

Entry-Level Corrections Officer Physical Task Job Task Analysis (JTA)

Subject Matter Expert (SME) Panel Member Briefing

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide SME panel members with background information to aid in their informed participation in the SME panel process.

JTA Overview

A Job Task Analysis (JTA) is a formal, structured process used to determine the critical and essential duties, tasks, responsibilities and requirements of a specific job classification. Results from the JTA process are used variously to:

1. Construct comprehensive Job Descriptions
2. Aid in determining medical requirements – physical capacity requirements
3. Validating employment testing and minimum entry requirements for employment
4. Determining content and emphasis of training curricula

Corrections work presents specific and unique physical challenges. In order that corrections officers are able to perform safely and effectively they must be able to perform a wide range of demanding physical tasks. Ability to perform these tasks is considered critical and essential to safe and effective job performance.

How does the JTA process produce a list of valid “critical and essential” tasks?

It is essential that the physical task performance requirements of the corrections officer job are clearly understood and carefully validated. This is a two-step process, 1. Job Analysis, and . . . 2. The Medical Panel review process).

The JTA process will identify the critical and essential physical tasks performed by entry-level corrections officers. This is done by a comprehensive process of identifying **all** significant physical tasks, and then surveying line and/or supervisory level professionals who actually perform/supervise the jobs to determine the **frequency** of task performance (*How often is the specific task done by most line officers?*) and the potential **consequences of inadequate performance** (CIP) (*What are the potential consequences if the task is not performed well?*).

The primary task of the SME Panel is to make sure that significant physical tasks are identified for the final survey instrument.

Specific formulae are used to determine which tasks are essential (a mathematical relationship between how frequently a task is performed and the consequences of inadequate performance). A task can be deemed “critical and essential” by virtue of either frequency or CIP.

What happens to those tasks, how are they used?

Critical and essential physical tasks are passed on to a panel of medical doctors who develop specific medical standards for corrections officer applicants. These medical standards are used to support the essential goal that new hires are medically sound to perform their job duties in a safe and effective manner.

Critical and essential tasks are also used to determine physical capacity requirements, such as being able to successfully perform on the ORPAT (Oregon Physical Abilities Test). The ORPAT is based on physical tasks that officers perform in the course of their job duties, as well as the overall physical fitness and physical capacities necessary to safe and effective job performance.

By careful validation in the JTA process we can insure that medical and physical capacity requirements and standards are reasonable and demonstrably job-related, **and** that these standards and requirements do not result in adverse (discriminatory) impact on any group (females, age 40+, minorities, etc.).

Of course, the primary goal is always the safety of the officer and the public.

Corrections JTA History

There have been several comprehensive baseline JTA's done for corrections officers over the years. We have extensive, validated data on virtually every significant aspect of task performance for entry-level corrections officers. However, this data must be reviewed periodically to insure it does not become outdated. Additionally, assessment and testing methodology and medical practices all change over time and this makes it necessary to update our databases.

Since we have extensive data on general tasks (that don't change much over time), we are focusing first on physical tasks. This is the important work for which you have been selected.

Before the SME process occurs . . .

- The JTA Coordinator does a complete review of all existing JTA physical task data for entry-level corrections officers, as well as existing medical requirements.
- The JTA Coordinator reviews literature on similar processes for other states.
- The JTA Coordinator does a research review for medical standards and physical testing for corrections officers.
- The JTA Coordinator meets with management representatives from both the State Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Oregon Jail Managers Association (OJMA).
- The JTA Coordinator constructs an alpha-level (draft) JTA survey instrument to serve as a beginning point for the SME process.
- DOC and OJMA provide a list of potential SME panel members.
- Potential panel members are contacted and asked to verify their participation.
- While the SME panel process will be identical, it has been decided to employ separate DOC and OJMA SME panels. This should facilitate the SME panels being able to focus quickly on common tasks for their specific environment. To insure consistency, the work product will be combined into one survey document.
- Once confirmed, panel members receive a written briefing and a copy of the alpha survey (in straight text format), and examples in PDF of what the survey design looks like.

