

Interview Questions: What Can I Ask?

Any question asked during the selection and interview process must be related to the job and the performance of that job. Even so called "legal" questions can be improper if the employer can not demonstrate a job related necessity for asking the question. Legal questions can also be suspect if they are used in such a way so as to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability. For example, asking only females if they are available to work weekends and evenings can be viewed as discriminatory. Although this is a legitimate question, it is improper if not asked of all candidates.

Keeping these things in mind, the following list provides some general guidelines on the kinds of questions that should and should not be asked during the selection and interview process.

Inquiry Area	Not Acceptable	Acceptable
National Origin / Citizenship	<p>Are you a U.S. citizen? (In some very specialized situations such as a requirement for national security or a presidential executive order, this question may be asked. Otherwise, any lawfully immigrated alien who is eligible to work may not be discriminated against on the basis of citizenship.)</p> <p>What is your "native tongue?"</p>	<p>Are you authorized to work in the United States?</p> <p>What languages do you read, speak or write fluently? (This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to job performance.)</p>
Age	<p>How old are you?</p> <p>When is your birth date?</p> <p>When did you graduate from high school?</p>	<p>Are you over the age of 18?</p>
Marital/Family Status	<p>What's your marital status?</p> <p>Who do you live with?</p> <p>Do you plan to have a family? When?</p> <p>How many kids do you have?</p> <p>What are your child care arrangements?</p>	<p>Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?</p> <p>Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be willing? (This question is okay, as long as ALL applicants for the job are asked it.)</p> <p>This job requires overtime occasionally. Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (Again, this question is okay as long as ALL applicants for the job are asked it.)</p>
Affiliations	<p>To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?</p>	<p>List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.</p>

Inquiry Area	Not Acceptable	Acceptable
Personal	<p>How tall are you?</p> <p>How much do you weigh?</p>	<p>Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential to the safe performance of the job.)</p>
Disabilities	<p>Do you have any disabilities?</p> <p>Please complete the following medical history.</p> <p>Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates.</p> <p>What was the date of your last physical exam?</p> <p>How's your family's health?</p> <p>When did you lose your eyesight (or hearing, leg, etc.)? How?</p> <p>Do you need an accommodation to perform the job?</p> <p>(Can be asked only after a job offer is made.)</p>	<p>Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.)</p> <p>Are you willing to complete a medical exam after we've made you a job offer? (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on the exam results.)</p> <p>Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related function? (The applicant is given a common job related task to perform. If asked, it should be asked of every applicant.)</p>
Arrest Record	<p>Have you ever been arrested?</p>	<p>Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)</p>
Military	<p>If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?</p>	<p>In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?</p> <p>What type of training or education did you receive in the military?</p>