

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Field Parole Officer A/B

Candidate Preparation Guide

Prepared By:



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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NOTE: In this Guide, an effort has been made to provide information about the intended format, content, logistics, and evaluation of the Field Parole Officer A/B 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 Field Parole Officer A/B examination. The Field Parole Officer A/B examination consists of the following three primary test components: the Technical Knowledge (TK) Test, the Basic Skills Test (BST) section, and the General Personality Survey (GPS).

The **Technical Knowledge (TK)** Test is designed to measure job-relevant knowledge in specific areas determined to be important to the effective performance of entry-level Field Parole Officers.

The **Basic Skills Test (BST)** section is designed to assess a series of specific skills, including Reading Comprehension, Decision Making, and Reasoning. These skills have been determined to be important to the effective performance of Field Parole Officers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The **General Personality Survey (GPS)** is designed to measure work-related personality characteristics, behavioral tendencies, and attitudes determined to be important to the effective performance of Field Parole Officers.

All Field Parole Officer A/B test components will be scored and your scores from all test components will be combined to determine your continued eligibility in the selection process.

Please note that the order in which the test components are administered is the same as the order in which they are listed above (i.e., TK, BST, and GPS). 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: This section provides you with general information regarding the schedule and logistics for the Field Parole Officer A/B examination.

Section 2: Technical Knowledge Test Overview: This section describes how to access the reading list from which questions will be drawn for the TK Test and provides test preparation / test-taking strategies.

Section 3: Basic Skills Test Overview: This section describes the skill components measured in the BST section of the exam and provides example questions and test preparation / test-taking strategies.

Section 4: General Personality Survey Overview: This section describes the characteristics measured in the GPS section of the exam and provides example questions and test-taking strategies.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

I. Date, Time, and Location:

The computerized online written exam which contains all examination components listed above will be administered to Field Parole Officer A/B candidates on June 7, 2025. 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. Exam Timing:

The overall time allotted to complete the Field Parole Officer A/B testing will be 120 minutes (2 hours). Some portions of the exam will be timed and some will not. The entire list of test components is below, with timed and untimed portions detailed. Untimed portions include (a) the instructions for each individual BST component and (b) the entire GPS component. Where a portion is untimed, we recommend an approximate time limit you should try to stick to in order to ensure you can complete the entire testing process in the allotted time. In general, we recommend spending no more than 3 minutes on any untimed instructions components.

Test Component	Number of Test Questions	Timed or Untimed Component	Time Limit or Recommended Time
Overall Testing Instructions	--	Timed	10 minute time limit
Technical Knowledge (TK) Test	20	Timed	40 minute time limit (timer begins when instructions for this test component appear on screen)
Basic Skills Test (BST) Components:			
BST Reading Comprehension – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Reading Comprehension – questions	23	Timed	10 minute time limit
BST Decision-Making – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Decision-Making – questions	20	Timed	5 minute time limit
BST Reasoning – instructions	--	Untimed	3 minutes or less recommended
BST Reasoning – questions	30	Timed	5 minute time limit
General Personality Survey (GPS)	155	Untimed	40 minutes or less recommended

total = 248

120 minutes = total session time

III. General Guidelines:

When participating in the Field Parole Officer A/B 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.

IV. Technical Knowledge (TK) Test Guidelines:

The TK Test questions are designed to measure job-related knowledge in particular topic areas drawn from the published reading list. These are all multiple-choice questions with a single correct answer. The guidelines below are applicable to this test component in particular.

1. **Be sure to answer ALL questions in the allotted time.** When completing the TK Test, the result is the same whether you respond incorrectly to a question or do not respond at all (e.g., you receive no credit for the question). When you respond you have the opportunity, even if by chance, to answer the question correctly. Therefore, you should respond to all TK Test questions even if you are not sure of the correct answer.
2. **Pay attention to the timer.** This test component will have its own separate timer. You will have 40 minutes to respond to 20 multiple-choice questions. A countdown timer will be visible on screen so you can keep track of the time you have remaining during this portion of the exam.
3. **Use your time wisely.** You should have plenty of time to answer all of the questions in this section but be sure to keep track of the timer. Read carefully and pay attention to details when reading and responding to the questions but be sure to keep up a pace that will allow you to answer all questions in the allotted time. 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. If you have finished all questions and are satisfied with your answers before the time expires, you may move on to the next section. You do NOT have to wait until the entire 40 minutes has run out. Keep in mind, however, that once you exit the TK Test component of the exam, you will NOT be permitted to return to this component.
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.