Next Steps

Most critical when looking at physical tasks are the potential consequences if they are not done competently (CIP). For this reason the SME panel for this process is comprised of supervisory personnel. Generally, it is held that assessing consequences of inadequate task performance is most appropriately done by supervisory - managerial level subject matter experts.

We will also be looking at *frequency* of task performance. We have extensive frequency data taken from line-employee surveys in previous JTA's. However, we strongly encourage SME panel members to discuss the alpha survey draft with line employees. This is intended to be a completely open process and you are free to make and distribute copies as you deem appropriate. However, we do ask that you not use the survey for any other purpose other than discussion.

You may also find it useful to discuss the physical aspects of the job with your personnel manager (to review issues around hiring, safety, retention and job performance) and/or risk management professionals within your agency, if they are available.

At ANY point in this process, you are encouraged to contact the JTA Coordinator, Rick Gardner at rick.gardner@state.or.us, 550 Monmouth Avenue, Monmouth Oregon, 97361-1330, (503) 378-2432 with any

comments, questions or suggestions. You are also encouraged to contact other SME members (a list will be provided as soon as we have a confirmed panel).

ALPHA SURVEY REVIEW

Because we have a large amount of existing, validated data, and to insure that the SME process is no more time consuming than is absolutely necessary, an alpha (initial draft) JTA survey instrument has been developed. This will relieve the SME group from the tedious task of replicating all of the basic tasks. It is also designed to stimulate thinking in some new areas (combined physical tasks, perceptual tasks, etc.).

Review of the Alpha Survey is the primary task of the SME group.

The primary task of the SME panel is to individually review the alpha survey and to make certain that it is complete and accurate.

There are many different “environments” within the corrections community, and even though some of them may present physical tasks that are not commonly performed by the majority of officers, these tasks may be of such a critical nature that they have to be considered essential. We want to make sure that we capture these.

It cannot always be known exactly what environment a newly hired officer will encounter, so it is important to reflect all of the reasonable possibilities.

Reviewing the Alpha Survey - Meeting Options

Once this review has been completed, we have two options:

1. To compile review results and distribute them electronically and have SME panel members respond electronically or . . .
2. To compile review results, distribute them electronically, and then meet together to process the results as a group.

While face-to-face meetings are more resource intensive, they typically result in a higher perceived degree of satisfaction with the final product.

Once the complete task process has been clearly outlined and explained, the SME group will be able to determine what they wish to do on the meeting issue.

Beta-Testing the Survey

Once there is substantial agreement on the content of the survey instrument, the next step will be to beta-test the actual survey. Our new survey methodology allows for web-based surveys, completed electronically. SME panel members and selected other participants will be emailed a link to the beta-survey, and will be asked to complete the survey on line. As part of this process they will also be asked to evaluate the survey, also electronically.

The results from this beta test will either be communicated via email, or a meeting convened to discuss the results.

The Final Survey Process

A final JTA survey will be developed for distribution to a statistically significant, randomly selected sample of supervisory-management level corrections professionals throughout both DOC and OJMA agencies.

The distribution of the final version of the JTA survey will conclude the SME Panel’s formal tasks.

When the final survey returns data are processed, SME panel members will receive a copy of the summary report. The SME panel may elect to set a final meeting to go over the survey results.

So, what do you do now?

First, if there is anything that is unclear or if you have any questions, please contact Rick Gardner immediately.

If you are reasonably confident you understand what you are being asked to do, please review the text version of the JTA survey when it arrives in your email box with the following in mind:

1. Note any tasks you are aware of that do NOT appear on the draft survey. Be specific and detailed. You may make notes on the survey document, or keep a separate list. **Be specific.**
2. Note any tasks that appear on the survey, that you believe are NOT performed by entry level corrections officers.
3. Assess whether or not the survey categories make sense, and that individual tasks are located in the appropriate category.
4. Note any task statements that are unclear or incorrectly stated.
5. Email Rick Gardner with your preference for either simply sending in your work, or meeting with the group to discuss. ***You will be informed as quickly as we can get responses from everyone as to whether you should simply send in your work, or bring it with you to a face-to-face meeting.***

Again, should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rick immediately.

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Your participation is very important and appreciated. Your knowledge makes this process possible.

Rick Gardner
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