



## TOP 10 SECURITY GUARD INTERVIEW TIPS



<http://securityguardtraininghq.com>  
SecurityGuardTrainingHeadQuarters

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# Top 10 Security Guard Interview Tips

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## Introduction

The interview process has two purposes:

1. To help the interviewee (you) decide if this is the job that you want and ask questions that will help you determine if this job will be a good fit for you.
2. To help the interviewer decide if you are the best fit for the position that is available.

It really is that simple. But that does not mean that it is an easy process.

***From the moment that you find out you have an interview; you must step into sales person mode.***

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“But I want to be a security guard – not a sales person,” you might be thinking.



That’s true. Until you have the job though, you are a sales person and what you are selling is yourself. You must be able to sell yourself as something that the company needs to fulfill a purpose.

There are two rules that sales people follow, no matter what they are selling:

1. Know your product.
2. Know your audience.

These two rules will take you a long way in the interview process and all of the tips that you are going to read about in this e-book will all come back to these two things. Without knowledge of your product (yourself) and your audience (the company you want to work for) you will not be successful in the interview.

Before, moving on to the 10 tips that will help you in the interview process, remember that the interview process does not begin the moment you walk in the

door of the interviewer's office. Nor does it begin when you walk in the building of the place you are being interviewed at.

*The interview process begins the moment you find out that you have an interview.*

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And that is where we will begin.

## Before the Interview

### 1. Research

Before you begin doing anything else, your first task should be to **find out as much about the company as possible**. And that goes back to that second rule of sales, "Know your audience."

The more you know about the company that you are want to work for, the more information you will have available to show the interviewer that you are the best person for the job. It could be something as simple as knowing that the owner of the company has been nominated for an ABC award or knowing how many people the company employs each year. Every little bit of information can be helpful in some way.

Here is some of the information that you should look for:

- **Who are the leaders of the organization?** Have they been featured in the news or media lately? What are their personal mottos, goals, and values? Where did they go to school? Have they owned other companies?
- **What kind of online presence does the company have?** Most businesses have a web site, so make sure that you read every page of that site. Do they have a Facebook account or a Twitter account? Read the latest updates and tweets. See how they interact with others and topics show up on their tweets and on the wall of their page.
- **Who is the company's competition?** How does the company promote themselves to stand out amongst the competition? Does the company have a motto? Is the company growing or expanding in comparison to other companies?

- **Does the company participate in volunteer events or charities?** Are they involved in the community?

Any information that you can gather about the company can be helpful. The information that you learn can help you answer questions. It can also create questions that you can ask later in the interview.

## 2. Practice

No matter what questions you are answer and no matter what you are talking about, it is important to sound confident. **The more you practice what you are going to say, the more confident you will appear.** Practice by yourself and practice with other people. Friends, colleagues, and family members make excellent practice partners and sometimes they hear things that you might not notice. You may not notice how many times you say, “Umm...” but your practice partner will.

You can also practice by using a recorder or a web camera. With a recorder, you can focus on your speech. Listen for things like talking to fast or too slow, pronouncing words wrong, overuse of the words “like”, “um”, or “uh”. Some people have a tendency to let words trail off at the end of their sentences and this can make you difficult to understand. With a web camera you can pretend that the camera is the interviewer. Observe how much you keep eye contact and how often you look at things other than the “interviewer”.

When you are practicing for the interview, one of the most obvious things to practice is how you answer interview questions. Be familiar with the most popular interview questions and practice answering them until you are completely comfortable with your answers. You will read more about the most commonly asked interview questions in the During the Interview section. You can also find more common interview questions that you can practice by doing some research online.

The interview questions are not the only thing you should practice though. Some of the other things you can practice are:

- Your handshake.
- How you introduce yourself.
- How you end the interview.



### 3. While You are Waiting

You will often have some time to wait in the reception area before you go into the interview. This time is important, too.

Here are a few DOs and DON'Ts to keep in mind:

- **DO** use this time to mentally rehearse your answers.
- **DON'T** talk to yourself.
- **DO** visualize yourself entering the interviewing room, shaking hands with the interviewer, and appearing calm and confident.
- **DON'T** chat up the receptionist. The receptionist has their own job to do and it is not the receptionist's job to babysit you or entertain you.
- **DO** get rid of the chewing gum before you enter the building. You do not want to have it in your mouth when you enter the interview and it will be more difficult to dispose of once you enter the waiting room.
- **DON'T** pace. Pick up a magazine or brochure before you sit down if you like but don't spend your time wandering around the reception area.
- **DO** use the restroom before you get settled. A full bladder will distract you and make you appear nervous.

## During the Interview

### 4. Confidence is Key

The first few minutes of the interview are imperative. It is believed that people develop an impression of you within the first 30 seconds and that impression can continue through the interview. No matter what you must appear confident. If you don't believe in yourself, if you do not have confidence in what you are selling, how can you expect anyone else to believe in you?

