

UNHCR's Practical Guidance for Assessing Candidates Driver Positions

Volume 2: Ambulance drivers – 2nd edition

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Executive Summary

In order to assist UNHCR partner organizations to employ suitable people as ambulance drivers taking into account the different operating environments, and to ensure they have the appropriate skillset to be able to drive ambulances in a safe and secure manner, UNHCR¹ has developed this guidance on how to test the candidates for the position based on all required skillsets that need to be applied.

This is the structure of the practical guidance:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Methodology. This chapter explains who the recommended assessment instruments apply to and some considerations that is good practice to consider when undertaking sample driving tests.

Chapter 3: This chapter contains the tests.

UNHCR invites partner organizations operating our ambulances to implement this practical guidance to improve their ambulance driver selection process.

¹ For further information or clarifications on the practical guidance please contact the Road Safety Unit at: visionzero@unhcr.org.

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1. Introduction

To ensure that drivers recruited by partner organizations have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude (behaviour) required for the position it is important to offer them the opportunity to demonstrate this through testing their technical knowledge, practical skills as well as through questions related to the position in the interview process. It is good practice that this process is conducted by persons who will be supervising them and who are qualified to carry out the test.

It is important to note that traffic crashes involving UNHCR procured ambulances have been identified as a recurrent problem (see Figure 1), and occasionally the ambulance drivers do not receive an appropriate emergency driving training once they are hired. For instance, according to a survey conducted during May 2022 with some of the partner organizations driving ambulances in Uganda, more than 50% of the ambulance drivers had not received specific ambulance driving training (see Figure 2). Consequently, a process for assessing ambulance drivers was also included in these guidelines, so some of the gaps produced by the lack of training could be covered in the initial driver selection process.

FIGURE 1. RATE OF UNHCR TRAFFIC CRASHES BY VEHICLE TYPE (2022)

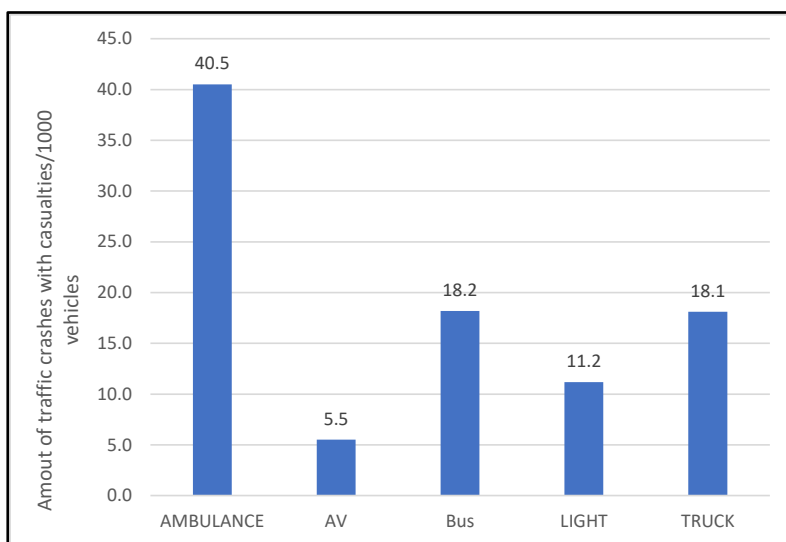
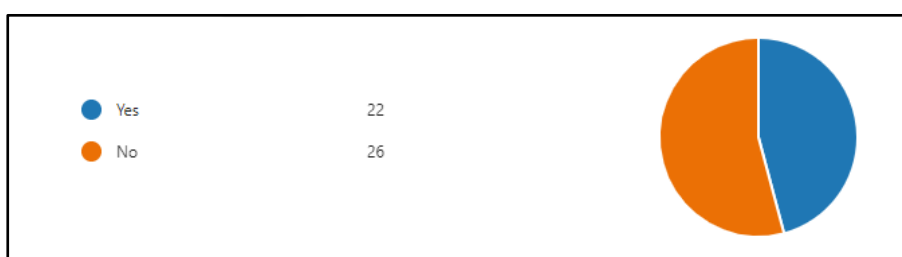


FIGURE 2. PROPORTION OF AMBULANCE PARTNER ORGANIZATION DRIVERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING IN UGANDA (2021)

