

SSPO® and PRF-R for Policing
(OACP Certificate: Part B & C)

Official Study Guide

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OACP Certificate Study Guide (Part B & C)

Introduction

Purpose of this Guide

The Ontario Association Chiefs of Police (OACP), TNT Justice Consultants, and SIGMA Assessment Systems have developed this guide to support candidates preparing for the OACP Certificate Part B and Part C assessments. SIGMA Assessment Systems is the official provider of the assessments included in these components.

This guide provides an overview of the Part B and Part C assessments and outlines what candidates can expect. It is intended to be a general resource to support preparation. Sample questions are included for both the SSPO and the PRF-R for Policing to help candidates become familiar with the format and types of questions they may encounter. Use of this guide does not guarantee specific results.

Some third-party vendors offer study materials or practice tests that claim to improve assessment outcomes. These resources may not accurately reflect the content or structure of the SSPO or PRF-R for Policing. Candidates who choose to use external materials do so at their own discretion. The OACP, TNT Justice Consultants, and SIGMA Assessment Systems **DO NOT** endorse or recommend any third-party preparation tools or platforms.

Overview of the Assessment Process

As part of obtaining their OACP Certificate, candidates must complete two assessments.

Part B consists of a cognitive assessment. Applicants complete the **SIGMA Survey for Police Officers® (SSPO®)**, which evaluates abilities such as problem solving, understanding complex information, and making timely decisions.

Part C consists of a personality assessment. Applicants complete the **Personality Research Form – Revised for Policing (PRF-R for Policing)**, which assesses personality traits that are relevant to effective performance in policing roles.

Part B: SSPO

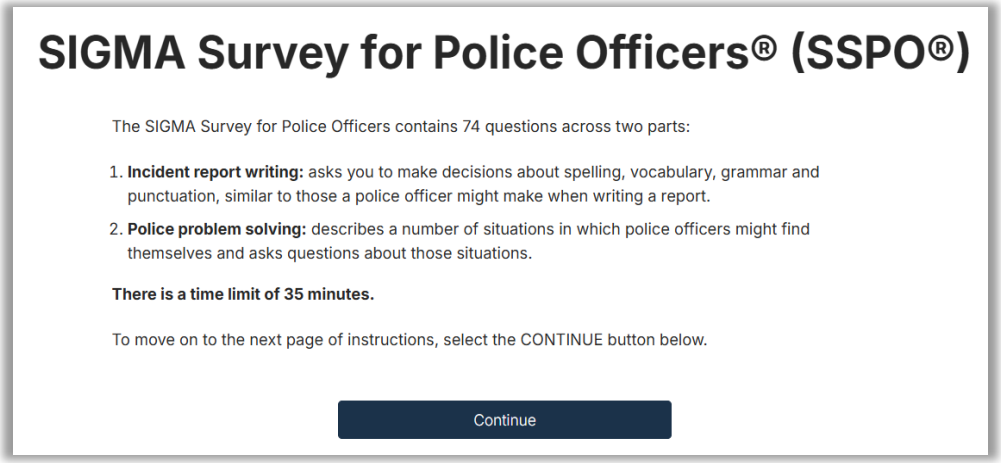
About the SSPO

The SIGMA Survey for Police Officers (SSPO) is designed to assess the cognitive skills required for effective policing. This includes the ability to apply sound judgment in practical situations and to produce clear, accurate, and credible written reports.

Structure of the Assessment

The SSPO is a timed assessment. Applicants have **35 minutes** to complete 74 multiple-choice questions.

The assessment is divided into two sections. The **Incident Report Writing Aptitude** section consists of 44 questions that focus on spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation, which assesses your ability to make appropriate language and writing decisions. The **Police Problem Solving** section consists of 30 questions based on scenarios relevant to police work. Each scenario is followed by multiple-choice questions that require you to identify the most appropriate response or course of action.