One of the worst things you can do in the first 5 minutes of the interview is showing your nervousness. For instance, "If they are nervous and can't answer questions or give one word answers," says Ahmed Elbarmil of [North Eastern Security Force](#), it decreases your likelihood of getting hired.

#### How can you demonstrate confidence in those first few minutes?

One of the best ways to do this is to **smile**. A smile goes a long way in any situation but it is especially important in the interview. It tells the interviewer that you are happy to be there and that you are happy to meet them. A smile implies sincerity and approachability. A smile suggests that you are honest.

You can also show that you are confident through your **eye contact**. Eye contact should be maintained throughout the interview, but when you first meet someone it is even more important. When you make eye contact with someone you are telling them that you have nothing to hide. You are suggesting that you are an open book. You also give them the impression that you are interested in them and that you are ready to listen.

Of course, one of the things that convey confidence more than anything in an interview is your handshake. This is why it was suggested that you practice your handshake. You should practice your handshake with many different people. Ask them questions like if it is firm enough; are your hands clammy; is it too brief or too long?



## 5. Top 10 Interview Questions for Security Guards

You must become familiar with the type of questions that are asked in a security guard interview and you must be able to answer them well. Some of them are general and can be expected at any interview while others are more specific to the security guard industry.



Here are the top 10 questions that you can expect:

### 1. "WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY?"

This is where your research is going to come in handy. If you have done your research well, you will be able to come up with several answers that will demonstrate that you have knowledge of the company and that you are not just looking for the first job that comes along.

**Some good answers could be:**

- Because I like the fact that your company is involved in charities.
- Because I think that we share the goal of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Because I believe your employees can take pride in working for a company like yours since you show that community is important.
- Because you take an active part in your Facebook community and show that you are truly interested in the needs of your customers.

### 2. "WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A SECURITY GUARD?"

Never answer with something generic like, "I need a job and this seems to pay pretty well."

Ahmed Elbarmil of [North Eastern Security Force](#) says that you “...shouldn’t say things like, “Because I can throw a good punch!” You need to use some common sense.”

Be specific in your answers and show them that you understand what the job is about and what is required of employees. Once again, use your research about the company to help determine your answers.

Some good answers could be:

- Because I feel I have good mediation skills and am able to diffuse situations.
- Because I believe that it is a position that helps people in our community feel safe.
- Because safe communities mean safe families and family is important to me.

### 3. “WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES?”

This question is asked often in interviews for all types of positions because the answers can tell the interviewers a lot about the interviewee.

When asked about your strengths, you should always remember to be honest and not exaggerate. Exaggeration will be noticed eventually so be sure to only tell them about strengths that you know you have and can be seen in your everyday work.

Gerold Ramos of [Allied Barton Security Services](#) says that the biggest mistake people make when answering the question about their greatest strengths is, “...talking too much or giving too much information.” He says that often, people give information that does not relate to the industry.

Some good strengths to mention in a security guard interview include:

- Strong work ethics
- Quick thinking skills

- Teamwork
- Independent work skills
- Self-control

One of the questions that can be most difficult to answer is the question about your weaknesses. The key point to remember here is that you don't want to tell them about weaknesses that will prevent you from getting a job.

**You can actually make this question work to your advantage though!**

Some techniques for answering the question about your biggest weakness are:

- **Turn it into a positive:** "I don't like deadlines; it is always my goal to finish the project as quickly and efficiently as possible. I find that this usually helps me complete things before the deadline arrives."
- **Demonstrate your problem solving skills:** "My biggest weakness has been organization but recently I have been able to solve this by implementing a list system that helps me stay organized and be more efficient."
- **Make your weakness irrelevant by telling them about something that does not apply to the job:** "I'm a perfectionist and like to do things right rather than 'good enough'."

#### 4. "WHAT IS THE MEANING OF \_\_\_\_\_?"

You might be asked about specific terms in the industry so make sure you are aware of the common terms that are used. You should understand them and how they apply to the job and be able to explain them. Some of the common terms you might be asked about include Sheriff, confidentiality, threat, and information security incident.

#### 5. "HOW DOES YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE RELATE TO THE DUTIES THAT ARE EXPECTED OF YOU IN THIS JOB?"

Your research should tell you exactly what duties are expected of you in this job and you should be able to relate past experiences to them. When

talking about past experiences, always **be concrete and provide specific examples**. Instead of saying, “In my last job I had to have quick thinking skills,” be ready to add an example, too. Your example does not have to be a task that you would do as a security guard but it should demonstrate how you used your quick thinking skills and how others, and more specifically, the company, were able to benefit from it.

#### 6. “HAVE YOU EVER LIED TO AN EMPLOYER?”

Questions like these are asked in interviews for two reasons: (a) to test your honesty and (b) to see if you can remain calm when being confronted directly with personal characteristics.