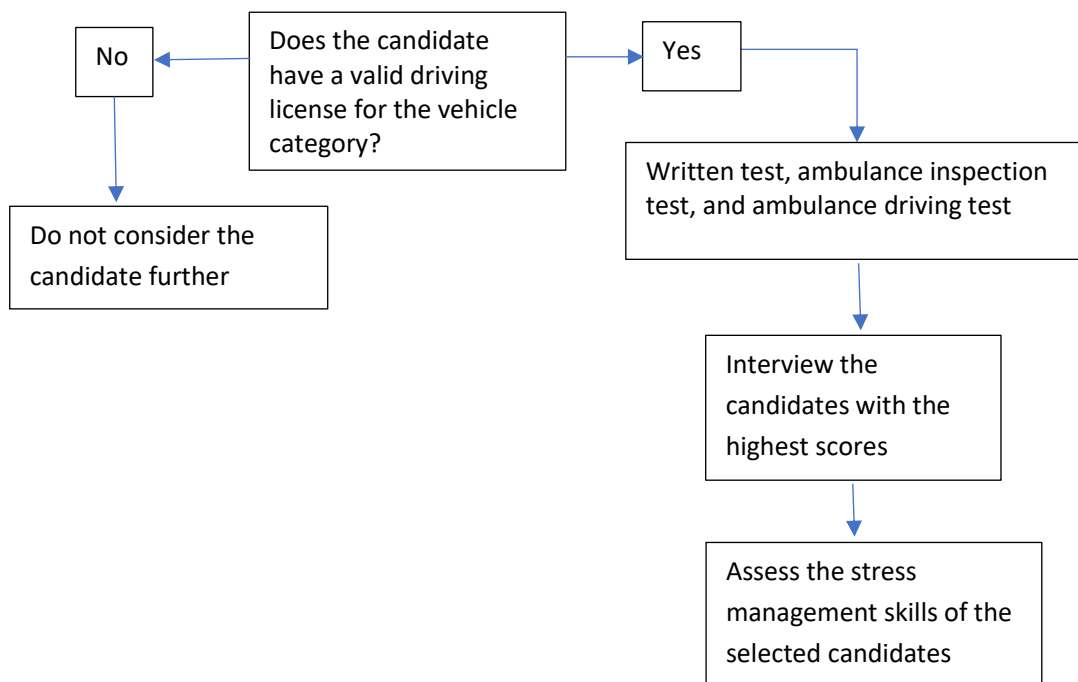


This practical guidance was designed to present different tests that could be used for assessing the drivers. Candidates are to be subjected to three related tests, and the drivers who achieve the highest scores are then invited to an interview to select the most competent candidates. The explanation on how to apply the different tests is included in the second chapter (Methodology), and the different testing instruments are presented in the third chapter.

2. Methodology

This practical guidance was designed based on a selection of different types of tests that are relevant for the driver selection process. The tests taken into consideration are a written test, an ambulance inspection test, a driving test, and subsequent interviews. Besides, a test for assessing stress management skills was also included, for after selecting the candidates, it's a good practice to assess the new ambulance drivers' stress management skills, and the results could complement stress management courses or programs.

Before testing the candidates, it is required to check the driving license, and any individual who does not have a valid driving license for the category of vehicle required could not be considered further as shown on the following process flow map.




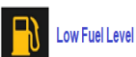












Each test has been assigned grading criteria, and the total score of each candidate is the sum of each individual score they obtain during the different tests. At the end, candidates with the highest scores are to be selected. To be consistent and fair with the selection assessment process, all candidates are to be subjected to the same tests and the same number of questions.

2.1. Ambulance driving knowledge test

It is good practice to submit all candidates to a written test. The assessment, which can be found in section 3, is to be printed out and given to the candidates on the day of assessment. It is good practice to ask candidates in advance to bring a pen for taking the written test.

The section 3.1 presents a questionnaire for testing some basic vehicle and ambulance driving concepts. The correct answer for each question is found on the next table.

