

PLEASE REVIEW THE TEST PROCESS ORIENTATION FIRST (as many questions are answered only in the orientation slides and notes). The questions listed here are the additional questions that were commonly asked by applicants in attendance at the session presented by Classified Testing on March 12th.

Q: Is there going to be 20 questions from the red book?

A: Highly likely that there will not be 20 questions directly from the red Accountability Manual. The estimates are based on the results from the Subject Matter Experts referencing each Source Material. The percentages on the study aide are only that, ESTIMATES. Based on test development process, the estimates for the “red book” will be adjusted.

Q: Do I have to bring my HFD badge to the test for the registration table?

A: No. If you are not on duty that day, your driver’s license is fine.

Q: Who makes the test?

A: Classified Testing creates and writes the exam.

Q. When will the DRAFT list be posted?

A. The DRAFT list will be posted by End of Business the day following the exam. The DRAFT list will only include the raw scores from the exam.

Q. How about formulas, equations, tables, figures, case studies, and stories in the source materials? Do we need to study or memorize these and will they be on the exam?

A. You do NOT need to memorize numbers or details from formulas, tables, figures, case studies, and stories. However, you do need to study these things and understand the concepts they are illustrating. A good rule of thumb is to think about how the information in a formula, figure, table, or story helps to do one of the Chief Inspector tasks listed in the study aide we provided. That is the same way we think about writing exam questions.

Q: Some tasks on the Study Aide pertain to specific chapters or guidelines. How do the books contain information about HFD specific guidelines?

A: Somewhere in those materials the experts found something that contributes to your ability to follow those guidelines. This could be information about a topic that is related to that guideline, or it could be information supporting your ability to do the action part of that.

Q. Why are the tests Classified Testing gives now so different from the tests that were given in the past?

A. Much like firefighting science and technology evolves and improves every day; the science of test design is also improving. Classified Testing is making changes to our test design to keep up with new best practices and to enable us to deliver World-Class, state-of-the-art testing services to the Houston Fire and Police departments for the City of Houston.

Q. How different is this test from the last one?

A. This test is a lot different from the exam for Chief Inspector that was administered over two years ago. Testing science has found that job knowledge tests that use information, facts, and knowledge in the same ways as people do on the job are more fair, more cost effective, more job relevant, and better predictors of how good an applicant will actually be at performing the job. That is why we changed the way we create tests—we want our test to be as fair and job related as possible given the current state of testing science.

Q: Why did you make the study aide if we've never used one before?

A: The goal of Classified Testing is to improve our service to the City of Houston, to become more state of the art, more transparent, and to make things easier for the test-takers. The Study Aide contributes to that goal.

Q. Are all of the 100 questions on the exam going to come from the top tasks listed on the study aide?

A. Yes. Those tasks help us write questions that are as job relevant as we can make them, so we stick to those most important tasks.

Q. Are the item/ question reviewers HFD?

A. Yes.

Q: If most of the test is based on comprehension and application, but the questions won't be verbatim, how do we interpret information and facts from the books? Do the authors' opinions count as fact?

A: The authors' opinions still do not count as fact, and you will not be expected to know what the author believes. If the book gives a definition or refers to technical details, take that as a testable fact. If a book repeatedly states something is specific, a must or a best practice common to many departments, take that as a testable fact. Remember, the test is conceptual and based on using and putting together important facts at the same level of thinking you would do on the job as a Chief Inspector. The important thing is to be able to put together sets of facts from a source material to answer a question.

Q. Any extra study tips not mentioned in the orientation?

A. Our test guide, distributed with your guidelines for this exam (from the quartermaster), contains some more study tips. Additionally, SQ3R works well for many students (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SQ3R>). Research on learning also shows that study in small, frequent chunks (like 45 minutes six to eight times a day) over a longer period (like 90 days) leads to more knowledge retention and higher test scores for most adults. It turns out good sleep is also really important for allowing your brain to clean out the mental junk and solidify everything you studied. Getting 8 hours of sleep on average at the same time each day (like 10pm to 6am) accelerates learning rates.

Q. Compare to past promotional tests for HFD, will this test be more difficult?

A. In general, our tests are becoming more and more job relevant. This means there is less focus on memorization, and more focus on applying information practical to the job to answering questions similar to the question you will have to answer on the job in that rank in order to do those most important tasks well. For many folks, this will make the test easier, but for some applicants who have relied on superior memory skills to do well on past tests; this might seem harder at first.