



**New York State  
Department of Civil Service**

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*An Introduction to Written Simulations  
and In-Basket Exercises*

for the

**Police Chief/Assistant Chief Series**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

The written test you are taking for Police Chief will consist of multiple-choice questions, a simulation problem and an in-basket exercise.

This information booklet is designed to inform you of the format and scoring of the simulation problem and in-basket exercise for the Police Chief test, and will tell you what to expect.

## ***THE WRITTEN SIMULATION***

As the name implies, simulations resemble reality, but in a controlled manner. The written simulation problem for the Police Chief test will present realistic situations you might encounter as a Police Chief. You will be required to work your way through each situation, making decisions about the best course of action to solve the problem presented. In some ways, simulations are like multiple-choice questions; you select answers from a number of possible choices.

Sometimes the choices present additional information which can help you in deciding what action to take. In other cases, the choices will direct you to the consequence of your decision and a further development of the situation. Unlike a multiple-choice question, however, **ONCE YOU CHOOSE AN ANSWER, YOU CANNOT GO BACK AND CHANGE YOUR ANSWER.**

## ***MATERIALS***

Written simulation problems require a developer pen and three separate booklets – a Test Booklet, a Response Booklet and an Answer Sheet Packet.

For the purposes of this Introduction, we have included a portion of a sample problem that includes the test sections, the Answer Sheet and the Response Booklet.

Portions of the Sample Problem will now be used to show how a simulation problem works.

## **OPENING SCENE**

When you open the Test Booklet, the problem will begin with an opening scene.

The opening scene introduces you to the problem. It tells you what your role is and what is happening. At the end of the opening scene, you will usually find the direction **Continue now with Section A.** Section A follows the opening scene.

### **Sample Problem**

Assume you are a new Police Chief in a police department that has an assignment to provide presentations on crime prevention to the public. Captain Jones, who reports to you, held the first presentation last Friday. On Monday, you receive an e-mail from the Police Commissioner who indicates that the Mayor has received complaints from attendees at the presentation who said there were not sufficient seats and handouts for the attendees at the Friday session. Captain Jones is currently holding the second session with a different group at the presentation site, which is several miles away.

**Continue now with Section A.**

## **PROBLEM SECTIONS**

All sections of the written simulation problem contain choices. Each section is identified by a letter of the alphabet. Section A is the first section presented in the problem. You will generally not be directed to other sections in alphabetical order. (For example, you may be directed from A to Q to H to C, etc.). Also, you may not be directed to every section in the problem. **GO ONLY TO THOSE SECTIONS TO WHICH YOU ARE DIRECTED.** Some sections may have more than one page. Be sure that you start with the first page of the section. Also, make sure that you look at every page in a multi-page section.

In each section, you will find a list of things you could do or information you might want to know to respond to the situation. Some of the things are good choices while others are neutral or even poor. In some of the sections, you will see additional information about the situation. In every section, you will see instructions for selecting choices. Some sections require you to **Choose ONLY ONE** of the choices; others permit you to **Choose AS MANY** as are appropriate, to **Choose UP TO** a specified number or to **Choose A SPECIFIC NUMBER**. Failure to follow these instructions could negatively affect your score on the test.

### **Section A**

You would now: **(Choose ONLY ONE, unless otherwise directed.)**

1. Leave a message on the Captain's desk for her to see you tomorrow.
2. Call the Police Commissioner to find out more about the complaints.
3. Talk to the Mayor's staff about the complaints.
4. Go to the presentation and talk to Captain Jones immediately.
5. Contact the presentation site and leave a message for Captain Jones.

In answering a **Choose ONLY ONE** section, you should assume that you will be allowed to make only one choice. You should evaluate all the choices and choose the one you believe is better than all the others. Occasionally, the response to that choice may direct you to make another choice in the same section. This does not necessarily mean that you have made a poor choice. It may be the preferred choice. However, you should **never assume** that you will have the opportunity to make a second choice.

In answering a **Choose AS MANY** section, you will have the opportunity to make several choices. Not all the choices listed represent proper actions to take. You should evaluate all the choices and choose all those that you believe represent proper actions while not choosing any of those that you believe represent inappropriate actions.

In answering a **Choose UP TO** section, you will be told the maximum number of choices you can make (e.g., **Choose UP TO FOUR**). You do not have to choose four but you should not choose any more than four. If you do choose more than four, you will receive credit for the four lowest valued choices and may receive a lower score.