V. Basic Skills Test Section (BST) Guidelines:

This section contains three (3) test components or “sub-tests” –Reading Comprehension, Decision Making, and Reasoning. These are all multiple-choice questions with a single correct answer. The guidelines below are applicable to these three test components in particular.

1. **Gauge your confidence before submitting an answer.** On the BST 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 3 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.
2. **Pay attention to the timer.** Each BST component will be timed separately. On each of these components, after reading the instructions, you will have a specified amount of time to respond to the exam questions in that test component. Section 3 of this guide specifies the time limit for each BST component, as does the table on page 6. Within each test component, a countdown timer will be visible on screen so you can keep track of time during the exam administration.
3. **Use your time wisely.** The BST 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, each BST component is designed such that most people will not get through all of the questions. Simply work as quickly and accurately as you can.
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.

VI. General Personality Survey (GPS) Guidelines:

The fifth test component – the GPS – 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 at work. The guidelines below are applicable to this test component in particular.

- 1. Be sure to answer ALL questions in the allotted time.** This test component is UNTIMED; however, we recommend that you complete the questions within 40 minutes or less. This component is NOT speeded. You should have plenty of time to answer all questions on this component, as most people finish the questions in 20 minutes or less. 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 GPS may be disqualified from the selection process.
- 2. Use extra time wisely.** If you complete this test component before your overall testing session 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 testing session time has run out.

SECTION 2: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE TEST OVERVIEW

The TK Test is designed to assess job-related knowledge in particular topic areas drawn from the published reading list. The reading list for the 2025 Field Parole Officer A/B exam can be found by visiting <https://www.mass.gov/guides/examination-guides-and-reading-lists#-field-parole-officer->.

All TK Test questions will be presented as multiple-choice questions supported directly by one or more reference sources found on the reading list. Each multiple-choice question will be followed by four possible response options, and candidates must choose the single correct answer from among the four choices. Test preparation and test-taking strategies are listed below.

I. TK TEST PREPARATION STRATEGIES

Multiple-choice tests, such as the Technical Knowledge (TK) Test, are designed to test your knowledge of a particular subject area. You can improve your performance on the TK Test primarily by having a command over all of the relevant material that will be covered. This section of the guide provides some strategies to assist you in preparing for the exam.

1. Focus Your Attention

When studying any reference source material from the reading list, you must focus your attention on the material you are studying if you expect to remember it. There are three things you can do that will help you focus your attention on the material you read.

First, since you tend to pay closer attention to things that interest you than to things that do not, you can try to make the material more meaningful or interesting. One way to do this is to apply it to you. Try to think of examples of the material that can be tied to your work or to the work you hope to be doing one day.

The next thing you can do is to eliminate distractions from your environment. These distractions compete for your attention and affect your recall of the material that you study. It is difficult to pay attention to several things at the same time. Instead, people usually switch back and forth, paying attention first to one thing and then the other. Unfortunately, you will not remember any material that did not receive attention. This means that listening to the radio while you are studying, or studying in a noisy area, will leave gaps in your memory of the material you are trying to learn.

Third, take notes! Studies have consistently shown that you are significantly more likely to remember something if you write it down versus if you merely read it. In fact, some studies have shown that writing something down one time is roughly equivalent to reading it seven times – in other words, you are seven times more likely to remember it if you write it down.

Finally, you should avoid trying to learn or memorize material when you are tired. Fatigue reduces the amount of material that you can remember. This means that it might be better to get a good night's sleep and study in the morning rather than staying up a few hours extra and sleeping late. Surely, you must have noticed how your attention wanders if you go without sleep for long periods of time.