Remain cool and tell the truth. You don’t have to tell them that you told your boss a dress looked great on her when it was actually quite hideous but you should tell them if you lied about something you did and got caught. Hopefully, this is not something that you have ever done, but if you have and there is an employer that might speak out about this event, be prepared to deal with it. Do not be defensive; instead, be ready to tell them what you learned about the situation and how you would handle things differently now and why.

#### 7. “IF YOU LEARNED THAT A COLLEAGUE WAS ACCESSING INFORMATION THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE ACCESS TO, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?”

Questions like this are behavioural questions that are used to determine how ethical you are. You should consider the company policy first and then base your answer on that. If you do not know what the company policy is or do not have access to it, give them your answer to the best of your ability. Follow up by stating that you understand that each company has specific policies for dealing with various situations and that if the company policy required you to deal with the situation in a different manner you would take that into consideration first and foremost.

#### 8. “TELL ME ABOUT A TIME THAT YOU...”

*...had to remove a patron from the premises.*

*...had to prevent a violent situation from occurring.*

*...had to apply first aid.*

The interviewer wants to know your version of the story. They just want to know if you have been in the situation and how you handled it, what you noticed, and how you decided what to do.

9. **“WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE INSTRUCTED NOT TO ABANDON YOUR POST BUT WERE ALERTED TO A SITUATION WHERE SOMEONE WAS IN DANGER?”**

Like #7, the most important thing is that you are able to follow policies and procedures. If you are able to learn about what these are beforehand you will be able to answer the question more precisely. If you are not able to access this information use common sense and consider the options. Are there others that you can or should call first? Will rushing off to the person in danger solve the situation? Could it be a distraction that would make your post at risk of becoming insecure? After taking a moment to consider these things give them your answer and once again follow up by stating your understanding that policies and procedures must be followed at all times.

10. **“DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR US?”**

The answer should never be, “no”; asking questions show that you are interested. You’ll find tips for this in #8!

## 6. Be Ready to Give Concrete Examples

There will likely be several questions where you will be expected to share experiences or asked for examples to demonstrate your skills. The interviewer simply wants to know more about your real life experiences.

One of the biggest mistakes that people make in interviews is skimming on the details. You need to make sure that your inner sales person is speaking when you are asked for examples.

Typically, the interviewer will ask a question that starts with, “Tell me about a time when you...”

Many people will answer the question with as little words as possible because they might be nervous or are afraid of saying the wrong thing. But imagine if you were on a car lot and you asked the sales person to tell you about a car you were interested in. If the sales person said, “Well, it’s red and it goes really fast and it

has a lot of cool stuff inside,” would it peak your interest in the car? Would you think the car was worth buying? Not likely.

Instead, be like the car sales person who tells you that the red paint is scratch and rust resistant and tells you exactly how fast the car can go and how quickly it can stop when needed. Be like the sales person who is proud to tell you about the technology that you will find on the dashboard of the car and how it can make you a better driver and will increase your pleasure in driving the car.

When you tell the interviewer about your experience in specific details they will be able to see what you are capable of and how your skills can be applied to the position.

On the other hand, don't go overboard. Make sure that every detail you provide is relevant to the question. You don't need to tell them that it was overcast or that you were excited about the raise you had gotten earlier in the day. Make sure the details you provide show the interviewer that you have specific skills.

Be detailed and specific – don't be wordy just for the sake of using more words.

## 7. Be Familiar with Non-verbal Cues

Understanding non-verbal cues can help you in many aspects of your life. It can help you do better at your job, understand your relationships better, and do better on an interview.

*Non-verbal cues are anything that is unspoken but can be communicated through actions.*

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**Eye contact** is one of the non-verbal cues that you should watch for in an interview. If the interviewer is making eye contact with you as you speak, it means they are listening and interested. If their gaze starts to drift towards the window or their bookcase, you may be talking for too long or talking too much about details that are not important to them.

**Watch for body language signals.** If their body is turned toward you as you speak they are interested in what you are saying. If it is turned away they may be losing interest or something you have said may be disagreeable. If they cross their arms it may be a signal that they are defensive about something you have said.

Other non-verbal signs include:

- Nodding of the head – agreement
- Stroking the chin – thoughtful, making a decision
- Scratching the nose – deception
- Scratching the back of the neck – questions or concerns

## 8. Be Prepared with Questions You Can Ask

At the end of an interview, you will almost always have a chance to ask questions. This is an opportunity for you to show your knowledge about the company and find out if this is really the right job for you. After all, one of the reasons to go to an interview is to help you to decide if you want to work there.