Note: The SSPO includes a penalty for incorrect answers. Random guessing is not recommended. If you are unsure of an answer, you may leave the question blank and return to it later. Unanswered questions are not penalized.

Incident Report Writing Aptitude

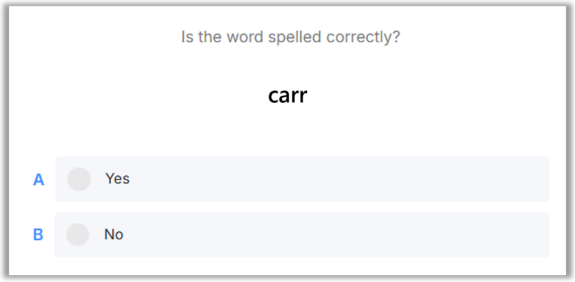
Police officers are frequently required to write incident reports. The first section of the SSPO assesses the skills needed to produce clear, accurate, and professionally written reports. This section includes three components: Spelling, Vocabulary, and Grammar and Punctuation.

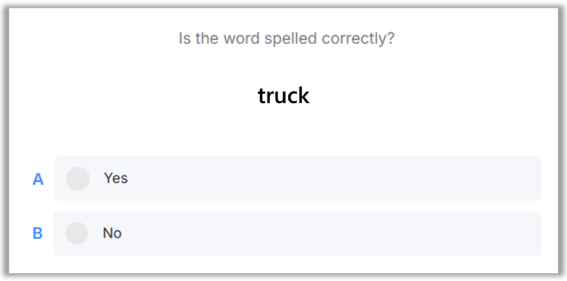
Spelling

The Spelling subtest evaluates your ability to recognize whether words commonly used in incident reports are spelled correctly.

You will be presented with 28 words. For each word, decide whether it is spelled correctly. Select "Yes" if the spelling is correct and "No" if it is incorrect.

Below are two examples of how Spelling questions appear on the SSPO:





In the first example ("carr"), the correct answer is "No" because the correct spelling is "car" rather than "carr." In the second example ("truck"), the correct answer is "Yes" because truck is spelled correctly.

Suggested tips:

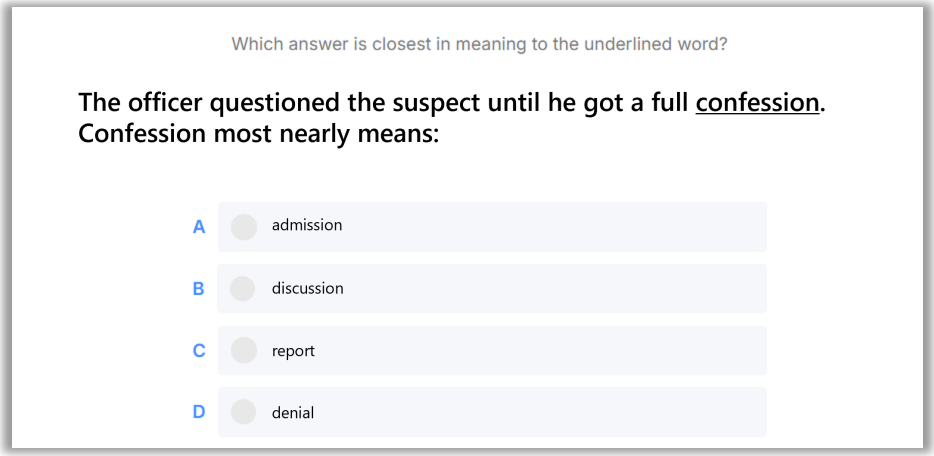
- Review commonly misspelled words, particularly those relevant to professional writing and in a policing context.
- Pay attention to word origins, as this can help explain irregular spelling patterns.
- Practice writing and saying words aloud to reinforce correct spelling.
- Avoid over-relying on spellcheckers when writing, as you may become less sensitive to incorrectly spelled words.
- Learn common English spelling rules (and their exceptions), such as:
  - *i* before *e* except after *c* (e.g., *believe* vs. *receive*); some exceptions include *leisure*, *heinous,* and *science.*
  - change *y* to *i* when adding suffixes to words that end in *y* (e.g., *ready* vs. *readily*).
  - drop the silent *e* when adding suffixes that begin with a vowel (e.g., *argue* vs. *arguing*).

