

# **COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**Fire Alarm Operator  
Entry-Level**

**Candidate Preparation Guide**

**Prepared By:**



**September 2024**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TERMS AND CONDITIONS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
I.    Date, Time, and Location.....	7
II.   General Guidelines.....	7
III.  Ability Test Component Guidelines.....	7
IV.  Work Attitudes Assessment Guideline: .....	8
<b>SECTION 2: VERBAL COMPREHENSION OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>10</b>
I.    Verbal Comprehension Component Description.....	10
II.   Verbal Comprehension Sample Questions .....	10
III.  Verbal Comprehension Test Preparation.....	10
IV.  Verbal Comprehension Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies.....	11
<b>SECTION 3: VERBAL REASONING OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>12</b>
I.    Verbal Reasoning Component Description .....	12
II.   Verbal Reasoning Sample Questions .....	12
III.  Verbal Reasoning Test Preparation.....	13
IV.  Verbal Reasoning Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies.....	13
<b>SECTION 4: VISUAL SPEED AND ACCURACY OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>15</b>
I.    Visual Speed and Accuracy Component Description .....	15
II.   Visual Speed and Accuracy Sample Questions .....	15
III.  Visual Speed and Accuracy Test Preparation.....	15
IV.  Visual Speed and Accuracy Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies.....	16
<b>SECTION 5: FOLLOWING WRITTEN DIRECTIONS OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>17</b>
I.    Following Written Directions Component Description .....	17
II.   Following Written Directions Sample Questions .....	17

III.	Following Written Directions Test Preparation .....	17
IV.	Following Written Directions Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies .....	18
<b>SECTION 6: WORK ATTITUDES OVERVIEW.....</b>		<b>19</b>
I.	Characteristics Measured .....	19
II.	Work Attitudes Instructions and Sample Questions .....	20
III.	General Tips for Completing the Work Attitudes Assessment.....	21
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>22</b>

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Candidate Preparation Guide is the copyrighted work of Talogy, Inc. This guide contains information that is legally protected, confidential, and intended ONLY for REGISTERED CANDIDATES who are preparing to take the Fire Alarm Operator (entry-level) assessment. Except as specifically permitted, no portion of this guide may be distributed or reproduced by any means or in any form, without Talogy's prior written permission.

As a registered candidate, you may view and print a single copy of this guide for your personal use to prepare for the Fire Alarm Operator (entry-level) assessment. Any copy of the guide or portion thereof must include all copyright notices in the same form and manner as on the original guide. You are expressly prohibited from distributing copies of this guide. This guide may not be modified in any way.

By accessing this guide, you agree to these conditions. Only candidates registered to complete the Fire Alarm Operator (entry-level) assessment have permission to access this guide. Unauthorized reproduction of this guide by any other individuals is strictly prohibited. Talogy reserves the right to seek all remedies available by law for any violation of these terms and conditions. All rights not expressly granted herein are reserved.

**NOTE:** In this Guide, an effort has been made to provide information about the intended format, content, logistics, and evaluation of the FAO entry-level examination. However, it is possible that minor alterations may be made in the testing procedures between the time this Guide is distributed and the administration of the test. We will work with the Human Resources Division to provide you with any updates that may be required.

## INTRODUCTION

This Candidate Preparation Guide is designed to help you prepare for the entry-level Fire Alarm Operator (FAO) examination. This Guide contains some very important information, including information on the scoring approach, sample questions, test-taking guidelines and tips, and test preparation strategies. **Be sure to read this Guide carefully in its entirety.**

The FAO examination consists of the following five (5) test components: Verbal Comprehension, Verbal Reasoning, Visual Speed and Accuracy, Following Written Directions, and a Work Attitudes assessment. All test components are designed to measure abilities or characteristics that have been determined to be important to the effective performance of entry-level FAOs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The **Verbal Comprehension** test component measures one's ability to understand written words and the ideas associated with them.

The **Verbal Reasoning** test component measures one's ability to combine separate pieces of information to form conclusions.

