

# Interviewing Tips

## Preparing for the Interview

### Research the Position

- Review the job posting carefully and become thoroughly familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the position. Be prepared to explain how your knowledge, skills, and abilities align with the role and demonstrate that you are a strong candidate.
- Gather and review relevant data related to the position, such as performance metrics, safety information, National Performance Assessment (NPA) data, or other applicable reports.
- If you do not have direct experience in the position for which you are interviewing, seek guidance from someone currently in the same or a similar role. This will help you better understand job expectations, common acronyms, processes, and functional responsibilities within the organization.

### Introductions, First Impressions, Elevator Speech, and Spotlighting

- **First Impressions (7/11 Rule):** Research suggests that people form multiple judgments within the first few seconds of meeting someone, based on factors such as appearance, body language, eye contact, and demeanor. First impressions are formed quickly and can be difficult to change, making it essential to be well prepared and present yourself professionally and confidently.
- There are three key speeches that should be thoughtfully developed, practiced, and refined throughout your career. These should evolve as your skills, experience, and professional goals grow.
  - **Elevator Speech:**  
An elevator speech is a concise, compelling introduction that typically lasts 30 to 60 seconds. It should clearly communicate who you are, your key strengths, and the value you bring to the organization or position. A well-prepared elevator speech can be used when introducing yourself, requesting meetings, networking, or opening an interview.
  - **Introduction Speech (“Tell me about yourself”):**  
This is a common opening interview question. While your response may be longer than an elevator speech, it should still be concise and well organized. Interviews are often time-constrained, so preparation is essential. Consider including your name, current role, geographic background if you are outside the local district or area, a brief summary of qualifications and strengths, and a short expression of appreciation for the opportunity to interview.

- **Spotlight Speech (Closing Statement):**  
When asked, “Is there anything else you would like to add?” this is your opportunity to leave a strong, positive, and professional final impression. Briefly summarize your key points, reinforce how your skills and experience align with the position, express enthusiasm for the role, and thank the interview panel for their time.

## Interview Setup

- Receiving notice of an interview—whether by phone or email—is an exciting milestone in the career development process. Advance planning can significantly reduce interview-related stress.
- Interview notices may be provided with as little as 24 hours’ notice or scheduled several weeks in advance, depending on the selecting official’s availability.
- Your interview notice typically includes the date, time, and location. If it is unclear whether the interview will be conducted virtually or in person, promptly contact the selecting official’s office for clarification.
- For in-person interviews, confirm the address in advance and allow additional time for travel, parking, building access, and navigation. Plan to arrive 10–15 minutes early.
- Prepare in advance for the possibility of a virtual interview. Access to an internal network connection is preferable in case you are required to share your screen or access internal systems. If you do not have access to a private workspace with a computer, coordinate with another office ahead of time to ensure availability, login access, and familiarity with the equipment.
- Stay organized by maintaining a dedicated interview folder that includes the job posting, your application materials, collected reports and research data, the interview notice, and any relevant contact information. Thorough preparation helps reduce stress and improves overall performance.

## General Interview Question Information

- Interview questions are designed to assess different aspects of a candidate’s qualifications and potential. Common types include:
  - **Technical Questions:**  
These questions evaluate job-specific knowledge, such as familiarity with forms, reports, data sources, systems, procedures, or technical aspects of a particular function.
  - **Behavioral Questions:**  
Behavioral questions focus on past experiences, which are often strong indicators of future performance. Candidates are typically asked to describe a specific situation, their role, the actions they took, and the outcome, often using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result).
  - **Situational Questions:**

These questions present hypothetical scenarios to assess problem-solving skills, judgment, and decision-making abilities.

- **Open-Ended and Probing Questions:**

These questions encourage detailed responses and may include follow-up prompts to gain deeper insight into a candidate's experience, thought process, and approach.