Some of the questions you could ask include:

- Who would I report to if I was offered this position?
- If I was hired for this position, what could I expect to be doing 5 years from now?
- What is the best way to advance in the company?
- What is the biggest priority for the person who is hired for this job?
- Is there an option for ongoing training once someone is hired for this position?
- What are the skills that people who advance in your company possess?
- Can I call you in a week if I have not heard anything yet?

## After the Interview

### 9. The Thank You Note

Thank you notes are something that many believe is not important but many employers put a lot of weight on thank you notes. The thank you note gives you one more chance to impress upon the interviewer that you are the right person for the job. Chances are, the decision about who to hire for the position will not be made for a couple days after the interview and if you send a thank you note that is received during the decision process, it can increase your chances of getting the job.

One thing to remember about thank you notes is that it can also be one more chance to make a mistake. Pay attention to your wording, spelling, and grammar when you send thank you notes. Give it just as much attention as you did your cover letter and remember that the last impression that you leave upon the employer is the one that will likely stay in their minds.

Keep your thank you note short and get right to the point. Thank them for the opportunity and re-state the position that you have been interviewed for. This is a good opportunity to remind them of your strongest point or of something that was discussed during the interview.

Gerold Ramos of [Allied Barton Security Service](#) says that thank you notes should be "...short and sweet; anything further is a hindrance." He also says that you should not try to provide additional information or try to re-answer questions that you were not happy with. This does not help you get the job, but it is more likely to rule you out.

It is best to send thank you notes by email, since it will get there when you want it to. If you are sending the letter by postal mail, remember to use proper letter formatting: your address at the top, skip a line, the company address (all should be flush to the left).

Here is a sample thank you note:





## 10. The Follow up Phone Call

There is a lot of debate about the value of the follow up phone call. This is because in the past people were told to call back after an interview and to do it often. Some even suggested that you call every day. This is going a little bit overboard.

At the end of the interview when you have an opportunity to ask questions you might have asked if you can call back in a week, if you have not heard from them. If they said that they preferred that you did not, then you should not do this. If they said it was ok to do so, and then give the office a call about a week after the interview.

The follow up phone call does not have to be a long conversation. Keep it short and to the point unless you are invited into a longer discussion.

Here is a sample script:

THEM: Good afternoon, XYZ Company

YOU: Hello. Could I speak to (the name of the person who interviewed you)?

THEM: Yes, one moment please.

...waiting

MR. or MS. INTERVIEWER: Good afternoon. How can I help you?

YOU: Hello MR. or MS. INTERVIEWER. This is (your name). We had an interview last week on (the date of your interview) and I'm just following up to see if the position has been filled.

MR. or MS. INTERVIEWER: (they will give you an answer)

YOU: OK. Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

If they tell you the position has not been filled you can ask them when you can expect to hear from them if you do get the position; this will give you a timeline to follow.

Remember that one follow up call is usually acceptable. Several are annoying. Ten follow up calls is simply harassment!

## Checklist

| Check | Tip # | Task  |
|-------|-------|---|
|       | 1     | Research the company that you are interested in.                                    |
|       | 2     | <b>Practice</b>   |
|       |       | - Your introduction   |
|       |       | - Shaking hands   |
|       |       | - Answering questions   |
|       |       | - Your parting words  |
|       | 3     | <b>Familiarize yourself with the DOs and DON'Ts of the waiting room.</b>            |
|       | 4     | <b>Increase your confidence:</b>  |
|       |       | - Smile   |
|       |       | - Make eye contact  |
|       |       | - Practice your handshake   |
|       | 5     | <b>Review the top 10 interview questions for security guards.</b>                   |
|       |       | - Practice with a friend.   |
|       | 6     | <b>Be prepared with concrete examples.</b>  |
|       |       | - Write down as many concrete examples of your skills as you can think of.          |
|       |       | - Practice by telling someone about them.   |
|       | 7     | <b>Become familiar with non-verbal cues</b>   |
|       |       | - Watch how others talk and how they listen; observe non-verbal cues that they use. |
|       | 8     | <b>Be prepared to ask questions</b>   |
|       |       | - Write down questions as you can think of and practice asking them with a friend.  |
|       | 9     | <b>Send a thank you note within 1-2 days of the interview.</b>                      |
|       | 10    | <b>Make a follow up phone call about a week after the interview.</b>                |

We at *Security Guard Training Headquarters* want to wish you the best of luck before your next interview!

We're confident that if you follow the tips in this guide you will give yourself the best chance of landing your next job.

If you go through the interview process and don't get the job, don't worry! There are plenty of security guard companies that are still looking to fill positions - you just have to get out there and apply!

You can always use the Job Board on our website to find companies looking to hire guards near you. Click the link below to see our job board:

<http://www.securityguardtraininghq.com/security-guard-jobs>

And of course, you can always come back to *Security Guard Training Headquarters* for specific and up-to-date security guard training requirements in your State.

Good luck!

*The SGTHQ Team*

<http://www.securityguardtraininghq.com>