

Hospital Orderly interview questions

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What to expect

Hospital Orderly interviews focus on your ability to move patients and equipment safely, follow infection control, and stay calm during emergencies. Employers want to know you can work as part of a clinical team and communicate clearly with nurses, doctors and patients.

- **Process and safety questions:** These probe how you would transport a patient safely, check equipment, or follow infection control procedures.
- **Behavioural questions:** These ask for real examples of teamwork, staying calm under pressure, or handling a difficult manual handling situation.
- **Scenario questions:** These put you in a hypothetical situation, such as a code call or a patient who becomes distressed during transport, to see how you judge and respond.
- **Client-facing and communication questions:** These assess how you interact with patients, families and staff, including explaining delays or reassuring an anxious patient.

Interviews usually start with a brief chat about your experience and availability, then move to safety and manual handling questions, followed by behavioural or scenario questions. You may be asked to describe your understanding of patient transport equipment or how you would report a fault. Some hospitals include a practical component or a walk-through of the role.

1. Can you walk me through how you would transport a patient from a ward to the imaging department using a wheelchair or trolley?

Why they ask

This tests your knowledge of safe patient transport, manual handling and patient comfort.

How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walk-through: preparation, communication, manual handling, transport, handover.

Example answer

"First I would check the patient's mobility and any instructions from the nurse, then introduce myself and explain where we are going. I would make sure the wheelchair or trolley is clean and working, and apply the brakes before helping the patient on. I would use a slide sheet or hoist if needed, and check the patient is comfortable and secure. During transport I would avoid bumpy routes and keep the patient informed. At imaging I would hand over to the radiographer, making sure they know the patient's needs, and then return the equipment to its storage area."

2. Tell me about a time you had to stay calm during a busy or emergency situation at work.

Why they ask

This assesses your ability to manage pressure, prioritise tasks and communicate clearly when things get hectic.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"In my current hospital job, a code blue was called on a ward while I was doing my linen round. I was the closest orderly, so I went straight to the ward and asked the nurse in charge what they needed. They asked for a crash trolley and a hoist. I brought both within a few minutes, then stood by to help move equipment and clear the area. After the emergency, I helped clean and restock the trolley. The nursing team thanked me for acting quickly, and the patient was stabilised."

3. How do you make sure you follow infection control and hygiene procedures when moving patients and equipment?

Why they ask

Infection control is critical in hospitals. This question checks your habits and understanding of standard precautions.

How to structure your answer

A practical explanation: hand hygiene, PPE, cleaning equipment, waste segregation, and reporting.

Example answer

"I always perform hand hygiene before and after touching a patient or equipment, and I use gloves and a gown when required. I clean wheelchairs, trolleys and hoists between patients with hospital-grade wipes. I follow the colour-coded waste system and make sure specimens are transported in sealed bags. If I notice any spill or contamination, I report it and clean it up straight away following the hospital's policy."

4. Imagine you are transporting a patient and they become distressed or confused. What would you do?

Why they ask

This tests your patient-facing skills, empathy and judgement under pressure.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: stop, assess, reassure, seek help, document.

Example answer

"I would stop the trolley in a safe spot and speak calmly to the patient, using their name and explaining what is happening. I would check if they are in pain or need anything. If they remained distressed, I would use my radio to call the nurse in charge and stay with the patient until help arrived. I would not continue the transport until the patient was settled and the nurse said it was okay. Afterwards I would report what happened and any changes I noticed."

5. What do you know about patient flow and bed management systems, and how would you use them in this role?

Why they ask

This checks your familiarity with hospital systems that orderlies use to prioritise transport jobs.

How to structure your answer

A knowledge and application structure: what you know, how you would use it, why it matters.

Example answer

"Patient flow systems show which patients need to move and when, so orderlies can plan their trips and avoid delays. I have used a bed management system to check discharge times and prioritise urgent transports, like taking a patient to theatre. I would keep my radio on, check the system between jobs, and let the coordinator know if I am running late. That helps the whole hospital run smoothly."

6. Describe a time you worked as part of a team to get a difficult task done.

Why they ask

Teamwork is central to this role, as you work with nurses, doctors, and other orderlies.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"During a ward reconfiguration, we had to move beds, furniture and equipment to a new area within a few hours. I worked with two other orderlies and a nurse to plan the order of moves. I took charge of moving the beds and hoists while others handled smaller items. We communicated by radio and finished ahead of schedule, which meant the ward was ready for patients that afternoon. The nurse manager said our teamwork kept the disruption to a minimum."