Vocabulary

The Vocabulary subtest evaluates your understanding of word meanings and your ability to interpret words in context.

For each question, you will read a sentence containing an underlined word. Use the context of the sentence to select the answer choice that is closest in meaning to the underlined word.

Below is an example of how Vocabulary questions appear on the SSPO:



The correct answer is “A” because “confession” most nearly means “admission.”

Suggested tips:

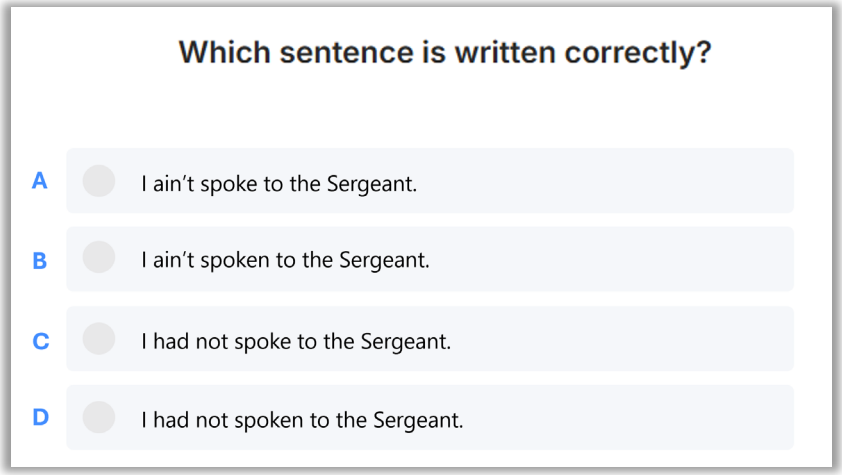
- Build your vocabulary through a range of reading materials and media.
- Familiarize yourself with prefixes, suffixes, and word roots, which can provide hints for guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Look up unfamiliar words and note their meaning, synonyms, and antonyms.
- Practice using new words in context to reinforce understanding.
- Use tools such as flashcards or vocabulary apps to support learning.

Grammar and Punctuation

The Grammar and Punctuation subtest evaluates your ability to identify grammatical errors and recognize correctly written sentences.

For each question, you will be presented with four sentence options that could appear in a police report. Select the sentence that is written correctly.

Below is an example of how Grammar and Punctuation questions appear on the SSPO:



The correct answer is "D" because it is the only sentence written correctly.

Suggested tips:

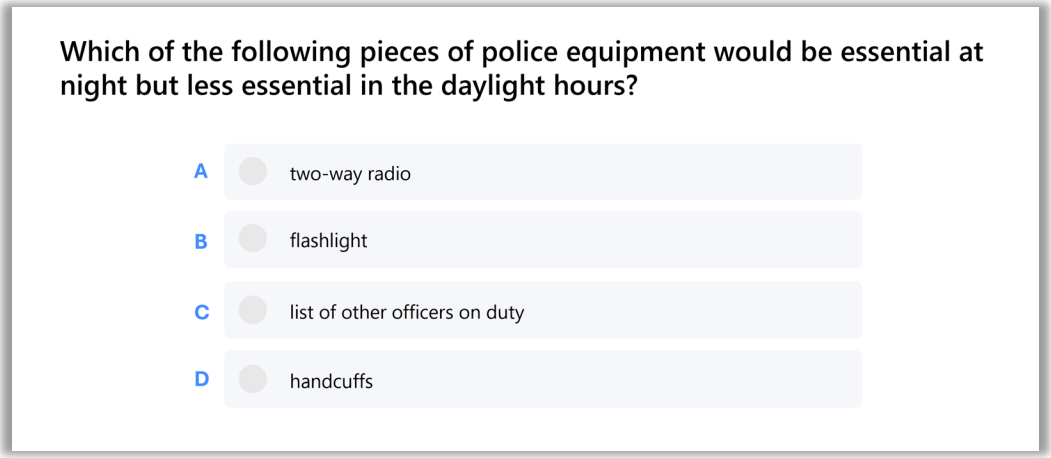
- Review key grammar rules, including sentence structure, verb tense, punctuation, parts of speech, and possessives.
- Practice writing and revising sentences to improve your grammar skills.
- Use grammar-checking tools or feedback from others to identify and understand errors in your writing.
- Read a little every day, paying attention to language patterns.

