



Skills Examiner Training

Developed as part of the National
Emergency Services Curriculum Project

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This class is normally expected to take approximately 50 minutes to present including the question and answer period when taken in-residence.

The point of this class is to step personnel up from being instructors and teachers to being those personnel responsible for certifying training. Though the skills are very similar and this can be accomplished by people of like qualifications, there are some distinct differences.

What is an Examiner?



- Examiners are reporters and recorders of observed behaviors--not implied behaviors, not wished-for behaviors, but *observed* behaviors.
- Your job is to record what you saw the student do and what you heard the student say.
- Stick to that and you can't go wrong.

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Emphasis needs to be placed on examiners only signing off personnel that actually successfully complete the task as required. Students are welcome to re-test at an appropriate time, but just because he or she says that they can do something does not mean that they can. No behind-the-barn sign-offs are allowed. If an examiner does this, then he or she is part of the problem and not the solution, and it will probably come back to haunt them.

Examining Skills



- Professionalism
- Teaching vs. Testing
- Mock Scenarios
- Skills Testing
- Tips
- Common examiner errors

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These are the areas that will be covered as part of the presentation.

Professionalism is Required



- Be where you are supposed to be on time
- Dress professionally - Wear the recommended uniform for the activity you are testing
- Maintain a sense of decorum

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Just like classroom or field instructors, evaluators need to set the tone. Examiners are often seen as the best of the best, and this is not necessarily a bad persona to portray – though elitist approaches should be avoided. It is especially important that these personnel follow established regulations, laws, and other guidance as the “do as I say – not as I do” mentality does not cut it with students.

Be sure that personnel serving as evaluators realize that they do need to maintain control of the situation at hand. Even though the personnel coming up to them should be qualified in the task to be demonstrated does not mean that they actually are. Evaluators need to watch out for the safety of their students and know when it is necessary to provide appropriate guidance.

Teaching Vs. Testing



- Don't teach students while evaluating tasks
 - If you assist one student, you must assist them all
 - Don't often have the time
- Teaching is accomplished during assigned teaching periods

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By the time students come to this stage, they should not need to be taught. If they need additional instruction, then that should be accomplished at a later time. Remember that it may appear as if an evaluator is favoring one student over another if they teach one and not another, even if it is at two completely different evaluation periods at different times.

Remember though, that students do need to be taught. Experienced personnel often forget what it is like to be a new student. Don't ask a mixed audience (experienced and inexperienced personnel) if they just want to move right to task evaluations. Inexperienced personnel will often not say that they need help until after they fail – when it is too late.

It should also be noted that establishing classes for like groups is appropriate. Bring in the experienced people for re-currency training and then use them to train inexperienced people at a future session.

Mock Scenarios



- Instructions to each candidate should be identical
- Make sure that those acting out the scenario are doing the same thing each time
- Use the same criteria each time
- Exercise guides and task books help solve this problem

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Mock scenarios can be good way to train groups of people in how a job will be accomplished, but this does require good planning and preparation if these exercises will be used for task sign-offs. The objectives and requirements of the task guides must be met, and that can often mean that multiple evaluators are necessary. That does not mean that they all must be qualified in the specialty, but their instructions must be clear. For example, assigning several individuals to watch ground team trainees on a simulated accident scene to see if those personnel handling patients use rubber gloves appropriately may require several observers, but all they need to look for is one thing. The main evaluator can collect that data afterwards and determine if everyone passed.

Be sure that if you are going to use a scenario multiple times, even at different locations or times, that the evaluators give instructions the same way and evaluate the same way. This way it is fair to the students. Don't be afraid to do a dry run. We've run upwards of 15 of these at the National Emergency Services Academy in a day, and doing a dry run to be sure everyone gets the same kind of evaluation is important. It also allows you one last chance to check to see if your staff is prepared.

Lastly, don't be afraid to look at the exercise guides and task books for additional guidance. We know that not everyone has a great imagination in every area that will be tested, and have tried to give some relatively simple examples of how exercises can be developed to meet your needs. It still requires planning on the user's part though.

Skills Testing



- Critical aspects
 - Does the student meet the goals of the skill?
 - Does the student meet them the same way you do?
 - Is the student's method wrong or just different?
- Nice-to-know Procedures
 - There are often many ways to accomplish a task.
 - Don't teach tricks of the trade until the students have mastered the basics.

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Make sure that students meet the requirements of the task guide, but don't go overboard. If the student uses another method that is equally effective and safe, even if it isn't your way, they should pass. Be sure your evaluators know their subject.

Be sure students know the job backwards and forwards before you teach them nice to know procedures. You may not be there at 2 am when they don't know how to do the job because you skipped steps in evaluating them. Follow the task requirements.

Tips



- Check the equipment being used before any demonstrations or testing
 - Make allowances for equipment problems
 - Let students know about equipment failures if it will affect them
 - Cancel and re-schedule a station if the equipment is required
- Introduce yourself

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These are just a few suggestions for new evaluators to try to get them off on the right foot.

Tips continued



- Get housekeeping items out of the way like sign-ins, pointing out restrooms, etc.
- Explain the evaluation procedures thoroughly
- Watch your facial expressions
- Allow time for reasonable questions
- Be fair and impartial
- Document the results – good or bad

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Most of the above are self explanatory, but there are often questions about what is required to be documented. The baseline is whether or not students pass their evaluations or not. This should be documented on the CAPF 112 or 113 and copies forwarded to the member's unit to be put in the member's ES Qualification Folder, CAPF 114. In the near future personnel should be prepared to enter completion into a national online database – it is coming along with qualification tracking at the national level, and ideally this will minimize the paperwork required to be kept in the long-run.

Common Examiner Errors



- Preconception
- Rating one student against the other
- Localizing effect
- Specificity
- Guessing
- Personal Preferences

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Make sure that evaluators have a bias free attitude before they start.

The key is to judge against the standard in the task guide – not other students, or what you think the standards need to be. The task guide was written so that personnel could do the job, not necessarily to make testing easy at all times or more difficult at others.

Don't pre-judge students based on what unit they are from.

Don't make the requirements more stringent than they already are.

Do your best to know what the answer should be before testing students, but if you get caught off guard – look it up. Guessing means that you may be right or you may be wrong – and when you're wrong it will inevitably come back to haunt you.

If you can't put your personal preferences aside to evaluate personnel correctly, then tell your boss so that they can find someone else. We all have things that we like doing, and things that we don't, and if you can't get past the ones you don't and do a competent job, then another evaluator should be used.



QUESTIONS?

Take the test!

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Feel free to contact your course moderator or the national emergency services staff should you have questions about your responsibilities as an evaluator. The national emergency services staff can be contacted at dos@capnhq.gov