



A  Sempra Energy utility<sup>®</sup>

**Test Preparation Guide  
Working Foreman –  
Leadership Skills Test**

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# Welcome!

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**Congratulations!** You are taking the first step to ensure your success on the tests and ultimately in your career at San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The tests used at SDG&E are designed to give you the opportunity to make the best use of your skills. This booklet will give you information about the procedures used to select employees who are qualified and likely to be successful in the job. These procedures include a test which indicates how successful you are likely to be in the job for which you will apply.

This booklet gives you some tips for preparing for the test, as well as suggestions on how to do your best. It also includes sample items that will help you understand the format of the actual test.

**GOOD LUCK!**

## How to Use This Guide

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This manual is divided into three sections aimed at helping you become more successful on your tests.

- General test taking strategies applicable to all tests
- A brief discussion of the current test
- Sample questions

If you are a *first-time* test taker, take time to read through this entire manual and familiarize yourself with the test you will be taking. Also provided are book recommendations to assist you in studying for your exams.

If you are *retaking* a test, pay attention to the general test taking strategies, work through the sample problems, identify your weaknesses, and obtain one of the resources described at the back of this manual. If you feel you need to “brush-up” on a subject, there are books to help you do that as well.

## About Lead Skills Tests

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SDG&E uses leadership tests for people applying to certain leadership roles. These tests measure leadership abilities and skills in areas that are related to successful performance in the job in question.

## General Test Taking Strategies

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The following discussion includes tips for taking a wide variety of tests and should be practiced alongside the tips provided for the individual test (provided in the following section).

### Before the Test

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- **Pace yourself.** If you choose to prepare for your test, review the material (books, practice problems, or study guide) in several relatively short periods rather than a few long periods. Studying in several 30-60-minute sessions allows you to absorb the material more easily than if you were to cram large quantities of information at once.

### When You Begin

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- **Be positive!** The tests are not designed to trick you or be unnecessarily difficult. In fact, if you've taken other tests in school or at work, you'll probably find these very familiar. Start with a positive attitude and don't give up! Try to remember the hints that are outlined in this booklet and don't get discouraged if there are questions for which you don't know the answer. Remember, each question counts the same as any other question. If you can't answer one, don't let that discourage you for the next items. Begin each section/test with the same positive attitude. No one is expected to get every answer right!
- **Read the directions and pay close attention to all test instructions!** Sometimes we assume we know what type of question we are answering, but many times test takers get answers wrong because they did not read the directions. An example of this would be the differences between *mark all that apply*, *answer only one*, and *mark the one that does not belong*.
- **Relax.** Feeling high amounts of stress or tension will cause you to forget what you know or think irrationally. Ways to reduce feelings of stress include preparing in

advance, not talking with others who are stressed about the test immediately beforehand, making sure you understand the directions, and reviewing this guide.

## During the Test

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- **Complete the easiest questions or sections first.** If the test allows for it, begin the test by identifying the areas in which you are strongest while remembering to mark the questions you skip. Complete these sections first and then move to the more difficult areas. Don't spend too much time on any one question - since any question is worth the same in scoring, it is always to your advantage to complete as many questions as you can!
- **Mark questions you skip for easy relocation.** If the test allows for it, and you find yourself in a situation where you do not understand the nature of the question or simply don't know the answer, mark it and return to it later. Surprisingly, this is one of the most common mistakes made by test takers. Spending valuable time on a test item that you cannot answer simply gives you less time to complete other items you may know. It is far better to mark that item and continue forward, coming back to that item if the test format and time permit at the end. Marking your answer sheet when you skip an item can help you keep track of where you are on the test - some candidates have lost valuable time when they did not mark a skipped item and got off-track.
- **Read each question carefully.** After reading each question, make sure you understand it clearly.
- **Do not make RANDOM guesses, but narrow down for the correct response.** Try to eliminate at least one wrong answer before guessing. If you are given four choices and randomly guess, you only have a 25% chance of guessing the right answer—or a 75% chance of guessing the WRONG answer. Further, if you can eliminate just one wrong answer you have boosted your chances to 33%. Obviously, if you can eliminate two wrong answers your chances have gone up to 50%. When all else fails, and you must make guesses:
  - **Be aware of key words:** “always,” “never,” “all,” or “none.” Consider these options carefully.
  - **Trust your “gut”:** Usually your first reaction is right.
- **Be aware of being tempted to pick wrong answers.** There are answers that test developers have created based upon simple common errors such as replacing the word “their” with “there.” Take your time to work through the problem if it involves numbers and to read actively if the question involves grammar and spelling situations.

- **Leave time for review.** If the test allows for it, and you complete the test before the time is up, don't stop working - review your answers! Don't look for patterns in the responses - the tests have been professionally developed and don't necessarily have the same number of "A," "B," or "C" answers. If you find that you have answered mostly "A," for example, trust your instincts and don't assume that it must be wrong. Research has shown that many people who change answers during the review change right answers to wrong ones. Changes should be made only when you are certain the original answer is wrong. You can also use any extra time to make certain your answers are entered darkly and clearly. Be sure all your answer changes are erased completely and there are no stray marks on the answer sheet.