TABLE 2. CORRECT ANSWERS OF THE VEHICLE AND AMBULANCE DRIVING KNOWLEDGE TEST (SECTION 3.1)

Correct answers	
Question 1	a
Question 2	b
Question 3	b
Question 4	b
Question 5	d
Question 6	a
Question 7	b
Question 8	Both a and d
Question 9	 Engine temperature warning  Low Fuel Level  Check Engine  Check Tyres
Question 10	 Speed Limit 30 KM  Bend to left  No overtaking  No Waiting  No Parking  Minimum speed 50 km  Stop and Give away  Turn right ahead  No Entry  Hump
Question 11	b
Question 12	d
Question 13	d
Question 14	d
Question 15	f
Question 16	b
Question 17	c
Question 18	c
Question 19	c
Question 20	c
Question 21	c
Question 22	d
Question 23	c
Question 24	b
Question 25	d
Question 26	c
Question 27	b
Question 28	b
Question 29	c
Question 30	f

2.2. Ambulance inspection test

After the written test, all candidates are to undertake an ambulance inspection test to assess if they understand the vehicle and equipment which is to be inspected before starting to drive. This test is measured using a checklist to record if the driver checked various components of the vehicle and equipment properly, and a qualified person needs to conduct the assessment. The assessment is to be conducted with a three-category grading scale in which 0 is used for those tasks the applicant did not do at all, 1 is used for those tasks the applicant did attempt to review but did not complete fully, and 2 is assigned for those tasks the applicant completed correctly during the test.

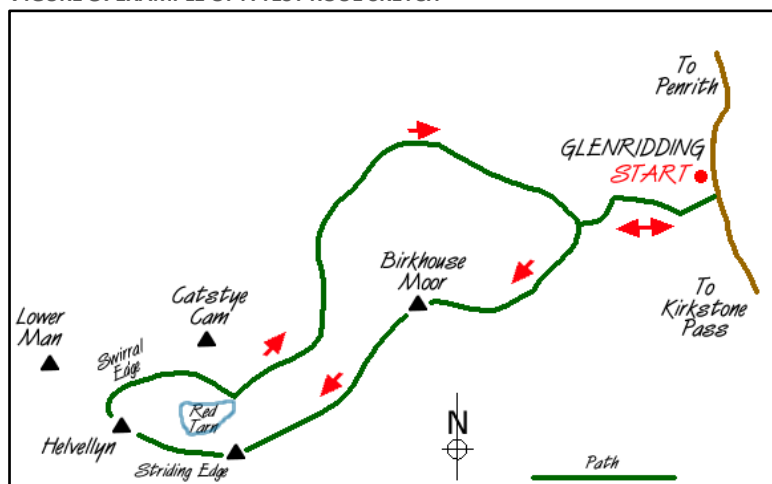
2.3. Ambulance driving test

A practical ambulance driving test (see section 1.3.3) could help to identify the candidates with the desired skills; therefore, such a test was included in this guidance, which also has a section of responding to emergency situations. It is important to take into consideration that the results of the driving tests depend on the duration of the test, so the longer the test takes, the more chances a candidate has of making mistakes. Consequently, when conducting ambulance driving sample assessments, the same test duration is to be applied to all candidates. Therefore, a test route is to be selected, and to do it, it is good practice to consider the following elements:

- Go through an urban area where interactions with pedestrians, motorcyclists, and other motor vehicles will occur.
- Different types of traffic control devices: stop signs, yield signs, traffic lights, etc.
- Different road geometries: roundabouts, at grade intersections, entering and exit ramps, low and high-speed roads.
- Different road surfaces: paved roads, gravel road, muddy roads, etc.
- Different traffic conditions: busy traffic areas, low traffic areas.
- During the route consider a stop for attending a hypothetical emergency situation (a person with a cardiac arrest, a broken leg, traffic injuries, etc) to see if the candidates proceed safely by parking properly, securing the scene, identifying the closest health care centre, and proper utilization of the warning lights and sirens.

Once the test route is identified, it is also a good practice to present a sketch to the candidates before starting the driving test. The sketch is to present some of the key reference points (see Figure 3), so candidates can gain some knowledge of the route in advance. This will help avoiding confusion during the test.

FIGURE 3. EXAMPLE OF A TEST ROUE SKETCH



A checklist for conducting an ambulance driving test is available in section 1.3.3. This test is divided in two categories: conformance with standard driving practices and attending emergency situations. The assessment is to be conducted with a three-category grading scale in which 0 is used for those tasks the applicant did not undertake at all, 1 is used for those tasks the applicant did to some extent and 2 is assigned for those tasks the applicant completed well during the test.

2.4. Interviews

After filtering some potential candidates, it is good practice to interview the candidates with the highest scores from the previous assessments (Table 3 shows an example of selecting candidates based on the testing procedure). A warm-up question and three competency-based questions could be enough for conducting the interview. In section 1.3.4 there are some sample topics for formulating the interview questions.

