

What Qualifies Someone to Perform Pre-Employment Screening Services?

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Posted by [Danny Sanchez, PT, CEAS](#) on March 10, 2016



In our last blog article, we talked about where to find pre-employment screening services. Choosing the right person to perform the screening is just as important. [Lisa Quast](#) is a career consultant with a background in HR. She warns, "Because employment tests are periodically challenged in court, employers must make sure tests do not violate federal, state, or local EEOC laws, including Title VII." [Tweet this quote.](#)

She's right, of course. That's why you need to choose someone who is well-qualified to perform your screenings. Those qualifications must include familiarity with ADA, EEOC and other pertinent laws.

So Who Do You Choose?

Some industry sources suggest you don't need an occupational or physical therapist to conduct all your tests. They say you can use a professional to perform musculoskeletal screenings. Then other tests can be performed by a trained assistant. But your company's hiring success and legal liability are at stake. Wouldn't it be more prudent to choose the best-qualified person to provide all pre-employment screening services?

In fact, [Joseph Pachman](#) states, "Within the practice of occupational medicine, it is assumed that the examiner is required to have detailed knowledge of both working and health conditions." The [American Occupational Therapy Association](#) underscores this point. They note that "although individuals from other disciplines can be involved ... the occupational therapy practitioner brings unique knowledge and skills related to the complex and dynamic interactions between the person, the environment, and the occupation."

The most qualified physical therapists are those who specialize in work environments. They primarily treat injured workers. And they help companies create and improve injury prevention programs. Their education, training and workplace-focused experience give them a unique set of skills.

Those Skills Can Help You Avoid Problems

As an employer, you know pre-employment screenings can only take place once you've offered a job to the candidate. That's why these screenings are often called [post-offer employment tests](#). But [Lisa Quast](#) says there are other legalities involved. She cites three areas where post-offer screenings could leave you vulnerable to legal problems:

1. *Test validity.*

Screenings can examine a wide range of factors:

- Knowledge and cognitive abilities
- Emotional intelligence
- Language proficiency
- Personality
- Job-related skills
- Physical capabilities
- Personal integrity

But the tests you require a candidate to take must be directly relevant to the job they will be doing. You must be able to show a relationship between test results and likely job performance.

2. *Test reliability.*

If a given candidate were to take the test several times, they should consistently earn a similar score. Without reliability, tests cannot accurately predict how a candidate will perform on the job.

3. *Test implementation.*

By law, the tests you administer cannot put any candidate or group at a disadvantage. You must understand and abide by all applicable regulations.

Which brings us back to the legal angle. [The purpose of screenings](#) is to protect both prospective employees and your company. You don't want the process itself to cause legal problems. Choosing someone who is well-qualified in every way ensures you're doing the right thing. That way your company can capture all the benefits of pre-employment screenings. You will be able to:

- Make better hiring decisions
- Reduce turnover
- Improve work quality and overall productivity
- Reduce workers' comp claims and costs

[Lisa Quast](#) offers five tips to help you do that:

- Pick relevant tests. Verify their validity and reliability before using them
- Make sure your tests meet all EEOC laws
- If you plan to buy tests from a third party, research them well first
- Don't include test questions that are offensive or too personal
- Remember that tests are just one part of a well-designed hiring process