The **Visual Speed and Accuracy** test component measures the degree to which one can compare numbers or patterns quickly and accurately.

**Following Written Directions** measures the ability to read and follow a set of rules.

The **Work Attitudes** assessment measures work related attitudes and characteristics needed for successful performance as an entry-level FAO.

**All five FAO test components will be scored and your scores from all components will be combined to determine your continued eligibility in the selection process.**

Please note that the order in which the five test components are administered is the same as the order in which they are listed above. This guide provides an overview of the testing procedures, the types of questions you will encounter on each test component, and the systematic methods of study and preparation that you should use in preparing for each test component.

You should review this guide as many times as necessary to become comfortable with the information and test-taking strategies presented.

This Candidate Preparation Guide is organized into the following sections:

**Section 1: General Information and Guidelines:** This section provides you with general information regarding the schedule and logistics for the FAO entry-level examination, along with test-taking guidelines.

**Section 2: Verbal Comprehension Overview:** This section describes the Verbal Comprehension component of the exam and provides example questions and test preparation / test-taking strategies.

**Section 3: Verbal Reasoning Overview:** This section describes the Verbal Reasoning component of the exam and provides example questions and test preparation / test-taking strategies.

- Section 4: Visual Speed and Accuracy Overview:** This section describes the Visual Speed and Accuracy component of the exam and provides example questions and test preparation / test-taking strategies.
- Section 5: Following Written Directions Overview:** This section describes the Following Written Directions component of the exam and provides example questions and test preparation / test-taking strategies.
- Section 6: Work Attitudes Overview:** This section describes the attitudes and characteristics measured in the Work Attitudes assessment and provides example questions and test-taking strategies.

## SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

### I. Date, Time, and Location:

The computerized online written exam which contains the five examination components listed above will be administered to FAO candidates on December 7, 2024. Testing will take place at multiple testing locations and candidates will be assigned to either a morning or an afternoon testing session. Two weeks prior to the exam date, you will receive a Notice to Appear that indicates the date and site where you will test and the arrival and testing times for your session. Please make note of your testing time to ensure you show up on time. Late arriving candidates may be disqualified from testing.

### II. General Guidelines:

When participating in the FAO entry-level examination, follow these general guidelines:

1. **Read all of the instructions carefully and pay careful attention to any additional instructions provided by administrators.** Instructions will be provided for each test component. It is very important that you read these instructions carefully before starting each test component to ensure that you understand the procedures that need to be followed.
2. **Read each question carefully.** Mistakes in responding to questions often occur because a candidate overlooked a key word or phrase. Be sure to identify the key words and phrases in the question, check the details of the possible answers with the details you identified, one-by-one. If every detail doesn't match, consider that answer suspect and try another, always keeping in mind you are looking for the single best possible answer.
3. **Test administrators will be available to help you.** If you have any questions about the testing procedures, ask for assistance or clarification. However, keep in mind that administrators will not explain the meaning of any question, define words, or give, in any manner, guidance on answering questions.
4. **Take a mental break if and when needed.** If you are having difficulty concentrating at any point during the exam, take a brief mental break. Take a minute to clear your mind and relax. Of course, you must keep in mind the time limit for the exam, but a brief mental break may be worth the time it takes.
5. **Review what you need to bring with you to the test site prior to your exam date.** Before you appear for testing you should follow the direction on your Notice to Appear and bring only a photo ID to the test site. Failure to bring the required documentation or information may result in you being ineligible to take the exam.
6. **Do NOT bring any electronic communication devices (i.e., cell phones, laptops, smartwatches, tablets) into the test site.** Communication devices should be left at home or in your car. Candidates found with any kind of communication device on them during testing will be disqualified from the testing process.

### III. Ability Test Component Guidelines:

The first four test components – Verbal Comprehension, Verbal Reasoning, Visual Speed and Accuracy, and Following Written Direction – measure work-related abilities. These are all multiple-choice questions with a single correct answer. The guidelines below are applicable to these four test components in particular.

