

Surviving Your Worst Test Security Nightmare

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Louisiana Department of Civil Service

About Us

- P** Centralized, Constitutionally-Based Merit System
 - P** Director is a Classified State Employee Selected by the Commission
 - P** 60,000 Classified State Employees
10,000 Employees Hired a Year
25,000 Written Test Administrations
 - P** Daily Testing in New Orleans
Saturday Testing at Vo-Tech Schools Across State
 - P** Test Consolidation: From 150 Job-Specific Tests to 22 Generic Exams
 - P** Large, Highly Competitive Eligible Lists with Several Thousand Candidates
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“While You Were Out”

P “You Mean They Stole the Tests?”

P No Sign of a Break-In

Damage Control

P Informing Our Staff

P Contacting State Police

Problems, Problems and Problems

P What to Do About Expiring Grades

P How to Handle Testing Requirements for Promotions

P Some Have Tested...Some Have Not

P How to Replace Commercially Developed Tests

Worst Case Scenario

P No Hope For Recovery

P How Will This Affect Hiring?

Facing the Hard Realities...

Picking Up the Pieces

P Closed Testing Without Notice

P Hire From Existing Lists

Epilogue

P We Extended 35,325 Grades

P Competitive Promotions - Noncompetitive Promotions - Details

P Temporary Experience and Training Ratings

P Paid For Parallel Forms For Commercially Developed Tests

P Other Aids to Recovery:

- 1) The large eligible lists were adequate
 - 2) Replacing 22 generic tests as opposed to 150 job-specific exams
 - 3) Rapid recovery
 - 4) Emergency funding
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Lessons

P Recovery Plan

P Security Audit

P Insurance

General Circular No. 001294

To: Heads of State Agencies and Human Resource Directors

Subject: Emergency Closure Of Civil Service Tests

Issue Date: August 21, 1997

Our Alexandria Test Center was burglarized resulting in copies of nearly all test booklets being stolen. Because the tests are compromised, they can no longer be administered. Therefore, we are forced to take the emergency measures of closing all written tests to application and closing all walk-in testing at our Baton Rouge and New Orleans Offices until replacement forms of the tests are ready.

State Police is investigating the theft of the Test Booklets. We will pursue the strongest legal actions available to us. We hope agencies will bear with us as we try to cope with this difficult situation. We will try to minimize inconvenience and delay in filling vacancies and keep you apprised as the situation evolves. We thank you for your cooperation.

TEST GRADES

Written test scores which would have expired between July 1 and December 31, 1997 are being given expiration dates of December 31, 1997. Candidates will NOT be individually notified, nor will they be issued new grade notices showing this extended expiration date. These grades were extended effective August 20, 1997. Certificates of Eligibles issued prior to August 20, 1997 will not contain the names of candidates whose grades expired between July 1, 1997 and August 20, 1997. As a result of this grade extension, this group of candidates will regain their eligibility for certification through December 31, 1997.

REGRADES

Candidates may continue to apply for regrades as usual.

TEST RE-OPENING SCHEDULE

We plan to resume walk-in testing at our Baton Rouge and New Orleans offices on August 26 for the following test series.

- 2027 - Accounting Specialist
- 2374 - Social Service Case Manager-F/S
- 5000 - Law Enforcement And Protective Services (LEAPS)

We plan to resume walk-in testing at our Baton Rouge and New Orleans offices on Friday, September 12, 1997 for:

4002 - Typing Careers Exam

Testing for all four of the above series will also resume in all Saturday test centers, except Alexandria, on Saturday, September 13, 1997.

Testing will resume and additional jobs will be reopened to application on a gradual basis as replacement tests are developed.

We anticipate replacement tests to be in effect for:

3500 - Professional Supervisor Test - October 18, 1997

1000 - Professional Accountant Test - November 1, 1997

1500 - Professional Auditor Test - November 1, 1997

SPECIAL AND PROMOTIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Specials Announcements #11/97 - 14/97 - For some of the jobs announced on these specials, testing had not been completed by all candidates prior to test closure. For these jobs, candidates will be evaluated on their experience and training, or certified as "eligible". Partially completed promotional announcements will be handled similarly. This may require some candidates with established written grades to submit new applications.

Special and Promotional announcements will continue to be issued. However, since testing has been suspended, state employees and other applicants who already have grades for jobs affected by this test closure will be required to reapply to become eligible. Announcements will state this requirement whenever applicable. Candidates and employees who previously established eligibility by testing will have to reapply to each individual announcement to be eligible. **CANDIDATES NEED TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO REQUIREMENTS STATED ON THE ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

PROBATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Agencies with probational vacancies should continue to send requests for certificates (SF-2's) to us routinely. We will continue to certify from existing registers while new test forms are developed. Certifiable score appointments may still be made from existing lists. Persons may also still apply for regrades.

NON-COMPETITIVE PROMOTIONAL APPOINTMENTS BELOW GS-15

Non-competitive promotions to jobs below GS-15 may continue to be made of employees with existing test scores. If an employee who does not have a test score is proposed for non-competitive promotion to a job which requires a passing test score, the Human Resource office must contact the Examining Division of Civil Service prior to submitting the SF-1. We will determine on a case by case basis whether a test will be required.

COMPETITIVE PROMOTIONS (GS-15 AND ABOVE) UNDER POSTING AGREEMENTS

For agencies with internal promotional posting agreements, you may no longer require written test grades beforehand. If a qualified employee submits an application and does not have a grade, he or she must be considered. If there are five or fewer applicants, you may propose a non-competitive promotion. If more than five people apply, send the applications of all applicants to Civil Service, per your agency contract. We will determine how they will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

COMPETITIVE PROMOTIONS (GS-15 AND ABOVE) FOR AGENCIES WITHOUT POSTING AGREEMENTS

For competitive promotions at GS-15 and above, send in the promotional request for certificates (SF-2). We will announce or certify from existing lists as usual until October 1, 1997. As replacement tests are installed, competitive promotional procedures will be published.

PROVISIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Provisional appointments with an effective date on or after July 1, 1997 will be approved. Tests will be administered as replacement tests are installed. If no replacement test is installed within the six month provisional period, the appointing authority may submit an SF-1 converting the employee to a probational appointment.

CONTACT PERSON

Questions should be directed to the Examining Division at (504)
342-8536.

Sincerely,

Allen H. Reynolds
Director