2. A Method for Studying: SQ3R

SQ3R stands for **survey, question, read, recite, and review**. These five elements make up a set of study habits that will help you perform well on the test.

SURVEY

"Survey" means to find the limits or borders of an area. Survey the material you have to study to get a rough idea of the content and organization of the material before beginning in-depth study efforts.

To survey a body of information, scan it from start to finish. By skimming over the pages, you will get an idea of what is to come. In most documents, this type of survey is made much easier through the use of headings. Bold, large, or major headings introduce big or important elements; smaller headings introduce subareas of these important elements. Another helpful overview of the material can be found in summaries such as chapter summaries, overviews, or statements of objectives. By looking over such summaries, you can get a quick view of the important parts or pieces of the material covered.

Surveying the study material gives you an idea of how long it will take to cover the material. This will help you to break the assignment down into reasonable time blocks. Material should be read in chunks of a reasonable size. You should carve out a specific section that you will try to understand before moving on. A chunk might be all of the material under a major heading. If the material under the heading runs for many pages, you might want to reduce the material to be understood to each of the minor headings, taking one at a time.

QUESTION

Most people need a reason to do things. In studying text material, a question becomes a reason. If you have some questions to begin with, the material that you are reading will take on more life and be more meaningful.

Before beginning each study session, look over the material you intend to cover. Develop some questions that you expect to be answered in the material. There are several ways to develop these questions. One way is to begin with the list of headings from the chapter or document outline. Write a question for each major and minor heading. Developing questions can provide a reason for reading the material and can help the information become more meaningful to you.

READ

For most people, reading means the same thing as studying. When they say that they have studied material, they often mean that they have read it through several times. Reading is important, but it will be done more effectively when the *survey* and *question* steps have been completed.

The most effective way to pace yourself is to decide on the number of chunks that will be read and understood in a given study session. You can use the questions you developed through the previous step as your definition of understanding. Once you can answer these questions, you can move on to the next section. A good time to take breaks is between these sections, not in the middle of them. This might be a way of rewarding yourself for successfully completing the reading of each section.

It is important to ensure that you understand the material you are reading. One way to do this is to look up the definitions of all new and unfamiliar terms. You should make a list of the words and phrases that you do not understand. If these terms are technical terms that you have not encountered before, the chances are that the answer is somewhere in the chapter or document that you are reading. Have a notebook available so that you can mark down each of these terms, leaving a space for their definition. The quicker you get to know the meaning of all the terms, the more effective your studying will be. If the term or word is not technical, but simply a large or uncommon word that you are not sure of, look it up in a dictionary. If you feel it would be helpful,

record the definitions of these non-technical terms in your notebook, as well. You might want to use it to keep track of all important terms, even those you understand.

Another good way to make your reading time as useful as possible is to mark or underline the text while you are reading. This will make you a more active participant in the studying process. In addition, it will help you to focus on the major ideas and keep you from getting bogged down in details. Your underlining or highlighting can also make it easier for you to find relevant material later for review or to answer questions on the test.

In marking or underlining the text, you should actually go through the text and underline key words and concepts that are important in understanding the material in the chunk you are reading. You can also make notes to yourself right on the text page or in a separate notebook. The value of note-taking to aid memory was highlighted in the previous section.

If you choose to use the underlining and marking method, here are a few guidelines:

- 1) Read the whole section before doing any underlining or marking.
- 2) Do not mark or underline too much. The value of the technique lies in highlighting only the most important material.
- 3) Use ink if possible so that the underlining and notes do not disappear or become unclear in the course of studying.
- 4) Use symbols as much as possible. For example, use "?" as a symbol for questions you have; use "*" to stand for a particularly important idea.

RECITE

If you have the material practically memorized, and at the "tips of your fingers," you will be able to complete questions more quickly, and have more time to handle difficult questions and check your work. Do you remember a time when you went to the store to buy several items? You did not have time to write out a list, so you just repeated the items out loud several times on the way to the store. After several repetitions, you had memorized the list. If you had paid attention to what was happening, you would have realized that the act of reciting the list made the difference between remembering the list and forgetting it. This is just as true of study material as it is of shopping lists.