TABLE 3. EXAMPLE OF THE APPLICATION OF THE ASSESSMENTS ACCORDING TO A SPECIFIC CONTEXT

Candidate's name	Written test	Ambulance inspection test	Ambulance driving test	Final score	Interview
Candidate 1	20	5	33	58	Consider the candidate for a final interview
Candidate 2	28	7	48	83	Apply the interview
Candidate 3	6	2	12	20	Don't interview this candidate
Candidate 4	29	8	57	94	Apply the interview

2.5. Stress management assessment

This test is to be applied to the new ambulance drivers after finalizing the selection process, and it's suggested to conduct it, for it's good practice to assess stress management skills to consider then in stress management training or programs. Good stress management skills are important for those drivers who will attend emergency situations as a routine task². The test has 10 questions that are rated from 1 to 6. They are used to evaluate three different skills of stress management: eliminating stressors, developing resiliency and short-term coping. The questions related to each skill are indicated on the table below. Please note that it is necessary to estimate the average on each stress management skill, and the average ratings of "4" or higher on each area are in the positive range.

TABLE 1. RELATION OF THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE WITH THE SKILLS TO BE ASSESSED

Skill Area Items	Questions
Eliminating stressors	1, 5, 8, 9
Developing resiliency	2, 3, 6, 7
Short-term coping	4, 10

² Becker, J., and Hugelius, K. (2021). Driving the ambulance: an essential component of emergency medical services: an integrative review. *BMC emergency Medicine*, 21,160.

3. Assessment tests

3.1. Vehicle and ambulance driving knowledge test

Name: _____ Last Name: _____

ID number: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: This test was designed to assess basic knowledge in relation to driving vehicles and ambulances. You will have 45 minutes to complete it. Please carefully read the instructions of each question and answer them individually with a pen. Please turn off your mobile phone and do not talk with other candidates during the test. Any communication with them will be considered as fraud or “cheating”, and your assessment will be cancelled immediately.

Select the best answer to the following multiple-choice questions about basic concepts of driving ambulances. **Maximum score: 43 points.**

1. What is the purpose of the emergency light and sirens? (1 point)
 - a) Communicate to other road users about the emergency
 - b) Improve safety
 - c) Both a) and b) are correct

2. Is it permitted to drive with the emergency lights and sirens on when not responding to emergencies? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

3. Is it necessary to turn on the emergency lights and sirens every time an ambulance is requested? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

4. What would be the first task to do when arriving to a place where an emergency needs to be attended? (1 point)
 - a) Stabilize the patient
 - b) Secure the scene
 - c) Apply CPR

5. Which basic equipment should ambulances be provided with? (1 point)
 - a) Seat belts for every sitting position in the patient compartment
 - b) Extrication equipment
 - c) Emergency care supplies
 - d) All of the above

6. Does using communication devices while driving increase the risk of traffic crashes? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

7. Do ambulances always have the right of way when approaching intersections? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

8. How would you check the correct pressure of the tyres? Select all the correct answers (1 point)
 - a) Use a reliable pressure gauge
 - b) Kick the tyre to feel if it is inflated
 - c) Just looking at the condition of the tyre
 - d) Check and adjust pressures when tires are cold

9. What do the following warning signs on a vehicle dashboard indicate? (Use other applicable examples in your country) (4 points)









10. What do the following signs mean? (Use other applicable examples in your country) (10 points)



11. When you approach a railroad crossing without flashing warning signals or crossing gates, you should (1 point):

- a. Cross the tracks as quickly as possible.
- b. Obey the STOP or YIELD signs installed on the railway crossing
- d. Speed up to beat the train.