Police Problem Solving

The Police Problem Solving subtest assesses your ability to think critically, reason through information, and make sound decisions under time constraints. Questions may require you to interpret written, visual, or numerical information, apply relevant rules or policies, and identify the most appropriate response to situations that may arise in police work.

The situations in this section may be presented in one or more paragraphs or in the form of a map. Each situation is followed by a set of multiple-choice questions with four response options. Your task is to select the option that represents the best answer.

Below is an example of how some Police Problem Solving questions appear on the SSPO:



Answer B (flashlight) is the most correct answer because flashlights are rarely used during daylight hours.

Suggested tips:

- Read each question carefully and pay close attention to relevant details.
- Look for key facts, patterns, or clues in the information provided.
- Consider the answer before reviewing the response options, then compare your thinking to the choices given.
- Use a process of elimination to rule out weaker options.
- Manage your time carefully and return to difficult questions later if needed.
- Practice working through questions efficiently while maintaining accuracy.

Mathematics in the SSPO

Many candidates ask about the level of mathematics required for the Police Problem Solving section of the SSPO. It is important to note that calculators are **NOT** permitted during the assessment. As a result, candidates should be comfortable performing mental arithmetic and basic calculations without external aids.

In general, candidates should be able to perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers. Candidates may also encounter practical calculations involving:

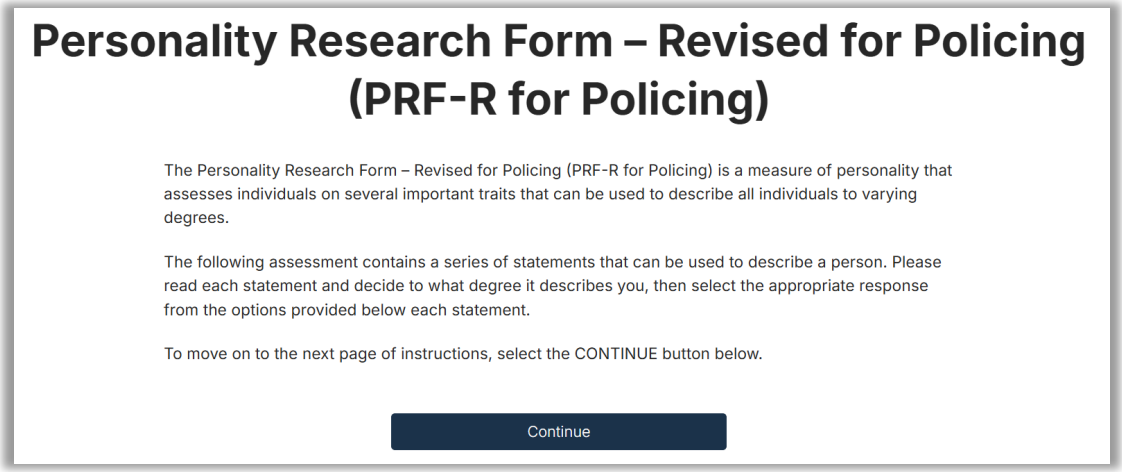
- averages
- percentages or fractions
- elapsed time or distance
- money
- unit conversions (e.g., centimeters to meters), and
- geometry (e.g., area, perimeter, or volume formulas for common shapes).