1. **Pay attention to the timer.** The four ability components will each be timed separately. On each of these four components, after reading the instructions, you will have 5 minutes to complete the exam questions in that test component. Within each test component, a countdown timer will be visible on screen so you can keep track of time during the exam administration.
2. **Use your time wisely.** The ability test components are intentionally “speeded” components. They are designed to gauge how quickly *and* accurately you can answer the questions. You should therefore work quickly, but also pay attention to accuracy. Do take the time to read carefully, but do NOT spend too much time agonizing over any one question. If you truly have no idea of an answer, skip the question and move on. You can always come back to it if you have time leftover once you have answered the rest of the questions on that test component. If you complete a test component before the time for that component has expired, you may review your responses to the questions in that component, or go back to answer any unanswered questions if you choose, before moving on to the next component. However, once the timer has expired on a test component, you will automatically be moved forward to the next component and will not be able to return to any prior questions. Do NOT panic if time runs out before you have answered all of the questions in a test component. In fact, the test is designed such that most people will not get through all of the questions. Simply work as quickly and accurately as you can.
3. **Gauge your confidence.** On the ability-related test components, be aware that your score will be based on both speed (i.e., how many questions you answer) and accuracy (i.e., how many questions you answer *correctly*). In general, it is best to answer as many questions as you possibly can, as long as you are reasonably confident in your answers. This is because **there is a small penalty for incorrect answers; however, a single correct answer will gain you more points than a single incorrect answer will lose**. A single correct answer will make up for 2 to 5 incorrect answers. This is why, even though there is a small penalty for incorrect answers, it is still in your best interest to answer as many questions as possible as long as you are doing more than just blindly guessing. If, for example, you can eliminate some answer choices that are clearly wrong, or if you feel that you are fairly to reasonably confident in the right answer, it is to your benefit to go ahead and answer the question. If, on the other hand, you truly have no idea what the right answer is, and you feel that your answer would be nothing more than a completely random guess, then it may be to your benefit to leave the question unanswered.
4. **Anticipate where possible.** Try to answer the question in your mind before you look at the choices. If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and choose the closest alternative.
5. **Use the process of elimination.** If you don’t know the answer to a question, first eliminate those choices that are clearly wrong. This will save you time by reducing the number of answers you have to re-read and re-evaluate before making your final choice.

#### **IV. Work Attitudes Assessment Guidelines:**

The fifth test component – Work Attitudes – measures work-related attitudes, behavioral tendencies, and personal characteristics. These questions will ask the extent to which you agree that a particular statement describes you. The guidelines below are applicable to this test component in particular.

1. **Be sure to answer ALL questions in the allotted time.** On this test component, after reading the instructions, you will have 45 minutes to complete the questions. This component is NOT speeded. You should have plenty of time to answer all questions on this component. Even if no



single point on the rating scale describes you or the way you feel perfectly, be sure to provide a response to every statement. Candidates who do not respond to all statements on the Work Attitudes assessment may be disqualified from the selection process.

2. **Use extra time wisely.** If you complete this test component before the time has expired, it is a good idea to review your responses to the questions and particularly to make sure that you have answered every question. Once the timer has expired, you will automatically be moved forward and will not be able to return to any prior questions. If you have finished all questions and are satisfied with your answers before the time expires, you may move on to the end of the exam. You do NOT have to wait until the entire 45 minutes has run out.

## SECTION 2: VERBAL COMPREHENSION OVERVIEW

### I. Verbal Comprehension Component Description:

The Verbal Comprehension component of the exam consists of 30 questions and measures the ability to understand written words and the ideas associated with them. You will see a designated word followed by four additional words. From the four choices presented, you must select the word that is the closest synonym to the designated word. After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 30 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

### II. Verbal Comprehension Sample Questions:

Sample test component directions and questions are presented below. *The correct answers for each sample question are listed and explained on the next page. Try to answer the sample questions yourself before looking at the answer key.*

#### Directions:

Look at the sample problems below. You will see a series of words in bold, capital letters followed by four other words. One of the four means the same as the word in bold letters. Please select this matching word from among the four choices.