12. If you miss your exit from a highway (1 point):

- a. Stop in any lane of the highway
- b. Reverse back to the exit on the highway
- c. Roll down your window and ask the driver next to you for help
- d. Get off at the next exit and come back to the exit you missed

13. When approaching a railroad crossing you should (1 point):

- a. Slow down
- b. Look for a train
- c. Be ready to stop
- d. All of the above

14. What should you do if another driver is following you too closely (1 point):
- If there is an open lane to your right, move over to the right
 - If there is not an open lane to your right, wait until the way is clear ahead, and reduce speed slowly to encourage the tailgater to drive around you
 - Never slow down quickly
 - All of the above
15. What should you do when driving in rainy conditions? (1 point):
- Turn on the front lights
 - Reduce the speed
 - Increase the following distance from other vehicles
 - Turn on the windshield wiper system
 - Press the brakes slightly to dry the linings of the braking system
 - All of the above
 - Only *b* and *d* are correct
16. Complete the next sentence: Defensive Driving or driving safely means (1 point):
- Drive with speed and agility
 - Do not take risks that could endanger the driver or others
 - Protect their vehicles with safety devices (airbags, seat belts, etc.)
17. You're driving and your car starts to skid. You should (1 point):
- Press the accelerator and steer in the direction of the skid
 - Apply the brakes and steer opposite the direction of the skid
 - Take your foot off the accelerator and steer in the direction of the skid
 - Apply the brakes and steer in the direction of the skid
18. When driving in a marked lane on a highway you should place your vehicle (1 point):
- To the right side to avoid other road users
 - To the left side to avoid other road users
 - In the middle of the lane
 - Anywhere in the lane
19. You drive with correct care when you (1 point):
- Keep one vehicle length between your car and the car in front of you
 - You concentrate only in front of your vehicle
 - Keep your eyes moving around to check possible hazards around you
 - All of the above

20. When you are entering a bend, you should (1 point):
- a) Speed up to have the maximum grip of the road
 - b) Break suddenly to slow down and take the bend
 - c) Adjust your speed before entering the bend, to avoid applying the brakes in the middle of a bend
 - d) keep the smooth, safe speed as in a straight line.
21. Under good driving conditions when driving behind another vehicle at any speed, you should (1 point):
- a) Drive as close to the vehicle as safely possible
 - b) Stay 1 second behind the vehicle
 - c) Stay at least 3 seconds behind the vehicle
 - d) Keep minimum a car length between
22. When you are driving a vehicle on the road you should (1 point):
- a) Concentrate on the vehicle in front of you
 - b) Concentrate on the second vehicle ahead of you
 - c) Concentrate on the vehicle next to you
 - d) Scan further ahead and not to concentrate only on the vehicle in front
23. When you drive through an area where children are playing, you should expect them (1 point):
- a) To know when it is safe to cross
 - b) To stop at the curb before crossing the street
 - c) To run out in front of you without looking
 - d) Not to cross unless without an adult
24. While driving you come across an aggressive driver of another vehicle. You should (1 point):
- a) Follow the car, when they are stopped educate them
 - b) Always stay calm and in control of the vehicle
 - c) Immediately stop the car by flashing and teach them how to drive
 - d) Write down their vehicle numberplate and report it to the nearest police station

25. When driving in wet weather, expect your vehicle (1 point):
- To be colder inside
 - Will stop at the same distance as on dry roads
 - Handle better because of the less grip
 - Take longer and further to stop, so slow down.
26. You have been driving for hours and you start to feel tired. What should you do? (1 point)
- Switch on your air-conditioning to get a bit cold.
 - Stop at a shop to get some coffee or caffeinated refresher
 - Pull off the road in a safe place, stop, and rest until you no longer feel tired
 - Open your windows to have fresh air
27. When driving in dusty road conditions you should (1 point)
- Speed up to get away from the risk
 - Switch on your head lights
 - Flash your headlights to warn other users
 - Switch on your indicator to the side
28. What is the best way to avoid hitting other road users (vehicles, pedestrians, animals) when moving off from a kerb? (1 point)
- Look around properly your car before sitting in and drive off quickly
 - Check your mirrors and look over your shoulders before moving off from the kerb
 - Warn people of your attention and sound your horn before moving off
29. Which of the following is not a sign of fatigue? (1 point)
- Itchy or heavy eyes
 - Yawning frequently
 - Being aware of the hazards
 - Being more irritable than usual
 - Nodding the head unconsciously
30. Which of the following actions is recommended when experiencing fatigue while driving? (1 point)
- Look for a safe place to pull over and take a break
 - Drink some coffee
 - Open the windows
 - Raise the radio volume
 - Increasing the speed
 - All of the above

3.2. Ambulance inspection test

This check list is not given to the candidates. It was designed for the assessor to take notes of the ambulance characteristics the candidates checked. Besides, each candidate is to be assessed individually.

Maximum score 8 points.

