

Dogger interview questions

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What to expect

Dogger interviews focus on your ability to direct crane operations safely and communicate clearly under pressure. Employers want to see that you understand load calculations, signalling, and WHS obligations, and that you can stay calm when a lift does not go to plan.

- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about WHS regulations, risk assessment, and exclusion zones.
- **Technical knowledge:** Questions on load charts, slinging techniques, and centre of gravity.
- **Scenario-based:** Questions about what you would do if a load shifts or a signal is unclear.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about teamwork, communication, and handling pressure.
- **Process:** Questions about how you plan and execute a lift from start to finish.

Typically, you will have a phone screen with a recruiter, followed by a site-based interview with a supervisor or safety manager. This may include a practical assessment where you demonstrate signalling and load securing. Some employers run a panel interview with both technical and behavioural questions.

1. Walk me through how you plan a lift from receiving the load details to completing the lift.

Why they ask

To assess your systematic approach and safety awareness.

How to structure your answer

Give a step-by-step walk-through: review lift plan, inspect gear, set exclusion zone, communicate with operator, guide load, confirm placement.

Example answer

"First, I review the load details and lift plan to understand the weight, dimensions, and centre of gravity. I check the load chart and select the right slings, shackles, and spreader bars. Before the lift, I inspect all lifting gear for damage and tag out anything that is not fit for use. I set up the exclusion zone and brief the crane operator on signals and the lift sequence. During the lift, I use hand and radio signals to direct the operator, and tag lines to control the load. Once the load is in position, I confirm it is secure and then signal the operator to release tension. Finally, I debrief with the team and document any issues."

2. Tell me about a time when you had to direct a crane in a tight or congested area.

Why they ask

To see how you handle challenging environments and communicate under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"On a previous project, we had to lift a large precast panel into a courtyard with limited crane access and nearby scaffolding. My task was to guide the panel without hitting the scaffolding or the building. I calculated the load's centre of gravity and used a spreader bar to keep it level. I positioned myself where I could see both the load and the operator, and used radio signals to make small adjustments. I also used tag lines to control the swing. We completed the lift without any damage and ahead of schedule, which allowed the next trade to start early."

3. What would you do if you noticed a sling was frayed just before a lift?

Why they ask

To test your commitment to safety and your ability to make immediate decisions.

How to structure your answer

State immediate action, then explain reasoning and follow-up.

Example answer

"I would stop the lift immediately and tag the sling out of service. I would not use it under any circumstances. I would inform the crane operator and supervisor, and replace the sling with a serviceable one from the store. After the lift, I would document the damaged sling and report it so it can be properly inspected or disposed of. Safety is non-negotiable, and a frayed sling could fail under load."

4. How do you calculate the safe working load for an irregularly shaped object?

Why they ask

To assess your technical knowledge and ability to apply load charts.

How to structure your answer

Explain method clearly, mention load chart, angle factors, and verification.

Example answer

"First, I determine the weight of the object from the load details or by calculation if not provided. Then I identify the centre of gravity, which might require adjusting the sling points. I use the load chart to find the safe working load for the crane at the required radius and boom angle. I also consider the angle of the slings: as the angle from horizontal decreases, the tension in the slings increases, so I use a larger capacity sling or adjust the rigging. I always verify my calculations with a supervisor or engineer if the load is complex."

5. Describe a situation where you had to communicate with a crane operator when radio communication failed.

Why they ask

To evaluate your problem-solving and adaptability in communication.

How to structure your answer

Describe your assessment, alternative communication, and escalation.

Example answer

"On a site, the radio batteries died mid-lift. I immediately switched to hand signals, which I had agreed with the operator beforehand as a backup. I made sure I was in clear view of the operator and used standard hand signals to guide the load down safely. Once the load was grounded, I signalled the operator to stop and we replaced the radio batteries. After that, we always carried spare batteries and did a radio check before every shift."

6. Why do you want to work as a dogger on this site?

Why they ask

To understand your motivation and fit with the site's safety culture.

How to structure your answer

Link personal values to site safety and teamwork.

Example answer

"I want to work on this site because I know it has a strong safety record and takes lifting operations seriously. I prefer working in environments where everyone speaks up about hazards and where

planning is thorough. I also enjoy the challenge of complex lifts and working with a skilled team. I believe my experience and focus on safety would make me a valuable addition to your crew."