1. <b>LARGE</b>	<input type="radio"/> bright	<input type="radio"/> small	<input type="radio"/> toy	<input type="radio"/> big
2. <b>SPEAK</b>	<input type="radio"/> talk	<input type="radio"/> run	<input type="radio"/> stand	<input type="radio"/> sleep
3. <b>STORY</b>	<input type="radio"/> hat	<input type="radio"/> ball	<input type="radio"/> day	<input type="radio"/> tale
4. <b>ILL</b>	<input type="radio"/> well	<input type="radio"/> cold	<input type="radio"/> sick	<input type="radio"/> strong

### III. Verbal Comprehension Test Preparation:

The best preparation for performing successfully on many of the test components, including the Verbal Comprehension component, is practice. Reading any and all types of information you can get your hands on will help you with this test component. Reading different types of materials – novels, textbooks, technical information, news articles, short stories, etc. – will help ensure you come across as many different types of words as you can. During your reading, make note of any words you do not know or where you are unsure of the meaning. Look up the word's definition, and search for synonyms for that word using a thesaurus. You may also be able to quiz yourself by finding free, publicly available exams online that test your knowledge of words, their meanings, synonyms, and antonyms. All of these steps are good preparation for the Verbal Comprehension component of the exam.

#### **IV. Verbal Comprehension Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies:**

This section presents the answer key for the 4 sample questions presented on the previous page, along with tips for thinking about and responding to some of the specific types of questions that will be presented on the Verbal Comprehension component of the exam.

##### Verbal Comprehension Answer Key

Sample Question 1) “big” means the same as the target word, “LARGE”

Sample Question 2) “talk” means the same as the target word, “SPEAK”

Sample Question 3) “tale” means the same as the target word, “STORY”

Sample Question 4) “sick” means the same as the target word, “ILL”

Each of these answers can be verified by looking up the meanings of the words in a dictionary or by searching for synonyms of each word in a thesaurus.

##### Verbal Comprehension Test-Taking Strategies

For these items, be sure to follow the test component instructions and select the synonym of the hold, capitalized word – i.e., the word that means the same as the target word. Do NOT be fooled into choosing the antonym, or the word that means the opposite of the target word. For example, if you did not carefully read the directions, you may be tempted to choose the word “well” because it means the opposite of “ILL.” However, the directions instruct you to choose the word that has the same meaning, which would be “sick.”

Further, be careful to choose the word that has the same meaning and not simply a related meaning or some affiliation with the target word. For example, a “cold” may cause you to become “ILL.” The word “cold,” however, does NOT mean the same thing as the word “ILL” and therefore “cold” is NOT the correct answer.

Paying close attention to the part of speech of the target word will also be very helpful. The word you select should be the same part of speech – e.g., noun, verb, adjective – as the target word. If, for example, one of the response choices for “ILL” were “flu,” you might be tempted to select this as the answer. Just as noted above, however, the “flu” may cause you to become “ILL” but it does not mean the same things as the word “ILL.” Likewise, the word “ILL” is an adjective that describes how someone feels physically, whereas the word “flu” is a noun that describes a type of physical malady someone might have. Because the word “flu” is not an adjective like the target word, you know that “flu” cannot be the correct answer.

## SECTION 3: VERBAL REASONING OVERVIEW

### I. Verbal Reasoning Component Description:

The Verbal Reasoning component of the exam consists of 30 questions and measures the ability to combine separate pieces of information and form accurate conclusions based on that information. You will be presented with a list of facts to review, followed by five conclusions. Based on the factual information given, you must determine whether each conclusion is true, false, or uncertain. After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 30 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

### II. Verbal Reasoning Sample Questions:

Sample test component directions and questions are presented below. *The correct answers for each sample question are listed and explained on the next page. Try to answer the sample questions yourself before looking at the answer key.*

#### Directions:

Look at the sample problem below. First read the list of facts. After you have read all the facts, look at each conclusion. From the facts, you can tell that some of the conclusions are definitely true and some are definitely false, but in some cases you just cannot tell from the facts whether the conclusion is either true or false. If you decide a conclusion is definitely true, select option "T." If it is definitely false, select option "F." If the facts do not give enough information to tell whether a conclusion is definitely true or definitely false, select option "X."

