

# Glass Production Operator interview questions

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## What to expect

Glass production interviews are practical. Employers are checking that you understand furnace and forming behaviour, that you can read a defect and act on it, and that you will turn up reliably for shift work in a hot and noisy plant. Expect a mix of technical walk-throughs and safety questions rather than abstract ones.

- **Process and technical:** Walking through how you monitor furnace conditions, run forming machines and handle a changeover, including the settings you watch and when you intervene.
- **Fault-finding and scenario:** Being given a defect or a line stoppage and asked what you would check first, what you would change, and when you would escalate.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of catching quality problems, working through a difficult shift, or improving a process on the line.
- **Safety and shift work:** Questions about PPE, heat, fatigue, confined space entry and how you keep yourself and your crew safe across rotating rosters.
- **Quality and inspection:** How you classify bubbles, cracks and dimensional faults, record data, and decide what gets scrapped, reworked or returned as cullet.

Usually a short phone screen with a recruiter or HR, then a site based interview with the production supervisor or shift manager, often on the plant floor so they can see how you handle the environment. Some employers add a practical component, such as a plant tour with questions about what you notice, a short aptitude or mechanical reasoning test, and a pre-employment medical and drug and alcohol screen before an offer.

## 1. Walk me through a typical shift, from handover to handover.

### Why they ask

They want to see that you understand the rhythm of a glass plant, not just the machines, and that you take handover seriously.

### How to structure your answer

A chronological walk-through. Start at handover, cover the checks you do first, the monitoring through the middle of the shift, how you handle changeovers or stoppages, then finish with your recording and handover to the next crew.

### Example answer

*"I start by reading the previous shift's log and talking to the operator coming off, mainly about anything running warm, any mould that has been giving trouble, and what is scheduled on the line. Then I do a walk of the hot end, check the furnace readings against the targets, and look at the gob as it comes through. Through the shift I keep an eye on temperatures and glass flow, take cold end samples, and log defects by position so I can trace a pattern if one shows up. If there is a changeover, I set up during the run down so we lose as little output as possible. At the end I record the data, flag anything unresolved in the CMMS, and brief the incoming operator before I leave the floor."*

## 2. How do you decide when to adjust furnace temperature yourself and when to call it in?

### Why they ask

This is a judgement question. They are testing whether you know your limits and the escalation thresholds in a plant where a wrong call is expensive.

### How to structure your answer

Talk through a decision ladder: what you check first, the small corrections you are authorised to make, the signs that mean it is bigger than a routine adjustment, and who you contact.

#### Example answer

*"First I check whether the reading is a true drift or a sensor or flow issue, because there is no point chasing a temperature that is not actually moving. If it is a small deviation and I have the authority, I make a gradual correction and watch the response over the next few pulls rather than making a big change at once. If the trend keeps going the same way after a correction, or if it is moving quickly, or if it lines up with a change in glass quality, that is when I call the furnace controller or shift supervisor. I would rather escalate early and be told to keep watching than sit on something that turns into a campaign of out of spec glass."*

### 3. Tell me about a time you caught a quality problem before it reached the customer.

#### Why they ask

Quality ownership is central to the role, and they want a real example rather than a description of the inspection system.

#### How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Set the scene on the line, describe what you noticed and how you investigated it, explain what you did about it, and finish with the outcome for the customer and the plant.

#### Example answer

*"We were running a container line and I noticed cracks appearing in the same spot on the bottle, but only on some of them, so a standard sample check was not catching it. I started logging every reject by mould number instead of just by shift, and after a couple of hours the pattern pointed to one mould out of the twenty four on the machine. I flagged it to the supervisor and we stopped long enough for maintenance to inspect, and the mould had worn. They swapped it and the cracks disappeared. Because we caught it before the pallets shipped, we did not have to deal with a customer return or a recall of that batch."*

### 4. You are midway through a changeover and the machine starts producing out of spec glass. What do you do?

#### Why they ask

Changeovers are the highest risk moment on the line. They want to see how you prioritise safety, quality and output when all three are under pressure.

#### How to structure your answer

A judgement under pressure structure. Deal with safety and containment first, then diagnose, then decide whether to stop, correct or pause the changeover, and explain who you inform and how you record it.

#### Example answer

*"First thing is to make sure nobody is exposed, so I would stop the machine feeding product forward and make the area safe. Then I would contain what has already been made, because if I cannot tell when it started, the whole run since the last good check is suspect. I would look at the obvious changeover settings first, because that is the most likely cause: gob weight, timing, mould alignment, temperature at the delivery. If it is something I can correct within my scope I would adjust, run a short check, and confirm the glass is back within spec before restarting the changeover. If it is not, I stop, call the supervisor, and log it so the fault is on record rather than just fixed and forgotten."*

### 5. This plant runs hot, loud and around the clock. How do you manage your own safety and fatigue on shift?

#### Why they ask

Shift based plant work turns on reliability and safe habits. They want to hear practical routines, not a recital of the safety manual.

#### **How to structure your answer**

An honest, systems based answer. Acknowledge the reality of the environment, then describe the specific habits and rules you follow and how you look out for the crew around you.

#### **Example answer**

*"The heat and the noise are the two things that catch people out, so I keep my water up and take my breaks away from the line rather than at the machine. I wear the PPE properly, including the hearing protection and the right gloves and sleeves for the hot end, even on a short job, because that is when people get complacent. On night shift I keep my sleep routine consistent across the roster rather than flipping back to day hours on my days off. If I am not sharp enough to be safe, I would rather say so than push through, and the same goes for the people I am working with. If I see someone struggling or taking a shortcut near the furnace, I say something."*

### **6. A customer rejects a pallet for dimensional faults. How do you work out what happened?**

#### **Why they ask**

It tests whether you can trace a fault back through the process and whether you think about prevention rather than just the one bad pallet.

#### **How to structure your answer**

A structured investigation answer: confirm and contain, trace back through the records, test the likely causes, then close the loop so it does not repeat.

#### **Example answer**

*"First I would pull the pallet details and match it to the production records for that run, so I know which machine, which moulds and which shift it came off. Then I would contain anything from the same run that has not shipped yet, because the same setting could affect all of it. After that I work back through the likely causes in order: was there a changeover around that time, were the moulds within wear limits, was the delivery temperature steady, did the inspection records show anything logged. I would run a check on the current output to see if the fault is still present or if it was a one off window. Then I would record what we found in the CMMS and adjust the inspection frequency or the setup checks so the same fault gets picked up earlier next time."*