It is very helpful to recite with another individual. He or she can ask you questions about portions of the material, which will make you recite the relevant material in a formal way. It is not even necessary to choose someone who is familiar with the material. The person only has to be able to recognize that what you have said is what is written in the reference material or in your notes.

In order to be most effective, recitation should take place quite soon after you have first learned or read the material. This is important because the greatest amount of information is lost or forgotten within a short period of time after it is first learned.

Do not try to cover too much information at once. Depending on the number of pages covered, this might be all of the information in one major section or chapter.

REVIEW

Reviewing the material to be covered will help you to understand and organize the material better. Review any notes you have taken, questions you have asked or answered, and passages you have underlined or highlighted in the text.

Review is done just before beginning a new study session. In this form of review, you are actually preparing yourself for new learning by strengthening old learning. This helps to ensure that any old learning that is needed as a basis for new learning is correct and available.

Another form of review is done before the test itself. This review can be done quite effectively in a group with other test takers. This cuts down on some of the drudgery of pre-test studying and also increases the meaning of much of the information. That is, while you are taking the test, you can more easily remember the information if you think back to who said what and how the review conversation went.

In summary, the SQ3R method of study is based on sound learning principles and gives you a simple formula to follow:

SURVEY	Skim the reading material and create manageable chunks to study.
QUESTION	Develop a purpose for reading by asking questions that you expect to have answered in the reading material.
READ	Read and re-read the material until you understand it thoroughly.
RECITE	Write down or talk about what you just learned to improve retention and integrate new information into your knowledge base.
REVIEW	Look over highlighted text and notes and integrate new information with old information.

3. *Practice, practice, practice.*

You are encouraged to create, have others create, or find (perhaps online) practice tests or quizzes to not only test your knowledge of the material but to help you get used to the multiple-choice test-taking experience as well. As you do so, you are encouraged to identify the kinds of errors you tend to make or patterns among your incorrect answers so you can focus any further studying.

II. TK TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

This section of the guide provides some strategies that may assist you on test day when you are actually taking the exam.

1. *Make sure you understand the test format and requirements.*

- Read and/or listen to all of the directions carefully.
- Make sure you know how to correctly mark your answer on each test component.
- Make sure you know how much time you have to complete each test component, as well as the overall testing process. Pay attention to any on-screen timers to make sure you know how much time is remaining in the test period.

2. *Read carefully and avoid rushing too much.*

- When there is an overall time limit to the test, it is tempting to rush through the reading of the questions and response options, and to answer too quickly. Note, you should have sufficient time to read carefully through all the TK questions and response options. Do not agonize for several minutes over one question but do take the time needed to carefully read and consider each response option.

- Be sure to read every alternative and decide what you think about each (e.g., bad, good, or possible) before choosing one. You may think the first choice is best, but then discover that the third choice is actually even better. Don't risk getting a question incorrect simply because you didn't read all of the answer choices.
- Read carefully, re-reading if there is time and paying close attention to key words or phrases that you must not overlook. Make note of key words or phrases that may impact your answer. Be sure not to overlook critical words such as "not" or "except" or qualifying words such as "always," "never," "some," "most," etc. Remember that "and" means that one element of the alternative must be present or true in addition to another element for the alternative to be correct. "Or" means that only one of the elements of the alternative must be present or true for it to be a correct alternative.
- Double-check to make sure you have marked the answer you intended to choose. When there are a limited number of questions on an exam, careless marking errors are costly. Check yourself as you go, but then also before you exit an exam portion, go back over every question and double-check your answers if you have time.