#### Facts

Chris is a welder.  
Terry works for Company B.  
Chris' only child is a girl.  
Company A makes automotive parts.  
Company B employs no welders.

#### Conclusions

1. Chris does not work for Company B.	<input type="radio"/> T	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> X
2. Chris' son is ill.	<input type="radio"/> T	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> X
3. Chris works for Company C.	<input type="radio"/> T	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> X
4. Terry is a welder.	<input type="radio"/> T	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> X
5. Chris welds automotive parts.	<input type="radio"/> T	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> X

### **III. Verbal Reasoning Test Preparation:**

Practice can come in many forms for this test component. Anything that requires critical thinking or logical reasoning is good practice for these types of questions. Practice playing logic games or doing logic puzzles is an excellent approach. Online quizzes may also be found that test your ability to think critically, apply logical reasoning, and draw sound conclusions based on given facts.

Note that for these questions, the given facts will remain visible for your reference at any time while answering the related questions. You do NOT need to memorize any of the information presented. Also note that multiple conclusions will be asked about following each set of facts.

### **IV. Verbal Reasoning Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies:**

This section presents the answer key for the 5 sample questions presented on the previous page, along with tips for thinking about and responding to some of the specific types of questions that will be presented on the Verbal Reasoning component of the exam.

#### Verbal Reasoning Answer Key

Sample Question 1) The facts say that Chris is a welder, and that Company B employs no welders. Chris could not possibly work for Company B because it does not hire welders. Therefore, the conclusion “Chris does not work for Company B” is definitely true, and you should select “T.”

Sample Question 2) The facts say that Chris’ only child is a girl, which means that her son could not be ill since she has no son. Therefore, the conclusion “Chris’ son is ill” is definitely false, and you should select “F.”

Sample Question 3) From the facts that are given, there is not enough information to know definitely where Chris works. Chris does not work for Company B because that company hires no welders. It is possible that she works for Company C, but it is also possible that Chris works somewhere else. Therefore, the conclusion “Chris works for Company C” is uncertain, and you should select “X.”

Sample Question 4) The facts say that Terry works for Company B, and that Company B employs no welders. Terry could not possibly be a welder because he works for Company B. Therefore, the conclusion “Terry is a welder” is definitely false, and you should select “F.”

Sample Question 5) From the facts that are given, there is not enough information to know definitely what Chris welds. The facts do state that Chris is a welder, but they do not state whether Chris works for Company A (which makes automotive parts) or whether she works somewhere else. The facts also do not state specifically what Chris welds. Therefore, the conclusion “Chris welds automotive parts” is uncertain, and you should select “X.”

#### Verbal Reasoning Test-Taking Strategies

Attention to detail is critical for these types of questions. Pay close attention to words like “all,” “some,” “only,” or “most.” For example, if the facts state that (1) all part-time employees work at XYZ Company and that (2) Mrs. Sample is a part-time employee, then it logically follows that Mrs. Sample must work at XYZ Company (because all part-time employees work there). On the other hand, if the facts state that (1) XYZ Company employs only part-time employees and that (2) Mrs. Sample is a part-time employee, then it cannot be logically concluded that Mrs. Sample necessarily works at XYZ Company. In this case, XYZ Company employs only part-time employees, which means that all employees who do work for XYZ

Company are part-time. This does not, mean, however, that XYZ Company is the only company that employs part-time employees; a part-time employee (e.g., Mrs. Sample) may very well work at a different company that also employs part-time workers.