Ask the candidate to perform an inspection of a UNHCR ambulance as if they would be starting a shift as a UNHCR driver. What would they check? If possible/applicable use a vehicle that will likely be used by them if they are a successful candidate

Candidate's first name and last name _____

Date _____

Topic	To be competent , the user/individual must be able to:	Grading scale		
		Bad (0 points)	Neither good nor bad (1 point)	Good (2 points)
Road and service worthiness of the ambulance	1. Check that the ambulance meets basic legal and compliance related requirements			
	2. Check ambulance for technical defects or immediate need for servicing like oil/filter change , coolant and fuel levels and tyre inflation levels			
	3. Check if the ambulance is equipped with the required emergency care supplies			
	4. Check the conditions of the emergency care supplies			

3.3. Ambulance driving test

This check list is not given to the candidates. It was designed for the assessor to take notes of the ambulance characteristics the candidates checked. Besides, each candidate is to be assessed individually. **Maximum score 34 points.**

Make the candidate perform a few manoeuvres in the parking area before going on the road to familiarize themselves with the vehicle. Once on the road on, the test route, give instructions to the candidate to attend a hypothetical emergency.

Candidate first name and last name _____ Date _____

Topic	To be competent , the user/individual must be able to:	Grading scale		
		Bad (0 points)	Neither good nor bad (1 point)	Good (2 points)
Conformance to standard driving practices	5. Wear the seatbelt			
	6. Change lanes safely at appropriate speed and observing traffic conditions			
	7. Overtake other road users legally, safely and by using correct signalling			
	8. At all times observe the speed and distance in relation to vehicles ahead, behind and on the sides and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles.			
	9. Signal your intentions correctly to other road users within a safe, systematic routine			
	10. Respond appropriately to all permanent and temporary traffic signals, signs and road markings as well as hand signals of traffic policeman.			
	11. Use indicators and arm signals to signal intentions as per the traffic requirements			
	12. Use the parking light when stationary, where needed			
	13. Select a safe, legal and convenient place to stop; secure the ambulance safely on gradients using hand brakes and wheel choke			
	14. Check for oncoming motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians and other traffic before opening your door			
	15. Remain calm and composed during difficult situations like traffic jam, accidents and strictly avoid any feud with fellow commuters and other public.			
	16. Give preference and right of road usage to children, elderly and differently abled. Comply with any related rules, regulations and practices for handling general public issues as well as show consideration towards stray animals.			

Topic	To be competent , the user/individual must be able to:	Grading scale		
		Bad (0 points)	Neither good nor bad (1 point)	Good (2 points)
Attending an emergency situation	18. Parking the ambulance safely			
	19. Securing the scene			
	20. Identifying the best route to the hospital or health care centre			
	21. Proper use of emergency lights and sirens properly			

3.4. Interviews

This is the last stage of the driver selection process. The candidates with the highest scores are to be interviewed, and competency-based questions are to be applied. This means that candidates are to describe what they did in certain situations. It is good practice to use some of the below for formulating the competency-based questions:

1. Warm up question: ask the candidates to introduce themselves
2. Driving techniques: safe or defensive driving, efficient driving, driver skills, driving in remote areas
3. Attending emergencies
4. Customer service
5. Mechanical problem with a vehicle
6. Interaction with other road users
7. Getting ready for journeys
8. Traffic crash situations
9. Social pressure to break traffic rules or company rules

3.5. Stress management assessment

Employee's first name and last name _____

Date _____

Instructions: Please respond to each statement by writing a number from the rating scale provided.

Rating Scale:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Strongly disagree | 4. Slightly agree |
| 2. Disagree | 5. Agree |
| 3. Slightly disagree | 6. Strongly agree |

When faced with stressful or time-pressured situations:

___1. I use effective time-management methods such as keeping track of my time, making to do lists, and prioritizing tasks.

___2. I maintain a program of regular exercise for fitness.

___3. I maintain an open, trusting relationship with someone with whom I can share my frustrations.

___4. I know and practice several temporary relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and muscle relaxation.

___5. I frequently affirm my priorities so that less important things don't distract me from more important things.

___6. I maintain balance in my life by pursuing a variety of interests outside of work.

___7. I have a close relationship with someone who serves as my advisor.

___8. I effectively utilize others in accomplishing work assignments.

___9. I encourage others to think on solutions, not just questions, when they come to me with problems or issues.

___10. I strive to redefine problems as opportunities for improvement.