In answering a **Choose A SPECIFIC NUMBER** section, you will be told the exact number of choices you must make (e.g., **Choose THREE**). You should not leave this section without making three choices. If you make more or fewer choices (e.g., four choices or two choices), you may receive a lower score. If you cannot find three choices that you believe are positive steps, you should look for choices that you believe will not be negative steps so that you can make the required three choices.

A **Choose AS MANY**, a **Choose UP TO** or a **Choose A SPECIFIC NUMBER** section will generally end with a numbered direction that begins: "**After you have chosen....**" This numbered direction does NOT count as one of the number of choices you may make in the section. You should make the appropriate number of choices in the section before following the instructions in the final numbered direction.

### ANSWER SHEETS

Once you have made a selection, you must find the response for that choice. The answer sheet serves as the place for you to record your choices. It also tells you which response number to look up to find the outcome of a particular choice.

A	1		C	11		E	21		G	31		H	41	
	2			12			22			32			42	
	3			13			23			33			43	
	4			14			24			34			44	
	5			15			25			35			45	
B	6		D	16		F	26		H	36		J	46	
	7			17			27			37			47	
	8			18			28			38			48	
	9			19			29			39			49	
	10			20			30			40			50	

The answer sheets contain numbers with blank boxes to the right of them. Letters that identify each of the sections are positioned to the left of the first choice in that section. The visible numbers correspond to the choices in the Test Booklet. The boxes to their right contain "latent information": numbers, words, or checkmarks that cannot be seen until they are exposed with the special developer pen. Because each answer sheet is designed for a specific problem, it is essential that you use the answer sheet that corresponds to the problem you are working on.

When you lightly rub the developer pen across the box next to your choice number, you will expose the latent information. TAKE CARE TO EXPOSE ONLY THE BOX WHICH CORRESPONDS TO YOUR CHOICE. When exposing material on the answer sheet, rub the developer pen once over the area you wish to develop. The image will appear in one to two seconds. **DO NOT** repeatedly rub an area. Repeated rubbing may cause the image to be scrubbed off the paper and become unreadable. This will make it difficult for you to continue with the test and may result in your getting a lower score than you would have gotten otherwise.

Using the developer pen on a choice box creates a record of your choice. Unlike a multiple-choice test, there is no way you can erase a choice once you make it. As in real life, once an action is taken, it is not possible for it to be rescinded. Subsequent steps can be taken to counteract the action, but the original action remains.

When you expose the box on the answer sheet that corresponds to the number of the choice you selected in the Test Booklet, you will see one of three things: a **checkmark**, a **GO TO** statement or a three-digit **number**, as indicated in the following example.

A	1		C	11		E	21	183	F	31		H	41		
	2			12			22	180		32			42		
	3			13			23			33	178		43	✓	
	4			14	161		24	GO TO F		34			44		
	5	156		15			25			35			45		
	6	GO TO G		16			26			36			46	✓	
	B	7			17			27			37			47	
		8			18		173	28			38			48	
		9			19		153	29			39			49	
		10			20			30			40		164	50	152

If a **checkmark** appears, continue to follow directions in the SAME section in which you are working in the Test Booklet. The checkmark merely means that your answer has been recorded, but no new information is presented to you as a result.

If a **GO TO** statement appears, go to the indicated lettered section in the Test Booklet. Be sure to develop the ENTIRE box, because some sections may be labeled with double letters (AA, BB, etc.).

If a three-digit **number** appears, look up that numbered response in the Response Booklet, read the response, and follow the directions at the end of the response.

In sections that allow more than one choice, make your choices one at a time. READ THE RESPONSE (IF ANY) TO EACH CHOICE BEFORE MAKING YOUR NEXT CHOICE.

## **RESPONSE BOOKLET**

The Response Booklet contains the responses, which provide both feedback on your choices and directions for proceeding through the written simulation problem.

The following illustration shows the kinds of responses and directions you can expect to see.

If the directions send you to another section (**GO TO SECTION D**), go immediately to that section and make no more choices in the section in which you were working. If the directions tell you to **Make another choice in the same section**, you **must** return to the section in which you were working and make another choice. If the directions tell you to **Return to the section you are working in and continue**, return to that section, make any additional choices that are appropriate and follow any further directions you are given.

181. He says he hopes so. **GO TO SECTION D.**
182. There have been none. **Make another choice in the same section.**
183. She says she was prepared to make her presentation. **Return to the section you are working in and continue.**

Responses provide information and/or directions for working through the problem. **HOWEVER**, not all the responses in the booklet are actual parts of the problem you are working on. Some responses present information which may be false or misleading. These have been included to prevent candidates from trying to piece the problem together by reading only the responses. The best course of action for you to take is to pay close attention **ONLY** to the responses to which you have been directed.