3. Proceed through the questions strategically.

- Try to answer the question before you look at the choices. If you know the answer, compare it to the available choices and pick the closest alternative. A thorough knowledge of the tested material will allow you to answer the questions without looking at the answer choices.
- Consider the rationale behind your answer. If someone were to ask you why you chose a particular answer, would you be able to provide support for it? If not, you may wish to re-think your answer.
- Use the process of elimination. If you do not know the answer to a question, first eliminate those choices which are clearly wrong. This will save you time by reducing the number of choices you have to re-read and re-evaluate before selecting your final choice.
- Answer easier questions first. This will save your time and focus for tackling more difficult questions during your remaining time on this test section.
- If you have difficulty understanding a specific term, re-read the sentence to determine its meaning without worrying about the meaning of a particular word. Try to understand the general message of the sentence or paragraph. The meaning of the unfamiliar word should become clearer once you understand the general context within which it has been placed.
- Tackle complex questions methodically. Divide and conquer! Break up the material into smaller segments in your mind, and then concentrate on one segment at a time. One approach is to first read the possible answers and then re-read the question. This tells you what to concentrate on while reading the question. Concentrate on the parts of the question directly related to the possible answers, even if you do not understand the entire question. You may not need to understand the entire question to find the correct answer. Also, focus on the topic sentences, which are usually the first and last sentences of a question. Read the difficult questions twice. The first time, read for the general meaning and do not get bogged down by individual words or phrases that you do not understand. The second time, read for more precise understanding. The first reading will provide the context so that the second reading is more meaningful.

- Be aware that an incorrect alternative may look attractive by containing an exact phrase from the relevant material. Or an incorrect alternative may contain a phrase or sentence that is used out of context. For example, an idea that is expressed but then rejected in the relevant material, may be presented as an idea that was supported. The trick here is to, once again, read very carefully.
- If all else fails, guess! You will not lose any more credit for an incorrect response than you will for no response, so even if you must guess, respond to every question. If the test period is about to end and you believe there will be a substantial number of questions (e.g., more than 5 or 10) that you will not be able to complete, reserve some time (e.g., a minute) toward the very end of the test period to respond to these questions, even if you must guess. While your guesses may not be correct, the alternative is to leave these questions blank and be assured of getting them wrong.

SECTION 3: BASIC SKILLS TEST OVERVIEW

The Basic Skills Test (BST) section is designed to assess a series of specific skills determined to be important to the effective performance of Field Parole Officers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The BST section contains three (3) components, or sub-tests. Each of the three components measures one of the following specific skills: Reading Comprehension, Decision-Making, or Reasoning.

Each BST question will be followed by three or four response alternatives. For each question, you should identify the single best answer and record the response chosen.

On each BST component, the instructions for that component are untimed. Be sure to read through the instructions thoroughly for each component, but do not dwell on the instructions as you do not want to run out of time to complete the later testing components. Try to limit your time to only 3 minutes to read each set of instructions. After reading the instructions on a BST component and moving to the questions, the timer for that component will begin. Each BST component will have its own time limit, which will be specified on the exam and will be shown via a countdown timer on screen. The time limits for each BST component are specified later in this section as well as in the table on page 6 of this guide.

I. **Skills Measured:**

The BST section of the exam measures the following three (3) skill components:

1. **Reading Comprehension:** The ability to read a passage and answer literal and inferential questions about it.
2. **Decision Making:** The ability to read a set of rules or procedures, follow them, and apply them to new situations.
3. **Reasoning:** The ability to analyze facts and make valid judgments or draw accurate conclusions based on the logical implications of those facts.

II. **BST Component Descriptions and Sample Questions:**

The sections below present more information regarding how each of the above characteristics will be measured via the BST components, along with general test preparation strategies and sample questions relating to each skill area. The correct answers for each sample item are listed and explained on pages 23-25. Try to answer the sample questions yourself before looking at the answer key.

1. **Reading Comprehension:**

The Reading Comprehension component of the exam contains 23 questions and measures the ability to read a passage of information and answer questions about it. Some questions will ask about information that can be found directly in the passage. Some questions will ask you to make an inference about what has been stated in the passage. Still other questions will ask about the purpose of or meaning behind the passage as a whole.

Each passage of information will have numerous questions associated with it. Each question appears on a separate page of the exam, but the passage always appears at the top of the page. You are not required to memorize any of the information in the passage. You can always refer back to the passage to help you answer the questions. All questions will be multiple-choice and will have one correct answer.

