



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSION COMMENTS

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Fill In the Bubbles

Advice About Completing Computerized Answer Sheets

At some point during elementary school most people were introduced to their first standardized multiple choice test. You know the one — where they handed out an answer sheet with hundreds of little circles with A, B, C, D, E inside them? There was just one certain kind of pencil you could use on it, and you were warned not to make any marks outside of the bubbles or in the “do not write in this area” area (even though it was *so* tempting). That sheet is also called a “scantron.”

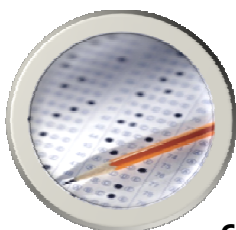
“Scantrons” are score sheets that can be scanned by a computer and efficiently converted into scores with excellent accuracy. We use them too, and the rules haven’t changed:

1) Stray marks and smudges may be counted as wrong answers

—When the sheet goes through the scanning equipment, it gives you credit based on where you place your marks. Extra marks can make the machine think you gave two answers to the same question, and may count that question as incorrect.

2) Make sure your marks are neat and dark

—If you fill in the bubble too lightly, it may not register on the scanner and may be counted as a missing response.



3) Use #2 pencils only—Our scanning equipment is intended to be used with a #2 pencil; other types may not register on the scanner. We provide you with pencils that we know our machine can read. It is okay to use your own pencils, but pay attention to the type of lead in them.

4) Only answers marked on the scantron answer sheet are scored

—Some people prefer to mark their answers in the test booklet first and then transfer the answers to the scantron answer sheet. This is a great

method to use if you have the time, but be aware that our policies do not afford you extra time to transfer answers after the allotted time for the test is up.

5) Make sure the question number on the test booklet matches the number on the answer sheet

—Pay attention to what number you are on so that you don’t skip a line and throw all of your other answers off.

6) Take extra care when filling in your Candidate ID number

—This is the most important response on your entire test. If you do not fill in your candidate ID number properly, we may not be able to figure out which test belongs to you. You are taking time out of your busy life to take the exam—you deserve to find out your score!

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“I’m a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.”

--Thomas Jefferson

Why We Do Those Things We Do...

Over the years, we have developed procedures to make everything run smoothly on test day. Sometimes candidates tell us that “those things we do” don’t make sense to them. Here are a few answers to commonly asked questions:

Q: Why don't you let people in late?

A: Once we begin reading instructions, we do not let anyone else in. We include everything in the instructions that we believe you need to know. To allow a candidate in late would mean that either that candidate must take the exam while missing a piece of information that he or she needs to know, or it would mean that we would have to make the entire room wait while we catch the latecomer up to speed.

Q: Why are the instructions so detailed?

A: We include what we believe you need to know. We give the same instructions for each session of the test, and some tests have multiple sessions. An analyst wrote the instructions based on what you need to do to be most successful on the test and what other candidates had problems with in the past. In any group of people, some test-takers will need more detailed instructions. We are usually dealing with large groups, and we try very hard to say things in a way that results in everyone doing what we need them to do. This helps to ensure that we have the information we need from every candidate, and that all candidates have the same testing experience.

Q: Why are you so picky about the Candidate ID numbers?

A: We are picky about Candidate ID numbers because they are the only way we can link the test to the person. We use Candidate ID numbers so that there are no names, genders, or other identifying characteristics associated with your test. We do not use your Social Security Number because there is no need for us to have such a sensitive number at this point.

Q: Why do you tell me where to sit in the testing room?

A: Assigning seats allows us to organize the room for the most efficient test administration possible. We fill in a testing room so that we can fit the maximum number of people into a room without showing preferential treatment to anyone. Your seat is random based on when you walk into the room. Not skipping seats allows us to get a quick and accurate count of the number of people who are in the room versus the number of people we checked in. At times, people check in and then go to the restroom or back to their cars without telling us; we need to have an accurate count so that we have the correct number of test materials to hand out.