These questions require you to draw logical conclusions based **ONLY** on the facts provided. Be careful NOT to make assumptions or pull in previously known information or opinions when making a determination about any of the conclusions. For example, you may believe that all dogs are beautiful, or you may know that Mr. Hamilton owns a dog, but if such information is not provided in the stated facts on the exam, that information should NOT enter any of the determinations you make regarding the stated conclusions. Never allow your opinions or beliefs to influence your determination regarding any of the stated conclusions, and be sure to base your determinations only on the facts that are given on the exam.

## SECTION 4: VISUAL SPEED AND ACCURACY OVERVIEW

### I. Visual Speed and Accuracy Component Description:

The Visual Speed and Accuracy component of the exam consists of 150 questions and measures the ability to compare numbers or patterns quickly and accurately. You will see a pair of number-series that may include decimals, letters, or other symbols. You must determine whether each pair of items is exactly the same (S) or different (D). After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 150 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

### II. Visual Speed and Accuracy Sample Questions:

Sample test component directions and questions are presented below. *The correct answers for each sample question are listed and explained on the next page. Try to answer the sample questions yourself before looking at the answer key.*

#### Directions:

Look at the pairs of numbers below. If the pair of numbers are exactly alike, select S – SAME. If the pair of numbers are not exactly the same, select D – DIFFERENT.

			S – SAME	D – DIFFERENT
1)	792	792	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2)	6123	6122	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3)	\$898	\$898	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4)	72,10	72.10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5)	117!	117!	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### III. Visual Speed and Accuracy Test Preparation:

Practice is critical for this section. Have friends or family members create visual speed and accuracy problems for you to solve. You may also be able to easily find free online quizzes to test your attention to detail in this way. We advise you to find and take as many of those quizzes as possible as practice for the actual exam. Note that spatial reasoning is a closely related ability, so quizzes that test your spatial reasoning may help bolster your ability in this area as well.

#### **IV. Visual Speed and Accuracy Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies:**

This section presents the answer key for the 5 sample questions presented on the previous page, along with tips for thinking about and responding to some of the specific types of questions that will be presented on the Visual Speed and Accuracy component of the exam.

##### Visual Speed and Accuracy Answer Key

Sample Question 1) The first pair of numbers, 792 and 792, are exactly alike. You should select S – SAME.

Sample Question 2) The second pair of numbers, 6123 and 6122, are not exactly the same. You should therefore select D – DIFFERENT.

Sample Question 3) The third pair of numbers, \$898 and \$898, are exactly the same, including the presence and placement of the \$ symbol. You should therefore select S – SAME.

Sample Question 4) The fourth pair, 72,10 and 72.10 are different because one has a period in it while the other has a comma. You should therefore select D – DIFFERENT.

Sample Question 5) The fifth pair of numbers, 117! and 117! are exactly the same, including the presence and placement of the ! symbol. You should therefore select S – SAME.

##### Visual Speed and Accuracy Test-Taking Strategies

Attention to detail and speed are critical for these types of questions. Pay close attention to the order of the numbers, as many items may have pairs that have the same numbers in them, but not in the same order – e.g., 12345 and 12354. If the order is different, then you should select D – DIFFERENT. Also pay close attention to numbers that are different but at first glance may look the same. It may be easy, for example, to confuse 6 with 9 or confuse 3 with 8 if you are trying to work very quickly. If there are decimals or symbols included in the pair, pay close attention again to the placement of those symbols. For example, 000.00 is NOT the same as 00.000. Likewise, 111!11 is NOT the same as 11!111. Always keep in mind that accuracy is just as important as speed on this section.



## SECTION 5: FOLLOWING WRITTEN DIRECTIONS OVERVIEW

### I. Following Written Directions Component Description:

The Following Written Directions component of the exam consists of 36 questions and measures the ability to read and appropriately apply a set of rules. You will see a set of rules followed by a number of problems. For each problem, you must determine the appropriate action to be taken based on the set of given rules. After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 36 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

### II. Following Written Directions Sample Questions:

Sample test component directions and questions are presented below. *The correct answers for each sample question are listed and explained on the next page. Try to answer the sample questions yourself before looking at the answer key.*

#### **Directions:**

Read the sample set of rules below. Then, answer the problems by following the rules.