## Strategies for Various Question Types

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### True - False

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- If any part of the statement is false, the entire statement is false.
- Words such as "always," "never," "all," and "none" are often, but not always, signals that a statement is false.

### Multiple Choice

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- Read the entire question and try to answer it *before* looking at your options.
- Even if you think you know the answer be sure to read through all of your options.
- If you are uncertain, begin by eliminating answers that are wrong, increasing your chances of being right.

# Test Preparation Guide

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The Working Foreman Leadership Skills Test contains up to 50 multiple-choice items (depending on which department/version of the test you will be taking), and there is a 2-hour time limit.

## Information about test content

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The following leadership skill areas listed below are sampled by the test. The test does NOT necessarily include questions from ALL areas, but this list represents the possible areas that will be tested for on the test.

### A. Personal Styles/Qualities

- a. Dependability
- b. Self-control
- c. Stress tolerance
- d. Integrity
- e. Initiative
- f. Persistence
- g. Adaptability/flexibility
- h. Independence
- i. Achievement/effort

### B. Thinking and Problem Solving

- a. Attention to detail
- b. Analytical thinking
- c. Problem sensitivity
- d. Critical thinking
- e. Monitoring
- f. Complex problem solving
- g. Troubleshooting
- h. Judgment and decision making
- i. Time management

### C. Leading and Interacting with Others

- a. Cooperation
- b. Leadership
- c. Concern for others
- d. Coordination
- e. Instructing
- f. Social perspectives
- g. Customer and personal service

## Sample Test Items

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The following sample items below are intended to give the test taker an idea of what to expect on the test. They serve as a tool for the test taker to determine the types and format of the questions that will be asked of them on the examination. This is only a sample of the content and does not include every content domain that will be covered on the test, nor does it necessarily represent the difficulty level of the items on the test.

1. You are a Working Foreman leading a larger crew and a new employee on your crew seems to constantly ask questions, taking up all your time. What would be the most efficient way to free up time for you to work on your other responsibilities?
  - A. Ask the newer employee to take their problems to a senior person
  - B. Determine if the new employee needs additional training and suggest that to the supervisor
  - C. Restrict the number of questions anyone can ask you per day
  - D. Answer all the questions during tailgates to ensure everyone hears the answers
  
2. The team of which you are a member never seems to agree on the best approach to a certain work problem. It seems everyone has a different opinion on how to approach the problem. As the crew leader, you should
  - A. rehash the same issues that the team had failed to resolve in the past.
  - B. Ignore others' opinions and make the decision based on your opinion only since you are the leader.
  - C. use brainstorming techniques to generate more alternate solutions.
  - D. listen to everyone's opinions, weigh the pro's and con's and make the best decision you can
  
3. An employee regularly comes to you with questions on procedures in the Employee Safety Handbook. What would you do?
  - A. Tell them the information is available online and tell them to find the answer
  - B. Ask the entire group if they covered the topic in training
  - C. Answer the questions and ensure the person has access to the online handbook
  - D. Notify the supervisor and have them deal with this employee
  
4. You find a company vehicle your crew is using idling unsecured and unattended on a job site. What would you do first?
  - A. Find the driver
  - B. Shut off and secure the truck and take the keys with you
  - A. Call you supervisor for guidance
  - B. Look up the policy to determine if it is against policy

## Answers to Sample Items

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1. B Determine if the new employee needs additional training and suggest that to the supervisor
2. D listen to everyone's opinions, weigh the pro's and con's and make the best decision you can
3. C Answer the questions and ensure the person has access to the online handbook
4. A Find the driver

## Further Resources

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### General Test Taking Strategies

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- Casbarro, J. (2003). *Test Anxiety & What You Can Do About It*. National Professional Resources, Inc.
- Driscoll, R. (2003). *Tame test anxiety: Proven Anxiety Reduction Training [Abridged Audio CD]*. Frontiers Press.
- Flippo, R. F. (2000). *Testwise (2nd Edition)*. Torrance, CA: Good Apple/Frank Schaffer Publications.
- Gilbert, S. D. (1998). *How To Do Your Best on Tests*. HarperTrophy.
- Hammer, H. (1998). *ARCO General Test Practice for 101 U.S. Jobs (4th ed.)*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Incorporated.
- Johnson, S. (1997). *Taking the Anxiety Out of Taking the Test: A Step-By-Step Guide*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Lawler, J., & Powers, R. (2003). *ASVAB for Dummies (Chapter 3: Test-taking and Study Techniques)*. New York, NY: Wiley Publishing, Inc.
- Meyers, J. N. (2000). *The Secrets of Taking Any Test: Learn the Techniques Successful Test-Takers Know*. Garden Grove, CA: LearningExpress, LLC.
- Na, G. F. (1999). *Guide to Standardized Test Preparation*. Globe Fearon.
- Newman, E. (1996). *No More Test Anxiety: Effective Steps for Taking Tests & Achieving Better Grades (1st Ed. w/ Audio CD)*. Learning Skills Publications, LLC.
- Research and Education Association Staff (1992). *REA's Math Builder for Admission and Standardized Tests*. Piscataway, NJ: Research and Educational Association.
- Rozakis, L. (2002). *Test Taking Strategies & Study Skills for the Utterly Confused*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

## Test Content Resources

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Covey, S. (2004). *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY: Free Press.