After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 10 minutes to complete as many of the 23 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

Example Reading Comprehension Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 23 of this booklet.

An example passage of information is presented below, followed by 3 example questions associated with that passage. For each question, select the one best response. You may refer back to the information in the passage to help you answer the questions.

Example Passage:

If an attention line is used in a letter, it must appear on the envelope. Attention lines are typed in capital and lowercase letters for regular mailings using commercial envelopes. They are typed entirely in capitals for mass mailings that will be presorted for automatic processing.

Example Questions:

- 1) When addressing a large number of letters that are to be sorted before mailing, the attention line should be typed in:
 - A. lowercase letters.
 - B. capital letters.
 - C. capital and lowercase letters.
 - D. abbreviated form.

- 2) Which one of the following is used for regular mailings?
 - A. lowercase letters only.
 - B. capital letters only.
 - C. commercial envelopes.
 - D. automatic processing.

3) The primary purpose of the passage is to:

- A. ensure an attention line is always used when mailing a letter.
- B. provide guidelines for which types of envelopes should be used.
- C. ensure the attention line is typed in all capital letters.
- D. provide guidelines for proper processing and mailing of letters.

Reading Comprehension Test Preparation

As with other components, the best preparation for the Reading 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 passages as you can. Practice writing summaries of what you have read, or telling someone else about what you have read by summarizing the main points. Make sure you can identify the main idea of the content. Study resources, tips, and quizzes can be easily found online to help enhance your performance on a Reading Comprehension assessment.

Enhancing your vocabulary is also likely to improve your reading comprehension ability. Again, the best strategy for this is practice. While you are reading anything and everything you can find, make note of any words you do not know the meaning of. Look up the word's definition, and search for synonyms for that word using a thesaurus. Keep a running list of the words you are looking up so you can study them periodically and keep the information fresh in your mind.

2. **Decision Making:**

The Decision-Making component contains 20 questions that require you to read and understand a set of rules or procedures, then decide how best to apply those rules or procedures to given situations.

For these questions, the given rules or procedures 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 questions will be asked about each set of rules or procedures that are presented on the exam.

After reading the instructions for this exam component, you will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the 20 questions as you can, as accurately as you can.

Important Note: The rules and/or procedures provided for the Decision-Making questions are NOT rules or procedures that are likely to be encountered in the job of Field Parole Officer. The information and questions presented on the exam (and in this preparation guide) are designed to assess candidates' general decision-making capability in following and applying any types of rules, procedures, or directions.

Example Decision Making Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on pages 23-24 of this booklet.

For the following example questions, read the example set of procedures or decision rules provided. Use the information contained in the procedures to decide on the best course of action to be taken for each situation presented in the questions.

Shipping Order Procedures

Ship all new orders immediately, except under the circumstances listed below.

1. When the new order is between \$1,000 and \$3,000, always obtain authorization from the Unit Supervisor before shipping it.
2. When the new order is over \$3,000, always obtain authorization from the Department Manager before shipping it.

- 4) According to the shipping order procedures, which one of the following actions should be taken given the situation below?

Situation:

Customer Account Number: 1-3615

Previous Balance Due: \$200.00

Past Due: 30 Days

New Order Amount: \$650.00

- A. Ship immediately
- B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager
- C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

- 5) According to the shipping order procedures, which one of the following actions should be taken given the situation below?

Situation:

Customer Account Number: 4-4679

Previous Balance Due: \$0.00

Past Due: No Amount Past Due

New Order Amount: \$1,254.37

- A. Ship immediately
- B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager
- C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

- 6) According to the shipping order procedures, which one of the following actions should be taken given the situation below?

Situation:

Customer Account Number: 2-2009

Previous Balance Due: \$1,450.00

Past Due: 15 Days

New Order Amount: \$3,000.50

- A. Ship immediately
- B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager
- C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

Decision-Making Test Preparation

As with other components, practice is the best preparation strategy for this section. 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.