Questions may also require candidates to interpret numerical information and apply basic mathematical concepts to everyday scenarios. The mathematical skills required are generally comparable to those encountered in everyday life and are not intended to assess advanced mathematics.

Part C: PRF-R for Policing

Assessment Overview

The Personality Research Form – Revised for Policing (PRF-R for Policing) assesses personality traits related to behaviours, attitudes, interests, and activities that are important for success in entry-level policing roles. Research has consistently shown that personality is a strong predictor of job performance across many occupations[1-6], including policing.[7] The PRF-R for Policing was developed through extensive research involving policing experts, police college students, and policing applicants.



Structure of the Assessment

The PRF-R for Policing contains 307 statements. The assessment is not timed, and most applicants complete it in approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Note: Although this assessment is not timed, it must be completed within your scheduled proctor session. After you complete the SSPO, you should have sufficient time remaining to complete the PRF-R for Policing without rushing.

Answering Questions

You will be presented with a series of statements, one at a time. For each statement, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with it using a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Below is an example of how each statement on the PRF-R for Policing is presented:



You are required to respond to every statement to ensure the results provide an accurate and reliable reflection of your personality.

Please respond honestly, as there are no right or wrong answers and the assessment is not pass or fail. There is no single "ideal" personality profile for a policing candidate. Individuals with a range of personality characteristics can be successful in policing.

Your results will be shared with the police service to which you are applying. The assessment is intended to provide recruiters with additional information about who you are as a person, your preferences, and your typical patterns of behaviour. For this reason, it is important that you respond honestly and select the option that best reflects how you usually think, feel, or act.

It is not necessary to overanalyze each statement. Your general impression is sufficient. If you are unsure, select the response that comes closest and move on.

Sample Questions

The following examples illustrate the types of statements you may encounter on the PRF-R for Policing:

I am willing to compromise to maintain harmony.

I rarely feel overwhelmed by my emotions.

I seek out social gatherings and events.

I prefer to be genuine rather than impress others.

I set goals and work diligently to achieve them.

I plan ahead before taking action.

I enjoy learning for its own sake.

General Preparation Tips

The following guidance is intended to help you approach the assessment in a focused and prepared state. These considerations support concentration, clarity of thinking, and overall test readiness.

Rest and Sleep

Adequate sleep supports attention, memory, and decision-making. Being well-rested can help you process information more effectively during the assessment.

To support good sleep:

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule leading up to the assessment.
- Avoid caffeine, large meals, or screen use close to bedtime.
- Create a sleep environment that is quiet, dark, and comfortable.

Managing Nerves

It is normal to feel some level of nervousness before an assessment. A moderate level of alertness can be helpful, but high levels of anxiety may affect concentration.

Simple techniques to stay composed include:

- Taking slow, steady breaths to regulate your pace.
- Focusing attention on one question at a time.
- Pausing briefly if you feel distracted, then returning to the task.

Nutrition and Hydration

Eating and drinking appropriately can help maintain energy and focus throughout the assessment.

General recommendations include:

- Staying hydrated throughout the day.
- Eating a balanced meal before the assessment.
- Avoiding excessive sugar or caffeine immediately beforehand.

Conclusion

The SSPO and PRF-R for Policing are key components of the OACP Certificate process. This guide has provided an overview of each assessment, including their structure, purpose, and examples of the types of questions you may encounter.

Reviewing the sample questions and materials in this guide can help you become more familiar with the assessment format and better understand what to expect on test day.

Legal Disclaimers

This guide, including all study tips and practice questions, is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It is intended as a general resource to support preparation and does not constitute a comprehensive or definitive representation of the content, format, or difficulty level of the OACP Certificate assessments.