## **SCORING**

CHOICES, NOT RESPONSES, ARE SCORED. Every time you use the developer pen on a box, you are recording a choice. Only the boxes exposed on the answer sheets will count toward your test score. Nothing you write in the Test Booklet or in the Response Booklet will be counted toward your final score.

EVERYTHING YOU EXPOSE ON THE ANSWER SHEET(S) WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN SCORING. Be very careful using the developer pen on the answer sheet. Avoid making stray marks or smudges with the developer pen. When you expose a box, make sure it is the one that corresponds to your choice. Whatever you expose on an answer sheet - EVEN BOXES THAT YOU EXPOSED ACCIDENTALLY - will be scored, except in those cases where exposing additional response numbers contrary to instructions would advantage you. You will NOT be allowed to change or cross out exposed boxes. If you cross them out, they will be scored anyway. You will NOT be allowed to obtain a fresh answer sheet to make different selections.

Each choice in the written simulation test is valued positively, negatively or neutrally. In order to achieve the best score you can, you should select only the choices that you consider to be positive. In those sections that allow you to make more than one choice, you should select all the choices that you consider to be positive, while taking care not to select poor choices.

You may not be able to tell from the response to a choice whether that choice has a positive, negative or neutral value. As in real life, you may make the right decision but not immediately get good results. It is also possible to make a poor decision but have things appear to turn out all right in the short run. Do not become discouraged if a response to one of your choices suggests that the situation is not improving.

## ***HINTS***

Because you will be working the problem by going back and forth between the Test Booklet, the Answer Sheet Packet, and the Response Booklet, you could lose your place in the problem. You may find it helpful to leave your Test Booklet open to the section you are working in while you mark the answer sheet or look up responses so that you can return to the correct Test Booklet section quickly and easily. This is especially true of **Choose AS MANY** and **Choose UP TO** sections where you may go back and forth several times before being directed to another section.

You may find it helpful to track your path on a separate piece of paper by listing, in order, the sections to which you have been directed. This will enable you to review the events of the problem in the order they occurred and to keep track of your progress. You can also make any notations you wish in the rest of the Test Booklet. Although the answer sheets will show the sections in which you have exposed choices, they will not give you information on the order in which you have gone through the sections.

You should NOT make notations or stray marks on the answer sheets.

You should keep working on a problem until you are directed to a response that tells you it is the **END OF PROBLEM**.

## ***IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO NEXT IN THE PROBLEM...***

. . . follow the steps below. You are responsible for keeping track of where you are in the problem. The monitor is not permitted to assist you in finding your place.

If you find that you have answered only a few sections of the problem, and don't know where to go next, you've almost certainly missed a direction. If you become lost, LOOK FIRST in that section of the Test Booklet in which you're working:

- If the section directs you to **Choose AS MANY**, **Choose UP TO**, or **Choose A SPECIFIC NUMBER**, you may have missed the very last choice in the section that will usually tell you what box to expose next on the answer sheet in order to find the response that tells you where to go next.
- If the section directs you to **Choose ONLY ONE**, the box you exposed on the answer sheet either will have a GO TO statement, or will direct you to a response number. That numbered response either will have a GO TO statement at the end or will direct you to make another choice in the same section. If the response does neither, MAKE SURE you have exposed the correct numbered box on the answer sheet. If you have, then MAKE SURE you have read the correct numbered response in the Response Booklet.

If you still find yourself not knowing where to go next in the problem, the SECOND thing to do is retrace your path through the problem to make sure you haven't gone to a wrong section by mistake.

The last thing to remember, should you become lost, is not to give up. Entering a wrong section is not fatal. Back yourself up and pick up again where you went off the track.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO IN-BASKET EXERCISES

The in-basket exercise portion of your Police Chief examination will use a two-choice "Yes" or "No" format to evaluate your responses to a series of situations similar to those that typically might occur in a Police Chief's job. Each in-basket item presents material that a Police Chief might typically find in his/her in-basket during the course of a day. (For example, letters, computer printouts, memos, forms, audio/video tapes, phone/fax messages, statistical/narrative reports, etc.) The in-basket items are followed by questions asking you to decide what further information you, as Chief, should seek before responding to the situation or statements indicating what action(s) you should take to resolve the situation or problem.