3. **Reasoning:**

The Filing Numbers component contains 30 items that require you to view a list of facts and a corresponding list of conclusions. You will need to determine whether:

- a) the conclusion is definitely true based on the given facts (True),
- b) the conclusion is definitely false based on the given facts (False), or
- c) the facts do not provide enough information to determine whether the conclusion is true or false (Not enough information provided).

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.

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.

Example Reasoning Questions:

Note that correct answers and explanations for these example questions are presented on page 25 of this booklet.

For the following example questions, read the list of facts. Then determine whether each conclusion is definitely true (True), definitely false (False), or whether not enough information has been given in the facts to make a determination about the stated conclusion (Not enough information provided).

Facts

Mr. Jackson works for Westmont Company.
Ms. Gaynor is a part-time employee.
All Westmont Company employees work full time.
Northern Lumber Company has some part-time employees.

7) Conclusion: Ms. Gaynor works for Westmont Company.

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Not enough information provided

8) Conclusion: Ms. Gaynor works for Northern Lumber Company.

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Not enough information provided

9) Conclusion: Mr. Jackson works full time.

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Not enough information provided

Reasoning Test Preparation

Practice can come in many forms for this section. 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.

III. **Basic Skills Test Example Question Answer Key and Test-Taking Strategies:**

This section presents the answer key for the 9 example questions presented in the prior section, along with explanations where needed of why the correct answer is correct. Where helpful, this section also includes tips for thinking about and responding to some of the specific types of questions that will be presented on the Basic Skills Test components of the exam.

1. **Reading Comprehension**

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Reading Comprehension Answer Key

Example Question 1) B. capital letters.

The last sentence of the sample passage states that “They (attention lines) are typed entirely in capitals for mass mailings that will be presorted for automatic processing.” Thus, when addressing a large number (mass mailing) of letters that are to be sorted before mailing, the attention line should be typed in capital letters.

Example Question 2) C. commercial envelopes.

The second sentence of the passage states that “Attention lines are types in capital letters and lowercase letters for regular mailings using commercial envelopes.” Thus, commercial envelopes are using for regular mailings.

Example Question 3) D. provide guidelines for proper processing and mailing of letters.

As a whole, the passage discusses how to properly process and mail different types of letters (i.e., how the attention line should appear in one circumstance versus another, what kind of envelope is used, etc.).

Reading Comprehension Test-Taking Strategies

Though it is tempting, particularly when under a time limit, to start answering questions before reading the entire passage, the best strategy is to read the entire passage first, at least one time. Do not spend an excessive amount of time reading the passage. Certainly do not feel like you have to memorize any of the information in the passage, as it will always be visible on screen for every question that relates to that passage. But do take the time to read through the passage at least once before attempting to answer the associated questions. This will actually lead to a more streamlined and time-efficient approach to answering the questions. It will ensure that you are reading the passage as a whole at least once, which will help you figure out the purpose of the passage and ensure you have seen all of the information in the passage. If you try to read only a portion of the passage at a time while answering questions that pertain to just that portion, you are likely to miss parts of the information and even more likely to have difficulty piecing together the message that the passage as a whole is trying to convey.

2. **Decision-Making**

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Decision-Making Answer Key

Example Question 4) A. Ship immediately

Example Question 5) C. Obtain authorization from Unit Supervisor

Example Question 6) B. Obtain authorization from Department Manager

For these questions, the shipping procedures listed provide various rules only for new orders. Therefore, all you need to pay attention to for these questions is the amount of the new order provided in each question. Any new orders between \$1,000 and \$3,000 need authorization from the Unit Supervisor. This applies to question 5, as the new order amount is \$1,254.37. Any new orders over \$3,000 need authorization from the Department Manager. This applies to question 6, as the new order amount is \$3,000.50. All other new orders (i.e., new order less than \$1,000) should be shipped immediately. This applies to question 4, as the new order amount is only \$650.00.

Decision-Making 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 instructions, rules, or procedures provided. Pay attention to the order or sequence of any procedures or rules stated, if applicable, and pay very close attention to any exceptions noted to a specific rule or instruction.

3. **Reasoning**

Correct answers to each of the example questions are listed below.