#### **Rules for Determining Type of Mail Delivery**

The three types of delivery used for mailing packages are regular, freight, and express. Listed below are the rules for deciding which type of delivery to use:

- Regular or freight delivery should be used for packages that do not need to be received urgently.
- Express delivery should be used for packages that need to be received urgently.
- Freight delivery should be used for large packages only.
- Regular delivery should be used for small packages only.
- Express delivery may be used for large or small packages.

	Regular	Freight	Express
<b>1)</b> large crate, not urgent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>2)</b> small package, urgent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### III. Following Written Directions Test Preparation:

As with other components, practice is the best preparation strategy for these types of questions. Practice reading and following any kind of instructions or procedural manuals and following the directions, rules, or procedures given. You should also be able to easily find online quizzes that will test your ability to understanding and apply rules, procedures, instructions, or directions.

#### **IV. Following Written Directions Sample Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies:**

This section presents the answer key for the 2 sample questions presented on the previous page, along with tips for thinking about and responding to some of the specific types of questions that will be presented on the Following Written Directions component of the exam.

##### Following Written Directions Answer Key

Sample Question 1) According to the rules, large packages may be shipped using either Freight or Express. Also, regular or freight delivery should be used for packages that do not need to be received urgently. The overlap here for a “large crate, not urgent” would therefore be Freight.

Sample Question 2) According to the rules, small packages may be shipped using either Regular or Express. Also, express delivery should be used for packages that need to be received urgently. The overlap here for a “small package, urgent” would therefore be Express.

##### Following Written Directions Test-Taking Strategies

Paying close attention to details is the most important strategy for these questions. Make sure you are very carefully reading and following each detail of the rules provided. Pay attention to the order or sequence of any rules stated, if applicable, and pay very close attention to any exceptions noted to a specific rule – e.g., “rule XYZ must be following, EXCEPT as noted below.”

Also, be sure to read everything in the Rules section, including the snippet that appears before the bulleted rules. That opening snippet may contain extremely important information for correctly answering the questions. Be careful not to skip over it.

## SECTION 6: WORK ATTITUDES OVERVIEW

In addition to the abilities needed by Fire Alarm Operators, certain work-related attitudes, behaviors, and personal characteristics are also important to effective performance. The Work Attitudes assessment will be used to assess these important characteristics.

After reading the instructions, you will have 45 minutes to complete the Work Attitudes assessment. Most candidates finish this portion in 20 to 30 minutes, but you may take the entire 45 minutes if you so choose.

No preparation is necessary (or expected) for the Work Attitudes component of the exam. However, this component will be scored, and your score will be combined with your scores on the other four test components to determine your continued eligibility in the selection process.

The Work Attitudes assessment contains a series of 121 short statements. You will read each statement (see examples below) and then decide the degree to which you agree with each statement as it applies to you.

### I. **Characteristics Measured:**

The Work Attitudes assessment measures characteristics categorized into the following six (6) dimensions:

1. **Conscientiousness** – the degree to which an individual tends to act with a sense of duty and the desire to be seen by others as reliable and dependable.
2. **Trustworthiness** – the degree to which an individual tends to adhere to rules and regulations and act with a sense of honesty and integrity.
3. **Managing Work Pressure** – the degree to which an individual thrives in a fast-paced, demanding work environment versus preferring a more steady, predictable environment with a slower pace.
4. **Getting Along with Others** – the degree to which an individual tends to interact effectively with others and remain even-tempered, composed, and in control during difficult interpersonal interactions.
5. **Drug/Alcohol Avoidance** – the degree to which an individual's performance or productivity is likely to be free from disruptions due to patterns of alcohol or illegal drug use.
6. **Safety Orientation** – the degree to which an individual tends to abide by safety guidelines, follow precautions, and avoid taking unnecessary risks.

## II. Work Attitudes Instructions and Sample Questions:

### Instructions

On the Work Attitudes assessment, you will see the following directions.

