

Dispatcher interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for dispatcher roles focus on your ability to juggle schedules, communicate under pressure and use dispatch systems. Employers want to see you stay calm when a driver calls in a breakdown and a customer is waiting.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through how you plan runs, allocate jobs or handle a typical shift.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example from your past, such as a time you dealt with a delay or a difficult customer.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a hypothetical situation, like a breakdown or an urgent job, to see how you prioritise.
- **Technical:** Questions about your experience with transport management systems, telematics and scheduling tools.
- **Safety:** Questions about fatigue management, chain of responsibility and compliance with road transport regulations.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about how you communicate with customers when schedules change or service fails.

Typically a phone screen with a recruiter or operations coordinator, then a face-to-face or video interview with the depot manager or operations supervisor. Some employers include a short practical test on a transport management system or a scheduling exercise. You may also be asked to complete a pre-employment medical and police check.

1. Walk me through how you plan a day's runs from start to finish.

Why they ask

This question tests your process and whether you can balance delivery windows, driver hours and vehicle availability.

How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walkthrough: start with the day's orders and priorities, check driver availability and fatigue limits, allocate runs in the TMS, confirm load readiness with the warehouse, then monitor and adjust as the day unfolds.

Example answer

"First thing, I review the day's orders and any priority jobs. I check which drivers are available and their remaining hours under fatigue rules. Then I open the transport management system and start allocating runs based on location clusters and delivery windows. I confirm with the warehouse that loads will be ready and check vehicle availability. Once runs are live, I monitor progress in real time and adjust if a driver hits traffic or a customer calls with a change. At the end of the day, I close out run sheets and note any issues for the next shift."

2. Tell me about a time you had to reschedule deliveries at short notice.

Why they ask

This behavioural question looks for your ability to stay calm, communicate clearly and solve problems under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on the specific actions you took and the outcome.

Example answer

"A driver called in sick two hours before his shift, and he had six deliveries including a time-critical medical supply. I checked who else was available and found one driver finishing early. I reallocated the medical supply to that driver as a priority, then moved the remaining five deliveries to another driver who could take them later in the day. I called each customer to give a new window and updated the run sheets. All six deliveries were made that day, and the medical supply arrived within its window."

3. A driver calls in a breakdown on a busy route with a time-critical load. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario question assesses your judgement under pressure and your ability to prioritise safety, service and cost.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: stay calm, assess the situation, prioritise the critical load, communicate with the driver and customer, arrange recovery or a swap, then document and review.

Example answer

"First I make sure the driver is safe and off the road. Then I check the load: if it is time-critical, I look for the nearest available vehicle to do a swap or recovery. I call the customer to explain the delay and give a new estimate. I contact the depot to organise a tow or a replacement vehicle. Once the load is moving again, I log the incident and let the operations manager know. After the shift, I review whether we can build in a backup vehicle for that route."

4. Which dispatch and tracking systems have you used, and how do you use them to monitor a fleet?

Why they ask

This technical question checks your familiarity with the tools of the job, especially TMS and telematics.

How to structure your answer

Name the systems, then give a specific example of how you use each one day to day, such as tracking progress, sending jobs to drivers or pulling reports.

Example answer

"I have used MTData and Maximas for scheduling and job allocation, and GPS telematics for live tracking. In MTData, I assign runs to drivers and monitor their progress on a map. If a driver is running late, I can see exactly where they are and send a message through the system. I also use Excel to track daily performance and flag recurring delays. At the end of the day, I export run data to check on-time performance and plan improvements for the next shift."

5. How do you ensure fatigue management and chain of responsibility requirements are met when allocating jobs?

Why they ask

This safety question tests your knowledge of Australian road transport law and your commitment to compliance.

How to structure your answer

Explain your understanding of the regulations, then give practical steps you take, such as checking driver hours, recording rest breaks and refusing to allocate a run if it would breach limits.

Example answer

"I check each driver's remaining hours before I allocate a run, using the fatigue management system. I make sure they have had the required rest breaks and that the run fits within their shift. If a job would push a driver over their limit, I find another driver or delay the job. I also keep accurate records of

hours and breaks so we are audit-ready. Chain of responsibility means everyone in the supply chain has a duty, so I speak up if a customer asks for something that would break the rules."

6. How do you handle a customer who is angry about a late delivery?

Why they ask

This client-facing question looks at your customer service and communication skills, especially when things go wrong.

How to structure your answer

Acknowledge the customer's frustration, explain what happened without blaming others, offer a solution or new time, then follow up to confirm.

Example answer

"I listen to the customer without interrupting, then apologise for the delay and explain what caused it, such as a breakdown or traffic. I give them a realistic new delivery time and offer to call them as soon as the driver is close. If the delay caused a problem for them, I ask what would help and see if we can prioritise their next delivery. After the call, I follow up with the driver and the customer to make sure the new time is met. I also log the issue so we can review the route or schedule."