Reasoning Answer Key

Example Question 7) B. False

The facts state that “All Westmont Company employees work full time” and that “Ms. Gaynor is a part-time employee.” It must therefore be false that Ms. Gaynor works for Westmont Company.

Example Question 8) C. Not enough information provided

The facts state that “Northern Lumber Company has some part-time employees” and that “Ms. Gaynor is a part-time employee.” It is therefore possible that Ms. Gaynor works for Northern Lumber Company; however, the correct answer is NOT A. True because that conclusion cannot be drawn for certain – i.e., is not *definitely* true. This is because the facts do not stipulate that everyone who works part-time works for Northern Lumber Company, or that Northern Lumber is the only company that employs part-time employees. Ms. Gaynor could work somewhere else and still work part-time. The correct answer is therefore C.

Example Question 9) A. True

The facts state that “All Westmont Company employees work full time” and that “Mr. Jackson works for Westmont Company.” It must therefore be true that Mr. Jackson works full time.

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 employees 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.

Be careful NOT to make assumptions or pull in previously known information or opinions when making a determination about any of the conclusions listed. 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 into 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. Be sure to base your determinations only on the facts that are given on the exam.

SECTION 4: GENERAL PERSONALITY SURVEY OVERVIEW

In addition to the knowledge and skills needed by Field Parole Officers, certain work-related attitudes, behaviors, and personal characteristics are also important to effective performance. The General Personality Survey (GPS) will be used to assess these important characteristics.

This portion of the exam process is NOT timed. We strongly recommend, however, that you respond to these items quickly with the first response that comes to mind. We suggest spending no more than 40 minutes on this component. This should be easy to do, as most candidates complete this component in 20 minutes or less.

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

The GPS contains a series of 155 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 GPS measures characteristics categorized into the following five (5) major dimensions:

1. **Agreeableness** – the degree to which an individual seeks to please, support, and cooperate with others.
2. **Conscientiousness** – the degree to which an individual persists at tasks, pursues goals, and takes an organized approach to assignments.
3. **Extraversion** – the degree to which an individual enjoys the company of others and prefer influencing or persuading others.
4. **Openness** – the degree to which an individual enjoys thinking about and analyzing a variety of topics, coming up with new ideas, and trying new things.
5. **Stability** – the degree to which an individual remains even-tempered and retains a positive attitude, even in difficult circumstances.

These characteristics vary in the degree to which they are critical for effective performance in any particular job, including the Field Parole Officer A/B job. Your task in this section of the exam is simply to indicate how accurately each statement describes you, your characteristics, and your behaviors at work.

II. GPS Instructions and Sample Questions:

Instructions

On the GPS, you will see the following directions.

Directions:

On the following pages, there are phrases describing people's work behaviors. Please use the rating scale next to each phrase to indicate how accurately each statement describes you at work. Please be frank in your responses, and describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future.

If you are completing this survey as part of a hiring, selection, or promotion process, please keep the following points in mind: (1) your responses to questions on this survey are subject to verification; (2) this survey includes questions designed to measure the extent to which persons describe themselves candidly and openly; and (3) providing untrue or misleading responses may invalidate your results and adversely affect your chances of selection or promotion.

Sample Item

S1. Enjoy organizing employee events

- ☐ Very Inaccurate
- ☐ Moderately Inaccurate
- ☐ Neither Inaccurate Not Accurate
- ☐ Moderately Accurate
- ☐ Very Accurate

As an example, if you felt that the phrase "enjoy organizing employee events" was a very inaccurate description of you at work, you would mark the circle next to "Very Inaccurate" to indicate your response.

The survey includes 155 phrases, and the typical completion time is approximately 20 minutes.

III. General Tips for Completing the GPS:

This section presents general tips that may help you to more successfully get through the GPS 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 behaviors at work as related 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 accurately the statement describes you at work.
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 personal characteristics. There are two important reasons why you should respond honestly. First,

the GPS 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 GPS 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 personal characteristics perfectly, be sure to provide a response to every statement. Candidates who do not respond to all statements on the GPS 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 Field Parole Officer A/B 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!