How the questions will look: Each in-basket item has a number of questions or statements associated with it. If you would take the action or seek the information described in the question, you should mark choice (A) on your answer paper; if not, you should mark choice (B). For each question, the appropriate answer is either yes or no and your score will be based on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the responses that you select. Only selections that you mark on your separate answer paper will be scored. NO credit will be given for choices that you marked in the test booklet.

In addition to the in-basket items, you will receive background information describing the department in which you are employed as Chief, resources that are available to you and a description of your department's organization. For the purposes of this introduction to in-basket exercises, you are to assume you are a Police Chief in a community that has approximately 30 sworn personnel. You came to the department from another police agency in a nearby county. Your patrol force is divided into three platoons which work fixed shifts. Each platoon is supervised by a Platoon Sergeant; there are also two Lieutenants in the department who report directly to you. You, in turn, are responsible to the Town Supervisor of the community.

A sample in-basket item and examples of the types of questions you will respond to are presented next.

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One morning during your first week on the job as Police Chief, you enter your office and find a number of items awaiting your attention. Among them is a memo from one of your Lieutenants.

**SAMPLE IN-BASKET ITEM**

Police Department

Inter-Office Memo

**TO:** Chief

**FROM:** Lt. Benson

**SUBJECT:** Attached Video Tape

**DATE:** March 21, 20 \_\_

The attached video tape arrived in the mail this morning. On it was an unsigned note stating, "You should find the enclosed video tape interesting. Channel 11 intends to broadcast this on their local news program at 6:00 this evening."

I viewed the tape and it showed a video camera photographing a dimly lit scene which I recognized as a parking lot behind a theater and commercial complex in the town. It shows one of our department's patrol vehicles cruising up and down the lanes of the parking lot. The vehicle stops and an individual dressed in the uniform of the police department gets out and appears to be looking into the car windows of the parked cars. I could not identify the officer, even though the camera appears to zoom in each time the interior light of the parked car comes on. The officer appeared to leave his vehicle on three separate occasions. After one such incident, I saw that the officer was carrying a package back to the patrol car.

At this point, the tape goes blank. The tape lasted for about ten minutes altogether. I reviewed the tape a second time without discovering any new details.

I thought that you would want me to bring this to your attention immediately.

You would now:

1. Discuss the video tape with Lt. Benson.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
2. Have a video technician attempt to enhance the quality of the video tape.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
3. Discuss the implications of the video tape with the Town Supervisor.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
4. Discuss the video tape with your Platoon Sergeants.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
5. Determine which of your officers were working nights recently.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
6. Review department records on car break-ins that may have occurred in parking lots in your jurisdiction over the past month or two.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
7. Issue a press release indicating that someone is using this video tape to defame the reputation of the police department.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
8. Plan to drive around the parking lots in your jurisdiction in an unmarked vehicle for the next week or two.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
9. Interview each officer who has been working nights during the past week in your jurisdiction.
  - A. Yes
  - B. No

## How this part of the test will be scored:

This discussion will help you understand the logic and scoring of this portion of the test. Of the choices indicated in this sample, only actions 1, 2, and 6, would be helpful in this situation. You would receive one point of credit for each "A" (YES) selected for choices 1, 2, and 6. You would receive no credit for each "B" (NO) selected for choices 1, 2, and 6.

**Choice 1:** The Lieutenant might have some information on the identity of the officer on the video tape.

**Choice 2:** This might assist in identifying the officer who was shown in the video tape.

**Choice 6:** This would give you some information on how prevalent larcenies from parked cars have been in your jurisdiction during the recent past, and whether there is any pattern to them.

**The other choices are incorrect actions to take at this time and you would receive no credit if you selected "A" for these six choices.**

**Choice 3:** This is premature at the time. The Town Supervisor would want to know what you are doing to identify the perpetrator.

**Choice 4:** This is inadvisable, since you are unaware whether the individual seen in the video tape was an officer, a supervisor, or someone impersonating an officer.

**Choice 5:** This would not be helpful since there is no indication when the video tape was shot. If it were shot several weeks ago, any of your officers might have been working nights.

**Choice 7:** This is wrong since there is no indication of anyone doing anything except showing what one of your officers is allegedly doing. It is also wrong because it would announce to the public that there is possible corruption in your department without any indication that you are attempting to determine who may be responsible.

**Choice 8 and Choice 9** are also unproductive and would be a waste of time.

You would receive one point of credit for each "B" (NO) selected for choices 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9. You would receive no credit for each "A" (YES) selected for choices 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9. **REMEMBER** that you should choose "A" (YES) **ONLY** for actions that would be appropriate and/or helpful.

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