

Fibreglass Laminator interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for fibreglass laminator roles focus on your practical experience with composite lay-up, your safety awareness around resins and chemicals, and how you handle quality and defects. Employers want to know you can work to consistent standards in a production environment.

- **Process:** Walk-through questions about how you complete a lay-up or finish a part from start to finish.
- **Technical:** Questions about resin mixing, vacuum bagging, chopper gun operation and tool use.
- **Safety:** Questions about chemical handling, PPE, ventilation and WHS procedures.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past work, teamwork, problem solving and how you handled challenges.
- **Scenario:** Judgement questions about defects, mould damage or production pressure.

Typically a single interview with a production supervisor or leading hand. It may start with a site walk-through, then a mix of technical and safety questions, followed by behavioural questions and a chance to ask your own questions. Some employers include a short practical test, such as a small lay-up or tool identification.

1. Walk me through your process for laying up a fibreglass part, from gelcoat to finished laminate.

Why they ask

Tests your knowledge of the full lamination sequence and whether you understand each step's purpose.

How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walk-through. Start with mould preparation and gelcoat, then move through cutting reinforcement, applying resin, consolidation, and finishing. Mention quality checks at each stage.

Example answer

"First I check the mould for cleanliness and apply release agent, then spray gelcoat to the specified thickness. Once the gelcoat has tacked off, I cut the glass mat and cloth to the pattern, lay the first layer in the mould, and wet it out with catalysed resin. I roll out air bubbles from the centre outwards, then build up subsequent layers, making sure to overlap joins. For thicker parts I might use vacuum bagging to consolidate. After the laminate cures, I trim the edges, inspect for dry spots or voids, and sand the part ready for assembly."

2. Tell me about a time you found a defect in a cured laminate. How did you handle it?

Why they ask

Assesses your problem-solving and quality focus, and whether you know how to repair composites correctly.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Describe the defect, what you did to fix it, and the outcome.

Example answer

"We had a batch of panels come out of the mould with some surface porosity near a tight corner. I inspected the area, marked the extent of the defect, and ground it back to sound laminate. I then rebuilt the area with a matching lay-up of mat and cloth, carefully consolidated it by hand, and let it cure. After sanding and fairing, the repair matched the surrounding finish. The panel passed inspection and we adjusted our roller technique on that corner to prevent it happening again."

3. You notice a mould has a damaged gelcoat surface just before you start a large lay-up. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests your judgement under pressure and your commitment to quality over speed.

How to structure your answer

A scenario response. State what you see, assess the risk, choose a safe course of action, and explain how you communicate it.

Example answer

"I would stop and not start the lay-up, because a damaged mould will transfer the defect to the part and could also cause release problems. I would report the damage to my supervisor straight away, and if possible I would either repair the mould surface if I'm trained to do so, or wait for a toolmaker to fix it. Meanwhile I would check whether any other moulds are available so production isn't held up. I would document the issue so the maintenance team can follow up."

4. What safety precautions do you take when working with resins, catalysts and solvents?

Why they ask

Safety is critical in composites work. Employers need to know you understand chemical hazards and WHS requirements.

How to structure your answer

A straightforward list with explanation. Cover PPE, ventilation, handling, storage and emergency procedures.

Example answer

"I always wear nitrile gloves, safety glasses and a respirator appropriate for styrene and organic vapours. I make sure the work area is well ventilated, using extraction or fans as needed. I handle catalyst carefully, never mixing it directly with resin without measuring, and I store chemicals according to the safety data sheets. I keep spill kits nearby and know where the eyewash station is. I also keep my workspace tidy to avoid trips and cuts."

5. How do you ensure a consistent resin-to-glass ratio when using a chopper gun?

Why they ask

Technical question about a key piece of equipment and quality control.

How to structure your answer

Explain your setup, calibration, technique and how you monitor the output.

Example answer

"Before starting, I check the chopper gun settings against the job specification, including resin pressure, catalyst ratio and glass feed rate. I run a test spray onto a piece of cardboard to check the pattern and ratio, then adjust if needed. While spraying, I keep a steady distance and speed, and I watch the laminate as it builds to make sure it looks evenly wet without being resin-rich. I also weigh samples if the job requires it. If I see dry spots or excess resin, I stop and recalibrate."

6. Describe your experience with vacuum bagging and resin infusion.

Why they ask

Tests your familiarity with advanced composite processes that many employers use for larger or higher-quality parts.

How to structure your answer

A technical walk-through of your experience. Mention specific projects, materials and what you learned.

Example answer

"I have used vacuum bagging on boat hulls and large panels. I lay up the laminate, then apply peel ply, breather and vacuum bag, and seal the edges with tacky tape. I pull a vacuum and check for leaks before infusing or curing. For resin infusion, I set up the infusion lines and resin feed, then open the vacuum to draw resin through the stack. I watch the flow front to make sure it reaches all areas without dry patches. After cure, I demould and inspect the part. I have also repaired vacuum bagging failures by locating leaks and resealing."