Q: Why do you wait to start the test exactly at the test time?

A: We go to great effort to start and end tests when we say we will. It is the most fair to people who showed up early or on time and may have put money into a meter or arranged for a ride to pick them up.

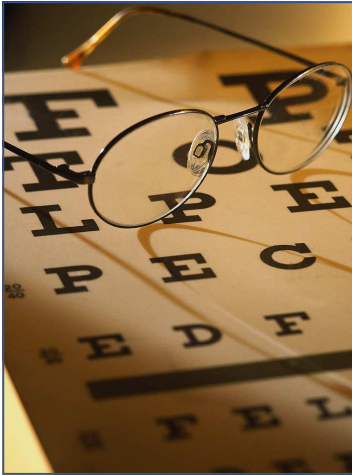
Q: Why do you give such a long time for people to read written instructions?

A: Some people read more slowly than others. Generally, we tell you to close your book and look up when you have finished reading. The head monitor waits for an indication that everyone in the room has finished reading before moving on to the next step. We do not want to penalize someone for reading slowly. We want to make sure everyone understands the instructions before the actual test begins.

Q: Why do you need ALL of the papers back at the end of a test, even the scrap ones I didn't write on?

A: We consider all of the papers that we give you, including blank scrap paper, part of the test. To ensure fairness when we give a test over multiple sessions, we make sure we get all of the test materials back at the end of the test. We count everything, including scrap paper. It would violate our test security policies, and be unfair to the other candidates, to allow a candidate to leave with any type of notes about our exam.





Safety Forces Vision Standards

Read This And See Them More Clearly

In order to become a Police Officer or Firefighter, applicants must meet the vision standards identified for each position. One standard regards uncorrected vision: it is required at 20/120 for Firefighters and 20/125 for Police Officers. You must meet this standard without glasses or contacts, and your vision also must be corrected to 20/20.

Due to the nature of these public safety positions, it is important that recruits in our safety forces have good vision for fighting fires, identifying vehicles, or determining if a suspect is holding a weapon. Vision is checked during the medical process after a conditional offer of employment. For information on the public safety hiring process, see our website at www.csc.columbus.gov under the links for uniformed police and fire series.

??? Ask Eyestein ???

Dear Eyestein:

**I recently took an exam and just got my results. I scored in the 70 band and I know I can do better. Can I come take the exam again?
Signed, I Belong In The 90 Band**

Dear Future 90 Band-er:

Now that you've taken the test, you've seen the questions and probably remember a portion of them. By merely being exposed to the same test again so soon, you would most likely do better the second time around. That wouldn't be fair to the other candidates who only had one opportunity to take the exam.

If you have taken any part of a competitive examination or noncompetitive qualifying examination for any classification, you cannot take the same exam again for twelve months from the date of your Notice of Test results, unless:

- A new test is being administered.
- You are a current City employee, in which case you can retake the exam after six months if it is being offered.
- You failed a typing or data entry performance test for the classification and a re-test is offered, in which case you can retake the test after a week.
- The test is for Police Officer. Police Officer candidates can retest twice in a twelve-month period.

Please note that you can re-test only if the test is being offered. Candidates are not retested on an individual basis.

A word of caution if you do get the opportunity to retake an exam: Your official score will be based on the

second examination. You do not have the option of choosing the best examination score. If you fail the second exam while your name is on the current eligible list, your name will be removed from the eligible list.