SIGMA Assessment Systems makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or relevance of the materials provided. The practice questions included in this guide are illustrative only and are not necessarily indicative of the types of questions, subject matter coverage, or level of difficulty that may appear on the actual assessments.

Use of this guide does not guarantee any scores on the OACP Certificate assessments or success in any stage of the police service application process. Outcomes may vary based on individual abilities and external factors beyond SIGMA Assessment Systems' control.

By using this guide, you acknowledge and accept that SIGMA Assessment Systems is not responsible for any decisions, actions, or outcomes resulting from reliance on its contents.

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Appendix: SSPO Practice Questions

The following questions are intended to provide examples of the types of questions you can expect on the SSPO for each section. Note that these questions are illustrative only and not intended to be representative of test content or difficulty.

Spelling

1. Is this word spelled correctly? **assualt**
   A. Yes
   B. No

2. Is this word spelled correctly? **collision**
   A. Yes
   B. No

3. Is this word spelled correctly? **evidense**
   A. Yes
   B. No

4. Is this word spelled correctly? **affadavit**
   A. Yes
   B. No

5. Is this word spelled correctly? **conspiricy**
   A. Yes
   B. No

6. Is this word spelled correctly? **indictment**
   A. Yes
   B. No

7. Is this word spelled correctly? **acquiesce**
   A. Yes
   B. No

8. Is this word spelled correctly? **defered**
   A. Yes
   B. No

9. Is this word spelled correctly? **jurisprudence**
   A. Yes
   B. No

10. Is this word spelled correctly? **perjury**
    A. Yes
    B. No

Vocabulary

11. The officer chose to detain the individual for questioning. Detained most nearly means:
    A. question
    B. release
    C. hold
    D. transport

12. The detective carefully logged the evidence into the system. Evidence most nearly means:
    A. proof
    B. rumour
    C. opinion
    D. excuse

13. The officer initiated a pursuit after the vehicle failed to stop. Pursuit most nearly means:
    A. delay
    B. meeting
    C. patrol
    D. chase

14. The suspect showed compliance with the officer's commands. Compliance most nearly means:
    A. resistance
    B. obedience
    C. escape
    D. innocence

15. The officer was accused of negligence in handling the case. Negligence most nearly means:
    A. carelessness
    B. bravery
    C. force
    D. deception

16. The offender was placed on probation instead of jail time. Probation most nearly means:
    A. imprisonment
    B. supervision
    C. acquittal
    D. arrest

17. Officers must use discretion when issuing warnings. Discretion most nearly means:
    A. authority
    B. judgment
    C. evidence
    D. confession

18. The officer attempted to mitigate the risk to bystanders. Mitigate most nearly means:
    A. increase
    B. accuse
    C. report
    D. reduce

19. The offender applied for expungement of his record. Expungement most nearly means:
    A. acquittal
    B. erasure
    C. testimony
    D. pardon

20. Clear articulation of grounds is required in reports. Articulation most nearly means:
    A. pursuit
    B. weapon use
    C. explanation
    D. arrest

Grammar & Punctuation

21. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officer instructed the suspect to remain where he was.
    B. The officer instructed the suspect too remain where he was.
    C. The officer instructed the suspect to remain, where he was.
    D. The officer instructed the suspect too remain, where he was.

22. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officers were prepared, to execute the warrant at dawn.
    B. The officers was prepared to execute the warrant at dawn.
    C. The officers were prepared to execute the warrant at dawn.
    D. The officers was prepared, to execute the warrant at dawn.

23. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officer spoke to the complainant, and than filed the report.
    B. The officer spoke to the complainant, and then filed the report.
    C. The officer spoke to the complainant and than filed the report.
    D. The officer spoke to the complainant and then filed the report.

24. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officer and her partner was assigned to the night shift.
    B. The officer and her partner were assigned to the night shift.
    C. The officer, and her partner was assigned to the night shift.
    D. The officer, and her partner were assigned to the night shift.

25. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officer's report was submitted to the sergeant, who reviewed it carefully.
    B. The officer's report was submitted to the sergeant who reviewed it carefully.
    C. The officers report was submitted to the sergeant, who reviewed it carefully
    D. The officers report was submitted to the sergeant who reviewed it carefully.

26. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officer neither confirmed nor denied the allegation.
    B. The officer neither confirmed, nor denied the allegation.
    C. The officer neither confirmed or denied the allegation.
    D. The officer neither confirmed, or denied the allegation.

27. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officers seized the weapons documented the scene and interviewed the witnesses.
    B. The officers seized the weapon documented the scene and interviewed the witness's
    C. The officers seized the weapons, documented the scene, and interviewed the witnesses.
    D. The officers seized the weapons, documented the scene, and interviewed the witness's.

28. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The officer asked whether the witness had seen the vehicle.
    B. The officer asked weather the witness had seen the vehicle.
    C. The officer asked whether the witness had saw the vehicle.
    D. The officer asked weather the witness had saw the vehicle.

29. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The evidence that was collected at the scene was properly stored.
    B. The evidence which was collected at the scene was properly stored.
    C. The evidence, which was collected at the scene was properly stored.
    D. The evidence, that was collected at the scene was properly stored.

30. Which sentence is written correctly?
    A. The suspect was charged; however, he was later released.
    B. The suspect was charged, however, he was later released.
    C. The suspect was charged; however he was later released.
    D. The suspect was charged, however he was later released.

Police Problem Solving

31. At 1:10 AM, you are first on scene outside a bar. Dispatch reports eight to ten people fighting and two people possibly injured. It is unknown whether weapons are involved. Backup is four minutes away. Which action is the most appropriate?
    A. Enter the crowd alone and begin arresting the most aggressive people.
    B. Wait at a safe distance, observe, request EMS, and update responding units.
    C. Drive directly into the crowd with lights and siren to force dispersal.
    D. Ignore the fight and begin interviewing bystanders around the corner.

32. You are dispatched at 7:40 PM to a shoplifting call at a pharmacy. Staff report that one suspect placed four electric toothbrushes worth $85 each and three skin-care items worth $26 each into a backpack and left without paying. What is the total value of the stolen goods?
    A. $340
    B. $366
    C. $394
    D. $418

33. You receive a missing person report at 5:30 PM. The youth was expected home at 3:45 PM. Their parents say they last had direct contact at 2:20 PM, when the youth texted that they were leaving school. How long had it been since the last direct contact when the report was made?
    A. 2 hours 25 minutes
    B. 2 hours 55 minutes
    C. 3 hours 10 minutes
    D. 3 hours 25 minutes

34. A foot pursuit moves through a park laid out as a grid. The suspect runs 60m east, then 80m north, then 60m west, then 30m north. How far north of the starting point is the suspect at the end of the pursuit?
    A. 30m
    B. 50m
    C. 80m
    D. 110m

35. You are first to arrive at a warehouse alarm. The side door is open, there are no signs of smoke or fire, and no persons are visible from your position. Another unit is three minutes out. Which action is most appropriate?
    A. Enter immediately and clear the building alone.
    B. Leave the property and return after backup arrives.
    C. Wait for the second unit, contain the area, observe exits, and communicate updates.
    D. Ignore the open door unless the alarm company confirms a break-in.

36. At 11:48 PM, you are dispatched to a possible impaired driver. The complainant says the vehicle was weaving and nearly struck a curb 6 minutes ago. The complainant last saw the vehicle heading east on Highway 9 at 80 km/h. If the vehicle maintained that speed, about how far away could it be by the time dispatch airs the call?
    A. 4 km
    B. 6 km
    C. 8 km
    D. 10 km

37. During a community event, 250 people enter a fenced area. Later, staff estimate that 16% left before closing. Approximately how many people remained inside?
    A. 200
    B. 204
    C. 210
    D. 234

Answer questions 38 to 40 according to the following section of legislation:

NUISANCE PARTIES

(1) No person shall sponsor, conduct, continue, host, create, attend, allow, cause or permit a Nuisance Party.

