

Telecommunications Technologist interview questions

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What to expect

Telecommunications Technologist interviews usually test practical competence, safety judgement and how you work with live networks and customers. Expect a mix of technical fault-finding, process questions and scenario work, often with a site or field component.

- **Technical fault-finding:** Questions that ask you to diagnose fibre, copper, radio or transmission faults using test equipment and logical isolation.
- **Installation and commissioning process:** Questions about how you plan, test and hand over a network build or service activation.
- **Safety and field judgement:** Questions that probe worksite safety, hazard controls, permits and working around live services.
- **Behavioural and teamwork:** Questions about past work in crews, with customers, or under pressure.
- **Documentation and QA:** Questions about test results, asset records, as-built updates and handover quality.
- **Client-facing and stakeholder:** Questions about explaining technical issues to customers, carriers or project managers.

A typical process starts with a phone or video screen covering your background and tickets, then a technical interview or practical assessment using fault scenarios and test equipment. Shortlisted candidates often attend a site visit or field walk-through, and some employers run a separate safety and fit-for-role check before an offer.

1. A customer service is down on a fibre link. Walk me through how you would isolate the fault.

Why they ask

This tests whether you use test equipment methodically, read network records and work from a known good point instead of guessing.

How to structure your answer

Use a walk-through structure: confirm scope and records, test from a known good point, isolate the fault section by section, repair, retest, then document.

Example answer

"I would start by confirming the service and the affected path in the network management system, then check whether the fault is at the customer end or in the access network. I would look at the latest test results and as-built records so I am not testing blind. If the link is fibre, I would use an OTDR from the exchange or a known good patch point to get a trace and locate any break, high loss event or dirty connector. I would clean and inspect connectors first because that is a common cause, then test again with a light source and power meter. If the fault is still there, I would work section by section: patch panel, lead-in, joint, customer equipment. Once I found it, I would repair or replace the faulty component, re-run end-to-end tests, update the asset record and close the job with the customer confirming service is restored."

2. You arrive at a site and find the pit is open, traffic is nearby and the cable route is not marked. What do you do?

Why they ask

Safety judgement is central to field telecommunications work, and employers want to see that you can stop a job when controls are not in place.

How to structure your answer

Use a stop, assess, control, escalate, proceed only when safe structure. State the immediate action first, then the controls and escalation.

Example answer

"I would stop work immediately and not enter the pit. I would set up exclusion zones and signage, check for traffic management requirements, and confirm whether the pit has been made safe by the responsible party. I would review the permits, service plans and dial-before-you-dig information to understand what is in the ground and whether the cable route is known. If the route is not marked or the pit is unsafe, I would escalate to my supervisor and the site controller and not proceed until controls are in place. I would record the hazard and controls in the daily pre-start or hazard report. Only then would I continue, and if the job could not be made safe, I would leave the site and hand back the work with clear notes."

3. How do you approach commissioning a new transmission or radio site?

Why they ask

Commissioning is a core task, and this question checks your sequence, your safety awareness and how you hand over a site to operations.

How to structure your answer

Use a process walk-through: pre-checks, safety, configuration, layered testing, handover. Mention what you do when something fails.

Example answer

"I start with the design pack, method statement and site access requirements. Before powering anything, I check earthing, power, rack space and environmental conditions against the plans. I confirm the configuration for routers, switches and transmission equipment, load it or verify it against the design, then bring services up in a controlled sequence. I test each layer: physical continuity first, then link, then service. I record results as I go, including any deviations from design. Once the site passes, I clean up, label everything, update asset records and GIS, and provide the handover pack to operations. If something fails, I isolate it before moving on so I am not commissioning on top of a fault."

4. Tell me about a time you had to work with another crew or contractor to restore a service under time pressure.

Why they ask

Telecommunications work is often multi-crew and time-bound, so interviewers look for coordination, communication and record keeping under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Keep the result tied to the service, the handover and what you learned.

Example answer

"On a carrier upgrade, our crew and a civil contractor were working to the same cutover window. The civil crew hit an unmarked duct and we lost the planned path. I called the supervisor, got the updated design and agreed a revised sequence with the other crew lead. I took on the testing and labelling while they cleared the duct, and we kept the customer updated through the project manager. We restored the link within the window and handed over a corrected as-built so the next crew had the right route. The main lesson was to keep one person coordinating and to update records as soon as the plan changes."

5. What network records do you keep, and why does that matter?

Why they ask

This probes your documentation habits, which directly affect fault-finding, safe isolation and handover quality.

How to structure your answer

Answer directly with examples, then explain the operational reason behind each record type.

Example answer

"I keep test results, asset details, as-built drawings, photos of completed work and any configuration changes. In the field I use GIS mapping software and network management systems to update the record while I am still on site, because details get lost later. That matters because the next technician needs to know what was installed, what was tested and what was changed. Accurate records cut down repeat visits, help with fault-finding and support safe isolation. I also make sure my written communication is clear enough for someone who was not there to understand the job."

6. A customer is frustrated because their service has been down for longer than expected and they want an answer now. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Technologists often face customers directly, and employers want to see calm communication, honesty and follow-through.

How to structure your answer

Use acknowledge, explain, set expectation, act, follow up. Do not promise a fix time you cannot meet.

Example answer

"I would acknowledge the impact and apologise for the disruption without blaming anyone. I would explain what I know in plain language, what I am doing next, and when I will update them. I would avoid guessing at a fix time if I am not sure. If I need to escalate, I would tell them I am doing that and give them a clear point of contact. I would keep working the fault and document the customer conversation. Once the service is restored, I would confirm with them that it is working and check whether they need anything else. If the delay was caused by something within our control, I would feed that back so the process improves."