Video Based Test (VBT) and Structured Interview (SI)

Applicants who applied for the CBP Officer position after November 2010 must pass both a video-based test (VBT) and a structured interview (SI) in order to be hired as a CBP Officer. Applicants who applied before that date are only required to complete the VBT. Typically the VBT and the SI are offered on the same day, though it is possible that due to operational constraints you may be asked to take the SI later in the day or on a separate day.

Q: What is the VBT?
A: The VBT is a video based test consisting of several different scenarios. You will view taped scenarios and respond to the video. You will be taped while responding to the different scenarios. The tape will later be reviewed and evaluated. The VBT will be administered to all individuals who pass the written test and are conditionally selected. The examination takes about one-half hour and is evaluated by a team of CBP management officials. The test is rated on a pass/fail basis. Therefore, you will need to receive a “pass” rating to continue through the process. Approximately 6 weeks after you have been tentatively selected, you will receive a letter, either by e-mail or through the USPS, informing you of the date, time and location for your VBT. Successful VBT results are valid for three years.

Q: What types of scenarios are included in the VBT?
A: The VBT consists of two types of scenarios. In the first type, you will be shown a job-related situation on a TV monitor and will be asked to respond to the scenario as if you were actually in the situation yourself. For example, you may be shown a situation with an agitated individual and be asked to address the individual as if you were actually in the scenario. In the second type of scenario, you will be shown a series of travelers or items that are attempting to enter the United States and you will be asked to indicate which travelers or items warrant further scrutiny and why.

Q: How is the VBT scored?
A: When responding to the VBT scenarios you will be videotaped and a panel of two trained raters will review your responses and score you on six competencies. You must receive a passing score on all six competencies in order to pass the VBT. The competencies include: Interpersonal Skills, Judgment/Decision-Making, Cooperativeness/Sensitivity to the Needs of Others, Emotional Maturity, Overall Task Orientation, and Oral Communication. You will not be scored on your knowledge of any policies, procedures, or law.

Q: Do I need to take the VBT?
A: Anyone who has not had a VBT for the CBP Officer position will be scheduled for the VBT.

Q: What is the Structured Interview (SI)?
A: The structured interview (SI) is given to applicants who apply for entry-level CBPO positions after November 2010. The interview will be given face-to-face, meaning that you will be interviewed in person; however, it will be videotaped for documentation purposes. You will be interviewed by one or two interviewer(s) who will ask you questions about your past experience handling certain situations and will probe for additional information. After you are dismissed from the room, two trained interviewers will rate you on several competencies. (Note that at some smaller testing locations, you may only be interviewed
in person by one interviewer; however, an offsite second interviewer will participate in the rating process.) You must pass the SI in order to continue in the hiring process.

Q: **What type of questions will be asked during the Structured Interview (SI)?**  
A: The SI is experience-based in nature, which means that you will be asked to describe past experiences related to different competencies that are critical to success as a CBP Officer (i.e., Teamwork, Flexibility, Cross-Cultural Communication, and Integrity). In addition, you will also be rated on the Oral Communication skills that you display during the interview. Shown below is an example of an experience-based interview question from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website:

> Describe a situation in which you dealt with individuals who were difficult, hostile, or distressed. Who was involved? What specific actions did you take? What was the result?

Q: **Can I review the Video-Based Test (VBT) scenarios or Structured Interview (SI) questions beforehand?**  
A: No, both the VBT scenarios and the SI questions and rating scales are considered test material and cannot be released to applicants. You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of the interview.

Q: **How is the Structured Interview (SI) scored?**  
A: After you leave the room, two trained interviewers will use your responses during the interview to rate you on the following five competencies: Teamwork, Flexibility, Cross-Cultural Communication, Integrity, and Oral Communication. You must receive a passing rating on all five competencies in order to pass the SI.

Q: **Do I need to take the Structured Interview (SI)?**  
A: All CBP Officer job announcements posted after November 2010 include a requirement that applicants take and pass both the SI and the VBT. Previous CBP Officer vacancy announcements only required applicants to take and pass the VBT.

Q: **How will I be notified of the Video-Based Test (VBT) and Structured Interview (SI)?**  
A: Approximately 6 weeks after you have been tentatively selected, you will receive a letter, either by e-mail or through the USPS, informing you of the date, time and location of your VBT and SI. You will be scheduled for the VBT and SI at the location you chose when you registered for the written test. If you have moved or otherwise need to request a new VBT and SI location, you will need to contact the Oral Board Team at (952) 857-2938.

Q: **What do I need to bring to the Video-Based Test (VBT) and the Structured Interview (SI)?**  
A: You will need to bring a government-issued picture ID, i.e., Drivers License, Passport, etc. You will not be given a VBT or SI without a valid photo ID.

Q: **How do most applicants dress for the VBT and the Structured Interview?**  
A: Although there are no absolute requirements for attire when taking the VBT and the SI, we can tell you that your VBT will be videotaped and later reviewed by a panel of trained supervisory/managerial CBP Officers. In addition, you will be meeting with 1-2 supervisory/managerial CBP Officers during the SI. Both the VBT and the SI will take place in a professional office environment where employees are either in uniform or professional attire. Most applicants tend to dress in business attire (e.g., a suit); however, you will not be rated based on your attire. Use your best judgment.

Q: **What if I cannot attend the Video-Based Test (VBT) and Structured Interview (SI) on the date scheduled for me?**
A: You may call the Oral Board Team at (952) 857-2938 to request a reschedule. Reschedules will only be given under extenuating circumstances. You will be notified of the scheduled VBT and SI at least 2 weeks in advance to enable you to make arrangements to attend.

Q: How will I know if I passed or failed the Video-Based Test (VBT) and the Structured Interview (SI)?
A: The VBT and SI results are sent to the Oral Board Team at the Minneapolis Hiring Center. The Oral Board Team will send you a "Notice of Results." This "Notice of Results" will indicate either an eligible (pass) or ineligible (fail). You should receive your Notice of Results within 4-6 weeks from the date of the VBT and SI.

Q: How long are the VBT and SI results good for?
A: The VBT and SI results are good for 3 years if you were rated eligible. If you received a rating of ineligible, you cannot be considered for a CBP Officer for one year from the date of the VBT and SI. If you have additional questions in regards to the VBT and SI process, contact us at our e-mail address of nhc-oralboard.medinfo@dhs.gov. You may call during normal business hours at (952) 857-2938. Because of the volume of inquiries received, you may have to leave a message and wait for a return call, so we strongly encourage you to contact us via e-mail.