Dear Eyestein:

**I have three degrees. How can I list them all on my profile? Is there a limit to how many jobs I can list under Work Experience?
Signed, Too Experienced**

No worries, Too Experienced:

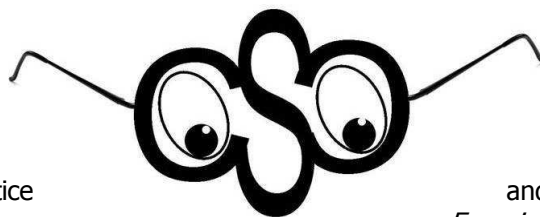
Civil Service wants you to shine! We do allow

applicants to list as much education and work experience as they want. Whether you have one degree or eleven, there's room for it on your profile! Simply go into *My Profile* once you're logged into our website

and click on *Education and Work Experience*. Just hit *Add* at the bottom of the

Education or Work Experience module to add a new entry. You can also view, edit, or delete previous entries by clicking on *View*, *Edit*, or *Delete* next to an experience entry. Submitted applications can be edited as long as the position is still open, or viewed at any time by clicking on the *Edit* or *Print Application* link next to the application title. *Print Application* generates a PDF of your online application, which is what we and Human Resources staff use to review applications – what you see is exactly what we see.

If you happen to be filling out a paper application and run out of room, we also have application continuation sheets – just ask at the front desk.



Municipal Civil Service Commission of Columbus, Ohio

Main Office and Test Center
50 West Gay Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-9038
614-645-8300
CivilService@columbus.gov
Fax: 614-645-8379/8334

Piedmont Test Center
750 Piedmont Road
Columbus, Ohio 43224-3266
614-645-0800
PoliceFireTesting@columbus.gov
Fax: 614-645-0866

www.csc.columbus.gov

*Commission Comments
brought to you courtesy of:*
Michael B. Coleman, Mayor
Grady L. Pettigrew, Jr., President
Delena Edwards, Member
Jeffrey D. Porter, Member
C. Amy DeLong, Executive Director

*Articles and information
contributed by:*
Brenda Sobieck, Editor
Cat Emhuff, Assistant Editor
Elizabeth Bailey
Deb Frame
Sheri Goodwin
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Laura Hausman
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Meet Commission Employee Merrari McKinney



"It's like 'Ferrari,' but with an 'M,'" she often says; it's a quick way to help others with her unique name. But the name isn't the only unique feature of this Office Assistant II. Just ask her where she's lived: Columbus, Ohio; Fukuyama, Japan; Anchorage, Alaska; Los Angeles, California; and Providence, Rhode Island. Quite a list! But the Civil Service Commission is glad this world traveler has decided to stay in Columbus. An Olde Towne East native, Merrari loves exploring her hometown, whether it's chatting with small business owners or meandering through Franklin Park. As she puts it, "Franklin Park is my favorite park in the world, and I've been to parks in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Japan, Netherlands, and the state of Alaska!" She also enjoys spending time drawing (see a Merrari original above), reading, and watching movies.

Here at the Commission, she is always busy. "I am responsible for helping CSC clients: both our internal HR people, as well as our applicants at large. I manage competitive eligibility lists established once a test has been given and scored, as well as process certifications in the recruitment and removal of applicants on said competitive eligibility lists," she says. When asked what she enjoys most about working at Civil Service, she replied, "I like doing this job. I really enjoy having a task on my desk to complete and then completing it. The unemployment rate for the City (and the nation at large) is decreasing, and I'm helping with that."

A woman of accomplishment, she already holds a bachelor's degree in Japanese/East Asian Studies, a minor in African-American and African Studies and an associate's degree in Business Administration. Clearly, she is well on her way to her goal of becoming a small business owner and living abroad again. But perhaps Merrari's most secret and useful accomplishment is her fluency in a scarcely spoken language this far into the Midwest: Japanese. She says, "If anyone in a department needs assistance with a Japanese speaker, they can call me. However, if someone needs help translating a surgery in Japanese: they should call someone else!"

Did You Know?

The Civil Service Commission received 31,413 applications for exams and noncompetitive positions in 2012.

Over 95% of those applications were submitted through our website.

We're Moving!

By the time the next issue of the *Commission Comments* is published, we expect to have our main office and test center moved to our new location at :

77 North Front Street.

It's just across the street from our current location, but it could make all the difference in the world to you when you want to be on time for one of our test administrations. Pay extra attention to the test location on your admission letter so you can find us before and after the big move!