

**PREPARATION GUIDE FOR**

**COASTAL PROGRAM ANALYST**

**EXAMINATION**

offered by

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL  
COMMISSION**

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*Making San Francisco Bay Better*

# INFORMATION AND STUDY GUIDE FOR THE COASTAL PROGRAM ANALYST EXAMINATION

## THE ORAL INTERVIEW

This examination takes the form of a Qualifications Appraisal Panel interview. Your score on the oral interview will be your final score in the examination. This examination interview is **NOT** a job interview. Should you be successful in the examination, you will be eligible to apply for job openings as they occur. The examination interview is designed to measure those qualities which are necessary for successful performance as a Coastal Program Analyst. The panel is generally made up of a representative from the California Coastal Commission Human Resources staff and one to three other coastal staff experienced in the classification(s). Should you have reason to question the objectivity of any panel member you should make your concerns known to the panel chairperson immediately. The chairperson will decide whether to continue with that panel member or ask the panel member to abstain from your interview evaluation.

The examination interview is “patterned”, meaning that all candidates are given the same questions and your answers are evaluated in relationship to predetermined correct responses.

On the examination bulletin, there is a section titled “Scope”. This section tells you what subjects may be covered in the oral interview. The California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code, Division 20, Section 30000) is basic reading material for preparation for this examination. The McAteer-Petris Act, (Government Code Section 66600), the San Francisco Bay Plan and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act (Public Resources Code 29000) are relevant to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. These documents can be found on the Commissions’ websites. The California Coastal Commission website is [www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov) and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development website is [www.bcdc.ca.gov](http://www.bcdc.ca.gov).

You will also be given an opportunity to present your education and experience to the interview panel. The interview time is limited. How you present this information can be as important as the actual education and experience. To best use the interview time you should be thinking well ahead of the interview about your knowledge and ability in the areas listed in the “Scope” section of the examination bulletin. Be clear in your mind as to how your specific education and experience demonstrates that you are qualified for this type of work, and then go over the knowledge and ability section a number of times so that you will be able to cover your qualifications completely, but concisely. Your ability to do this will also contribute to your evaluation in such areas of the “Scope” as: 1. Analyze situations accurately and take effective action; 2. Effectively and convincingly communicate in ...verbal form...4. Inspire confidence and trust; and 7. Exercise common sense and good judgment.

You may wish to familiarize yourself with the work of the Commissions by perusing the web sites of each organization. These sites contain information regarding the programs of each agency and what they do as well as current issues before each Commission.

Both of these websites also include links to the agendas for the commission meetings. Nearly every agenda item is supported by a staff report written by staff – in most cases, a Coastal Program Analyst. You can read the staff reports by clicking on the agenda item. Reviewing some of these staff reports is an excellent way to become familiar with the actual work of the analysts.

At the end of a Civil Service examination interview you will usually be asked if there is anything you would like to add that has not already been covered in the interview. At this point, if you wish, you may elaborate or add to an answer to a prior question or make some general brief statement regarding your qualifications. If everything has been covered it is also quite acceptable to say, “Thank you, I have nothing to add.” Do not take this question as an invitation to launch into any general topic of conversation; the panel has many people to interview. The California Coastal Commission human resources office will be able to answer, at a later time, any specific questions you have regarding the examination process.

Some things to keep in mind regarding the Qualifications Appraisal Interview:

- There will be a panel of 2 to 3 people at your examination interview.
- The interview will be tape recorded.
- The interview is an examination; all candidates are asked exactly the same questions.
- The questions will be read to you and also provided in writing during the interview.
- You will not be allowed to refer to notes or outside information during the interview.

### **THE HIRING INTERVIEW**

The oral examination interview is evaluated and scored for placement on an eligibility list for Coastal Program Analyst. The hiring interview takes place when an actual job vacancy occurs. This interview is used to match a specific person’s skills with specific job requirements. When a vacancy occurs, applicants in the top ranks of the eligibility list are contacted, usually by mail. Before you go to a hiring interview you should acquaint yourself with the mission and functions of the Commission with which you are interviewing and how this specific job fits in. The Commission may hire anyone who is certified from the eligibility list, transfer a current state employee from another job or rehire (reinstate) a former state employee.

### **PROBATION**

If you are hired you will serve a probationary period of one year. During this period you will receive written reports (usually three) from your immediate supervisor that will be discussed with you. Early identification of any problems that need to be remedied to pass probation is critical to your success. The probationary period is crucial because it is the final test of your ability to perform as a Coastal Program Analyst. You should work closely with your supervisor to identify skill areas needing improvement. Your supervisor’s manager is also available to you as a development resource to insure your successful transition through probation to permanent status.