### **Directions:**

This assessment is a measure of your attitudes toward work. This form contains 121 questions, and each question has 5 choices. Read each question carefully. Answer each questions truthfully and completely. Mark each answer by selectin it or the circle to its left. Some of the questions may describe things that you have never experienced. In this situation, or if you are uncertain about a response, choose the one that most closely describes you or your views. Do not spend too much time on any one question; answer each question as best as you can and move on.

Once you begin the assessment, you will view a number of statements. For the vast majority of the statements, you will rate each statement based on how well it applies to you, by choosing one of the scale points below.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>In Between</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
--------------------------	-----------------	-------------------	--------------	-----------------------

Some questions may inquire about the likelihood that you would engage in or endorse a particular behavior. You will rate each of these statements by choosing one of the scale points below.

<b>Very Unlikely</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>In Between</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>
----------------------	-----------------	-------------------	---------------	--------------------

Choose “In Between” ONLY when you truly do not Agree or Disagree to any extent, or only if you are truly not sure how to rate the statement as it applies to you.

Finally, other questions may have a rating scale that is specific to only that question. Be sure to read the rating scale or response choices carefully for each and every question and choose the one that most closely describes you or your views.

### Sample Questions

The following are example statements or questions similar to the statements that might appear on the exam. These specific examples are presented ONLY for illustrative purposes and do not actually appear on the Work Attitudes component of the exam.

The following sample statements would be rated using the scale that ranges from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

1. You set goals and strive to achieve them.
2. You prefer to work alone.
3. You take time to think about why people do things.
4. You find yourself taking control in group situations.
5. You find that it is not necessary to have all of the facts before making a decision.
6. Insults don't bother you.

The following sample questions would be rated using the scale that ranges from Very Unlikely to Very Likely.

1. How likely are you to become annoyed when someone unexpectedly interrupts you while you are working on a task?
2. How likely are you to follow an established rule or procedure that you do not agree with?
3. How likely are you to report a coworker's infraction to your supervisor?

The following sample is a type of question that would be rated using the response options that are specific only to that question.

1. If an employee takes home office supplies from work without asking, what do you think should be done the first time the employee is caught?
  - Nothing, as long as the employee returns the supplies.
  - Light caution only.
  - Strong reprimand or warning.
  - Suspension without pay.
  - Probably fired.

### III. **General Tips for Completing the Work Attitudes Assessment:**

This section presents general tips that may help you to more successfully get through the Work Attitudes component of the exam.

1. **Make sure you understand the rating scale.** Read each item and the rating scale carefully, so you know exactly which rating most closely describes you or your views as relates to the specific statement or question presented.
2. **Work quickly.** Do not spend too much time thinking about your responses to these statements. Respond with your first instinct regarding how closely the statement applies to you.
3. **Respond honestly.** It is possible that others may have suggested or will suggest that you respond in certain ways to try to increase your chances of success, even if those responses do not accurately reflect your typical behaviors, attitudes, or feelings. There are two important reasons why you should respond honestly. First, the Work Attitudes assessment contains internal mechanisms that can be used to identify candidates who are not responding honestly. If the pattern of your responses suggests that you are not responding honestly, you may be disqualified from the selection process. Second, research has shown that candidates who attempt to guess what kinds of responses are desirable on the Work Attitudes component very often guess incorrectly and thereby *hurt* their chances of success on the assessment.
4. **Respond to every statement.** Even if no single point on the rating scale describes you, your typical behavior, or your attitudes or viewpoints perfectly, be sure to provide a response to every statement. Candidates who do not respond to all statements on the Work Attitudes component may be disqualified from the selection process.

## **CONCLUSION**

We hope that this Guide gives you a better understanding of what to expect for the Fire Alarm Operator (entry-level) examination and provides you with some suggestions for preparation. The suggestions provided here are not exhaustive; we encourage you to engage in additional preparation strategies that you believe will enhance your chances of performing effectively on the exam.

**BEST OF LUCK!**