

Interview Question Guidelines

TOPIC	PERMISSIBLE QUESTIONS	QUESTIONABLE
Address	What is your address?	Do you own or rent your home? How long have you lived at your present address?
Age	Can you show proof of age upon hire? Are you over 18 years of age? Can you produce documentation supporting your legal right to work permanently in the USA?	Age Birth date Dates of attendance at elementary or high school, or college Dates of Military Service
Arrest or Criminal Record	Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (if the information has bearing on necessary job functions; i.e. embezzlement for Accounting positions)	Have you ever been arrested? About convictions unless the information bears on job performance.
Credit Ratings or Garnishments	Nothing, unless job related. <i>Note: It is a Civil Rights violation to refuse to hire an individual if the refusal is based even in part on the person's poor credit rating.</i>	About credit ratings since it usually has little or no relation to job performance.
Citizenship	Indicate that proof of the applicant's legal right to work in the U.S. will be required after the hiring decision. Note: This statement is better covered on the application close to where the applicant signs that the information provided is true rather than in the interview.	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you born? Where were your parents born?
Disabilities	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job?	Do you have any disabilities? What is the nature or severity of your disability?
Education	Training and experience related to job requirements.	About education that is not related to job performance.
Family	About freedom to travel if job requires and ability to meet work schedule requirements.	About family planning, family size, children's ages, child care plans, spouse's employment or salary.
Gender	Applicant's gender but only if gender is a required qualification (demonstrably related to job performance).	Questions regarding pregnancy, birth control, children, child bearing, or childcare plans. Questions inquiring whether an applicant's spouse will allow him/her to travel.
Height & Weight	About ability to perform the job requirements only if height or weight is a "bona fide occupational qualification."	How much do you weigh? How tall are you? <i>Note: The Civil Rights Act indicates that unless an employer proves otherwise, height requirements are discriminatory.</i>

TOPIC	PERMISSIBLE QUESTIONS	QUESTIONABLE
Marital Status	Nothing - this is irrelevant until after hire where it may be needed for benefits purposes	Whether person is married, single, separated, divorced, engaged or widowed.
Military Service	Questions regarding relevant experience gained during military service.	Questions regarding military experience, e.g., dates of service and type of discharge.
Name	Current legal name "Is additional information, such as a different name or nickname necessary in order to check job references?"	Whether person has worked under a different name. Questions which divulge marital status or ancestry.
National Origin	Ability to speak, read, or write English or a foreign language if the job requires.	About ancestry, birth place of applicant, parents or spouse.
Notice in Case of Emergency	<i>Note: you can request this as part of a release for the purpose of conducting a plant tour if this is done with ALL visitors, but the data cannot be included in any of the hiring records.</i>	Name, address and <i>relationship</i> of relative or other individual to be notified in case of accident or emergency.
Pregnancy	Nothing--but it is legitimate to ask when someone is available to begin work, but this is best done for all candidates on the application - not just when visual cues suggest it might be an issue.	Are you pregnant or planning to become pregnant? Are you planning to start a family?
Race	Statement that a photograph may be required after the hiring decision is made.	Questions requiring applicant to identify race, complexion, color of skin, hair or eyes. Questions requiring applicant to identify attitudes about working with, supervising or being supervised by, a person of another race.
Religion	Statement of the employer's regular working hours, days, or shifts and ask whether the applicant can work that schedule.	Religion of applicant. Any questions which lead to elicit information about an applicant's religious affiliation, e.g., involvement in church groups.

Reference: National Public Employer Labor Relations Association Newsletter, Ted Clark: Tips for Lawful Interviewing, September 2001