

Mine Deputy interview questions

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What to expect

Mine Deputy interviews are safety-critical. You will likely face a panel that includes a mining manager, a safety superintendent and a technical specialist. They want to know you can apply statutory rules in practice, lead a crew under pressure and make sound judgements underground.

- **Technical and statutory knowledge:** Questions on gas testing, ventilation, ground control and the specific state mining legislation you will work under.
- **Scenario and safety judgement:** Hypothetical underground situations that test how you assess risk and respond to hazards.
- **Behavioural and leadership:** Past examples of supervising crews, dealing with conflict or enforcing rules when challenged.
- **Process:** Your routine for pre-shift inspections, permits and isolation procedures.
- **Emergency response:** How you would coordinate evacuation or respond to an incident.

The interview typically starts with introductions and a walk through your deputy's certificate and underground experience. Then the panel moves to technical and scenario questions, often with a strong safety focus. You may be asked to describe a real incident you managed. The interview ends with your questions and a discussion of roster and site conditions.

1. Walk me through your pre-shift inspection routine. What do you check first, and how do you record your findings?

Why they ask

This tests whether you have a disciplined, statutory approach to the most important part of a deputy's shift.

How to structure your answer

Process walk-through: describe the sequence from collecting the report to entering the district, the specific hazards you check, and how you record and action findings.

Example answer

"At the start of every shift, I collect the deputy's report and check the communication system. I then travel to the district and inspect the roadways, roof and ribs, ventilation controls and any recent fall. I test for methane and carbon monoxide at the face and in returns, and I check that doors and stoppings are sound. I record everything in INX InControl and note any actions required before production starts. If I find a hazard, I isolate the area and arrange support or repair before the crew enters."

2. Describe a time you had to enforce a safety rule that a crew member resisted. How did you handle it?

Why they ask

The panel wants to see how you balance statutory duty with crew relationships and whether you can hold your ground without creating unnecessary conflict.

How to structure your answer

STAR: set the situation, explain the task you faced, describe your actions step by step, and give the result including what the crew learned.

Example answer

"In a previous role, a miner refused to wear a dust mask in a dry area. I explained the statutory requirement and the health risk, but he continued to argue. I took him aside from the crew and gave a direct instruction. I explained that I would have to report the breach if he did not comply. He put the mask on, and later I followed up with a toolbox talk on dust control. The crew saw that I apply rules consistently, and we had no further issues."

3. You detect methane above the statutory limit in a heading. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a core statutory competency. The panel needs to know you can act decisively and follow the regulations without hesitation.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: state the immediate action, then the escalation, then the corrective steps and reporting.

Example answer

"If I detect methane above the statutory limit, I immediately stop work in that heading, switch off non-intrinsically safe equipment and withdraw the crew to a safe location. I inform the mine control room and the underground manager. I increase ventilation and re-test after the gas clears. I do not allow anyone back until methane is below the statutory limit and I have recorded the event. I also complete an incident report and brief the crew on what happened."

4. How do you ensure ventilation is adequate for the crew and equipment in your district?

Why they ask

Ventilation is a key deputy responsibility. This question checks your technical knowledge and your ability to use ventilation plans and monitoring tools.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation: describe your planning, measurement, adjustment and recording process, and mention the tools you use.

Example answer

"I check the ventilation plan for the district before shift. Underground, I measure airflow at key points and compare with the plan. I inspect brattice, doors and stoppings for damage. If airflow is low, I adjust the ventilation or report to the ventilation officer. I also ensure that diesel equipment is not left idling in dead ends. I record readings and any changes in the daily report."

5. Tell me about a time you responded to an underground incident. What was your role and what did you learn?

Why they ask

Emergency response is a statutory duty for deputies. The panel wants to see you can stay calm, follow procedures and learn from the experience.

How to structure your answer

STAR with emphasis on emergency response: describe the incident, your immediate actions, how you coordinated with others, and the outcome plus your key learning.

Example answer

"A loader caught fire in a decline. I was on the next level and heard the alarm. I followed the emergency procedure, accounted for my crew at the refuge chamber and radioed the control room. I then assisted with the evacuation of other personnel. After the fire was out, I helped secure the area and gave a statement to the investigation. I learned to keep my emergency skills sharp through regular drills."

6. Why do you want to work as a Mine Deputy at this mine?

Why they ask

This checks whether you understand the site's safety culture and whether you are likely to stay and contribute beyond the initial contract.

How to structure your answer

Motivation and fit: link your statutory experience to the site's values, training and technology, and show you have thought about the specific operation.

Example answer

"I want to work as a Mine Deputy at this mine because I value a site that invests in training and technology. I have seen how a strong safety culture depends on supervisors who are visible and consistent. I am looking for a role where I can lead a crew, apply my statutory knowledge and keep improving safety outcomes."