to be cheating. Cheating involves any attempt by an individual or group to enhance test scores by means other than actual knowledge or ability, including but not limited to efforts to give or receive information about the exam content or correct responses before, after or during the exam. Examples of cheating <u>during</u> an exam would be:

- Attempting to gain access to the exam under false pretenses;
- Failing to follow instructions;
- Talking to another candidate during the exam;
- Removing or attempting to remove exam materials from the exam site;
- Leaving the exam room, holding room or other location without permission from the Exam Administrator;
- Attempting to use notes, hand held computers or calculators when instructed not to;
- Looking at another candidate's responses or computer screen;
- Working on a test section after time has been called; and
- Giving or receiving exam information from another person.

Requests for Accommodation

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is the responsibility of the applicant with a disability to request accommodation which he/she requires in order to participate in the application or examination process. The Personnel Department reserves the right to require documentation of the existence of an ADA disability and the need for

accommodation from an appropriate health care or rehabilitation professional. The individual will not be required to provide documentation if both the disability and the need for accommodation are obvious. If you think that you have special needs in order to take the exam, please call Carmen Douglas, (334-625-2675) as soon as possible before the exam date in order to make your request.

Exam Results

You will not receive specific scores or exam information. Your exam results are simply used to determine your rank or placement on an employment list or register. Therefore, your rank will be provided based on the job(s) for which you have applied.

When a vacancy occurs, the top five scoring individuals at the time of the vacancy are referred to the hiring manager. Selections are made from this list of five. Therefore, the higher your rank the greater your chances of being on the list(s) sent to the hiring managers.

If you have applied for a job that is open on continuous recruitment (i.e., there is no closing date), your rank can change if someone takes the test after you and scores higher than you.   To determine if the job is on continuous recruitment, review the job announcement at www.montgomerypersonnel.com.   If the announcement says that the job is opened until hiring needs are met, the job has been opened on continuous recruitment.

Retaking the Exam

If you cannot appear on the scheduled exam date, you can call 334-625-2675 to schedule yourself for the next exam. If you fail to appear for the exam without contacting the Personnel Department, you must reapply and be scheduled for the next available exam date.

If you apply for the PSC position for the City and County, your score on the PSC exam will apply to both. The scores for the PSC exam are active for up to two years. However, you can retake the PSC exam after 120 days. Regardless, your most recent scores will be used to determine your standing (placement) on the PSC lists/registers.

The Montgomery Area Public Safety Communications Exam

The Public Safety Communications (PSC) Exam is used by the City-County Personnel Department to test individuals interested in E-911 Communications Center employment with the City of Montgomery and/or County of Montgomery.

The Public Safety Communications exam is a computerized test consisting of 12 sub-tests. The exam is administered in the Montgomery City/County Personnel computer room. Applicants are allowed 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete the overall test.

The Public Safety Communications Exam

The Public Safety Communications exam is a computerized test consisting of 12 sub-tests. The Decision Making test and the two data-entry tests are not scored part of your final score, however, applicants must have an overall data entry score of 7440 keystrokes per hour in order to pass the overall test. Applicants are provided 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete the overall test. The following information provides a brief description of each test

1. **Decision Making Test**
This test measures the ability to make decisions quickly and accurately and to correctly signal the response using a computer.
2. **Data Entry**:
This test measures the ability to read written data and accurately enter that data using a keyboard. Multi-tasking also measured.
3. **Data Entry (audio)**:
This test measures the ability to hear audible data and accurately enter that data using a keyboard. Multi-tasking also measured.
4. **Call Summarization 1**:
This test measures the ability to hear, comprehend, and summarize audible information. Multi-tasking also measured.
5. **Call Summarization 2**:
This test measures the ability to hear and comprehend audible information while accurately entering that information using a keyboard, and to use that information. Multi-tasking also measured.
6. **Cross-referencing (audio)**:
This test measures the ability to locate information, requested audibly, on a written list and to correctly/accurately respond using a keyboard.
7. **Character Comparison**:
This test measures the ability to compare and contrast written data.
8. **Memory Recall**:
This test measures the ability to learn and later recognize associated information.
9. **Memory Recall-Numeric (Audio)**
This test measures the ability to hear data (numbers and letter sequences), memorize it, and then use a keyboard to accurately enter the data.

10. **Prioritization**:

This test measures the ability to evaluate and analyze information in order to prioritize or categorize incidents.

11. **Probability**:
This test measures the ability to use the frequency of supplied information to determine the most likely correct solution.

12. **Map Reading**:
This test measures the ability to use maps for determining routes and locations.

General Tips for Taking the Exam

On The Day Before The Exam

On the day before the exam, you should prepare just as you would for any other important appointment. Know where you are going and explore your options for getting there. Make sure you know how to find the exam site, and get driving directions and information about where to park ahead of time. Prepare what you should take with you to the exam. Review the examination announcement and your schedule letter which identifies everything you need to bring with you to the exam, (for example: a driver's license or picture ID) and items not to bring to the exam. Make sure you dress comfortably and in layers, in order to ensure your comfort during the exam.

Get plenty of rest the night before the exam and allow yourself enough time in the morning so you do not have to rush. Being rested and having a clear head on the day of the exam may help as much as any last minute review. Be aware that you may not use cellular phones, beepers, headphones, or other similar communication devices in the exam center. The use of such devices at the exam center is strictly prohibited and can result in your disqualification. Finally, be aware that smoking and food are not allowed at the exam center.

On The Exam Day

When you leave for the exam, allow yourself extra time to find parking, to locate the room where you will be taking the exam, to sign-in, to go to the restroom and to get yourself settled.   Be sure to bring your picture identification with you to the exam site. You will not be admitted without proper picture identification. You will not need to bring anything else with you. This includes study materials, this booklet, pencils, communication devices, calculators, etc.

Beginning the Exam

Before you start your exam, a monitor will check your identification and sign you in to the exam site. The monitor will seat you at your assigned computer with a password for that computer. The test screen will be set up before you enter the room.

Once everyone is seated, the monitor will read general instructions to the group. You should listen carefully to these instructions because they may help you to perform better on the exam.

You will be asked to type in biographical information:
- On the first screen, you will type your SSN#.
- On the second screen, you will type in your name. You will type in your address only if it has changed since you applied for the PSC position.
- You will pull the right side bar down to see the RED "Begin Test Session" window.

During the Exam

At this point, the 1 hour and 45 minute time limit will begin. As you listen to the first instructions over the ear phones, you should adjust the volume with the bulb on the ear phones wire. The test proctor will assist you through the first sub-test (Decision Making) of the exam. You will then work through the rest of the test sub-tests independently which have instructions and one (1) practice item for each sub-test. You should read and/or listen to the instructions and complete the practice item for each sub-test before completing the actual sub-tests. When you are finished with all sub-tests, you will be returned to 1st screen. At this point, you are finished and you do not need to retype your SSN#.

During the exam you may take breaks at any time. You should work at your own pace but do move quickly and do not spend too much time rereading instructions. When you have finished the exam, you will leave the test site.

Important Points on Taking the PSC Exam
- The "Enter" key takes you back to the top of the screen. You should use the "Tab" key or the mouse to move around on the screen when needed.
- You must go through each of the sub-tests in the order they are given to you. You cannot go back to any of the previous sections so make sure you understand the instructions and take the practice items before proceeding to each sub-test.
- The two data entry tests are the only sub-tests that give you a specific time limit.

GOOD LUCK!