

Handbook Highlight from the Montana Municipal Officials Handbook

Testing

***LGC Note:** This week the LGC received a call asking if a City could implement skill testing of the applicants for a job. The answer is **YES**, and it is often a really good idea. This portion of the Handbook offers good advice on implementing skills testing. If you are hiring an accountant and you don't check to see if they are proficient with the required software, or if you hire someone who says they can operate a backhoe, but really can't.... the time you invest in the new employee to develop their skills will be significant. Or, you may find yourself reopening a search for the position as a result of an inability to do the job they were hired to do. Your local job service offers some skills testing that takes you out of that loop. If you are developing your own skills tests, remember to have someone take the test first to make sure it can be done in the time allotted and that it is an accurate test of the skills needed for the job. Make sure you test all your applicants at that phase of the job search so you don't discriminate against any applicant.*

3.108 Testing

Municipalities may ask applicants to undergo testing as part of the application process. Carefully developed and administered employment tests can provide organizations with a way to decide systematically and accurately which people have the ability to perform well on the job. The local job service center may be able to provide certain skills testing such as typing and computer based tests. Before a municipality utilizes testing in the application process, there are several areas to consider:

- Be certain that the tests are job-related.
- Have a current employee try the test before use to ensure that the task is possible in the time allotted and relevant to the posted job.

- Only use tests that are valid and do not discriminate against any group of applicants.
 - Administer the same tests under the same conditions to all applicants for the same position.
 - Accommodate people with disabilities by modifying the test or testing conditions or eliminating the testing requirement for all of the applicants.
 - Do not rely solely on tests for making decisions about candidates; use them as one component of the overall selection procedure.
 - Any physical fitness testing required of applicants (besides police and fire) must be carefully analyzed by legal counsel to ensure they are both valid and reliable.
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