(2) No person who, individually or jointly with others, is an owner, occupant, tenant, or who otherwise has rightful possession of or possessory control of any Premises, shall allow, cause or permit a Nuisance Party on said Premises under their possession or control.

Remedial Costs: Fees

Take Actions to End Nuisance Party

A. Every person who sponsors, conducts, continues, hosts, creates, or causes a Nuisance Party shall take all reasonable and lawful actions to end a Nuisance Party.

Remedial Costs - Failure to Comply – done by City – at expense of person required to do it

B. Where anything required to be done in accordance with subsection A is not done, the municipality may do such thing at the expense of the person required to do it, and such expense may be recovered by action or by adding the costs to the tax roll and collecting them in the same manner as property taxes. For the purposes of this subsection, the municipality may enter upon land at any reasonable time.

Fees and Charges

C. In addition to any remedial costs or other fees or charges, the following fees or charges relating to Nuisance Parties may be imposed on a person who sponsors, conducts, continues, hosts, creates, or causes a Nuisance Party:

(a) fee for the attendance of a Fire Prevention Officer at the scene of a Nuisance Party: $70.00 per officer, per hour (or part thereof);

(b) fee for the attendance of a Police Officer at the scene of a Nuisance Party: $60.00 per officer, per hour (or part thereof);

(c) fee for the attendance of a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer at the scene of a Nuisance Party: $50.00 per officer, per hour (or part thereof).

38. You respond to a large house party. The homeowner is present and states, “I’m not hosting it. It’s my son’s party.” The party continues to disturb the neighbourhood. Under the legislation, who can be held responsible?
    A. No one unless property damage occurs
    B. Only the son hosting the party
    C. Only guests attending the party
    D. Both the homeowner and the person hosting

39. You attend a nuisance party with two police officers present for 1.5 hours and one municipal officer for 2 hours. What is the total fee charged?
    A. $220
    B. $260
    C. $300
    D. $340

40. You arrive at a nuisance party where the tenant is not present, but the tenant allowed others to use the premises. The party is ongoing. Under the legislation, what is the tenant’s responsibility?
    A. Responsible for permitting the nuisance party on the premises
    B. Responsible only if they are physically hosting
    C. Only guests are responsible
    D. No responsibility if they are not present

Answer Key

Spelling

#	Answer
1.	A. No, the correct spelling is “assault.”
2.	A. Yes.
3.	B. No, the correct spelling is “evidence.”
4.	B. No, the correct spelling is “affidavit.”
5.	B. No, the correct spelling is “conspiracy.”
6.	A. Yes.
7.	A. Yes.
8.	B. No, the correct spelling is “deferred.”
9.	A. Yes.
10.	A. Yes.

Vocabulary

#	Answer
11	C. The word “detain” is closest in meaning to “hold.”
12.	A. The word “evidence” is closest in meaning to “proof.”
13.	D. The word “pursuit” is closest in meaning to “chase.”
14.	B. The word “compliance” is closest in meaning to “obedience.”
15.	A. The word “negligence” is closest in meaning to “carelessness.”
16.	B. The word “probation” is closest in meaning to “supervision.”
17.	B. The word “discretion” is closest in meaning to “judgment.”
18.	D. The word “mitigate” is closest in meaning to “reduce.”
19.	B. The word “expungement” is closest in meaning to “erasure.”
20.	C. The word “articulation” is closest in meaning to “explanation.”

Grammar & Punctuation

#	Answer
21.	A.
22.	C.
23.	D.
24.	B.
25.	A.
26.	A.
27.	C.
28.	A.
29.	A.
30.	A.

Police Problem Solving

#	Answer
31.	B.
32.	D.
33.	C.
34.	D.
35.	C.
36.	C.
37.	C.
38.	D.
39.	D.
40.	A.


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