Assessment Services Review

IPMA-HR To Begin New Firefighter Examination Project

Participate and receive a 15% test discount!

PMA-HR is about to embark on a 10-month project to develop and validate a new entry-level firefighter examination. The goal of this project is to develop a new firefighter examination with high validity and maximized fairness to all groups tested. The new examination will attempt to test not only cognitive (intellectual) abilities but many other abilities required to succeed on the job, such as alertness and powers of observation; ability to function as part of a team; interest in community service; stress-tolerance, achievement-mindedness and other traits important to success. In addition to these non-cognitive abilities, the test will assess the ability to learn in training, to read, interpret and understand technical material, reasoning and problem solving ability, situational judgment and “common sense.”

Developing a test that attempts to assess all these abilities is only part of the project. The most time-consuming phase will be ascertaining whether the test does what it claims. This is the process of validation, and we plan to accomplish this by administering the test to 300 or more firefighters and comparing their test scores to actual job performance ratings. Test components that show a significant relationship to actual job performance ratings will be retained, while test components that do not show a true relationship to job performance will be dropped from the final version of the test.

In these first stages of the project, we are looking for fire departments willing to participate in the validation project. Any department that is willing and able to volunteer 10 or more firefighters to complete the test is invited to become a sponsoring department. Participating firefighters will be required to complete 2-3 hours of testing. The supervisors of these firefighters will also be required to submit confidential performance evaluations on the firefighters tested.

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Firefighter Examination Project cont.

To help assure objectivity, these performance evaluations will never be shared with the firefighters or the department. These testing and performance rating phases are anticipated for January and February of 2005.

All participating agencies will be granted a 15% test discount.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact Katie Pierce at 703-549-7100 or e-mail kpierce@ipma-hr.org.

IPMA-HR never offers a test for use by our clients until it has undergone thorough validation, and only your cooperation can make this possible. Thank you for your cooperation!

The Importance of Test Security

For more than 50 years, IPMA-HR has been a leading supplier of entry-level and promotional exams for fire, police, correctional, telecommunication and administration to jurisdictions in the U.S. and Canada. We know how important it is to feel confident in the testing products used for the hiring of competent employees, and to ensure the highest quality of service to agencies, exam security is of vital importance. Unfortunately, there are candidates (both internal and external) who will go to great lengths to “beat the system” and get their hands on an exam. The security of each stage of the process is essential: from ordering exams to the receiving of shipment, and from the administering of exams on exam day to destroying used exams or returning unused exams after the rental period.

The IPMA-HR Assessment Services Department takes the first step in exam security by requiring all agencies to submit a Standard Test Security Agreement (STSA) along with agency letterhead. Signing this agreement protects the interests of the agencies who use IPMA-HR exam materials. Requiring the agreement allows the agency to assign a primary signer such as an HR Director, Civil Service Chairman, or City Mayor to be responsible for supervising the receiving and/or administration of the exams. The primary signer is then allowed to assign up to two alternate signers from the agency. Alternate signers can include the Human Resource professional, City Clerk, Commission Secretary, – any agency staff member who again will be responsible for receiving and/or administering exams. When the shipment is sent it is sent to one of these signers.

One area to be particularly aware of is the importance of security when receiving exam shipments. The signer of the order must be available to pick up the package on the day of requested delivery. If a receptionist is responsible for signing for the package, make sure he/she knows that you are expecting a package and must be contacted immediately. Do not allow package(s) to remain unsupervised especially in heavy foot traffic areas such as reception. Once received, it is important that the signer opens the

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package and checks that the order is correct.

Until the day of the exam, exams should be placed in a locked environment. Between receipt and exam administration, no one other than the STSA signers should have access to the exams. Keeping a minimum amount of people involved in this process lessens the chance of a costly mistake.

Exam day is also a time to be wary. Count all study guides, exams, scoring stencils and answer sheets again before administering. Candidates should be informed of the consequences of cheating or copying the exam materials or questions in any way. An adequate number of proctors should be available to walk around the room watching for any signs of cheating. Some agencies have candidates sign a document promising to adhere to honesty and fairness. If a study guide is provided prior to the exam, remember to count them once collected to be sure you have the same amount that you handed out. Once the exam is completed, collect all used exams, answer sheets and any scratch paper that candidates were allowed to use. All used study guides and exams should be destroyed immediately or returned to IPMA-HR. We recommend that all answer sheets be kept under lock and key for your records, any scratch paper may either be kept for your records or destroyed.

The last step in the security process is recording used and unused exams on the Test Quantity Report form including how any used exams were destroyed or returned to IPMA-HR. Our rental policies state that all unused exams, study guides, scoring stencils and test administrator copies be returned to us within the 60-day rental period. The shipment needs to be sent via traceable method whether through USPS, FedEx or UPS. Once we receive the shipment, any unused exams will be credited to the agency minus a $2.50 restocking fee.

Although some of this information may be common sense, please be extra cautious in the security of the exams.

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Did you know that IPMA-HR agency members receive 10% off of assessment products?
The International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) is currently in the process of validating the new Entry-Level Correctional Officer Examination (C-3) and looking for departments interested in participating.

The validation study includes two phases: 1) administering the new Correctional Officer Examination to current Correctional Officers, and 2) having supervisors evaluate the correctional officer’s job performance. Data from correctional facilities around the country will be combined with the data you provide and will be used to conduct the statistical analysis to ensure that exam performance predicts job performance.

Agencies that participate will receive a 10% discount on your next several orders up until 500 tests have been ordered. Also, you will receive a free technical report when the study is completed. If there are any barriers to participation, we would be open to discussing other types of incentives.

If you would like to participate, please complete the following and return to Kathleen Pierce (below):

Agency: ________________________________
Contact Name: ________________________________
Title: ________________________________
Telephone number: ________________________________
E-mail address: ________________________________

Please indicate the number of correctional officers that would be participating:

Thank you very much for your time,
Kathleen Pierce
Assessment Services Coordinator
Phone: 703-549-7100 ext. 252
E-mail: kpierce@ipma-hr.org

"IPMA-HR has provided my organization with an easy to use testing process. The customer service has been excellent. My questions are answered in a timely manner and my orders are promptly filled. The tests have provided us with a helpful screening tool. I would recommend IPMA-HR to those needing pre-employment or promotional tests."

Stephanie Romagnoli, PHR
City of Muscatine, Iowa

We hope you enjoyed the first edition of IPMA-HR’s Assessment Services Review (ASR). If you wish to opt-out of receiving further editions, please email your request to jepstein@ipma-hr.org. If others at your organization would like to receive the ASR, please send an e-mail request to assessment@ipma-hr.org. We always welcome your feedback!