

UNHCR's Practical Guidance for Assessing Candidates Driver Positions

Volume 2: Ambulance drivers

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Executive Summary

In order to assist UNHCR partner organizations to employ suitable people as ambulance drivers taking into account the different operating environments, and to ensure they have the appropriate skillset to be able to drive ambulances in a safe and secure manner, UNHCR¹ has developed this guidance on how to test the candidates for the position based on all required skillsets that need to be applied.

This is the structure of the practical guidance:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Methodology. This chapter explains who the recommended assessment instruments apply to and some considerations that should be taken into account when undertaking sample driving tests.

Chapter 3: This chapter contains the recommended tests.

UNHCR invites partner organizations operating our ambulances to implement this practical guidance to improve their ambulance driver selection process.

¹ For further information or clarifications on the practical guidance please contact the Road Safety Unit at: visionzero@unhcr.org.

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1. Introduction

To ensure that drivers recruited by partner organizations have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude (behaviour) required for the position it is important to offer them the opportunity to demonstrate this through testing their technical knowledge, practical skills as well as through questions related to the position in the interview process. It is recommended that this process be conducted by persons who will be supervising them and who are qualified to carry out the test.

It is important to note that traffic crashes involving UNHCR procured ambulances have been identified as a recurrent problem (see Figure 1), and occasionally the ambulance drivers do not receive an appropriate emergency driving training once they are hired. For instance, according to a survey conducted during May 2022 with some of the partner organizations driving ambulances in Uganda, more than 50% of the ambulance drivers have not received specific ambulance driving training (see Figure 2). Consequently, a process for assessing ambulance drivers was also included in these guidelines, so some of the gaps produced by the lack of training could be covered in the initial driver selection process.

FIGURE 1. RATE OF UNHCR TRAFFIC CRASHES BY VEHICLE TYPE

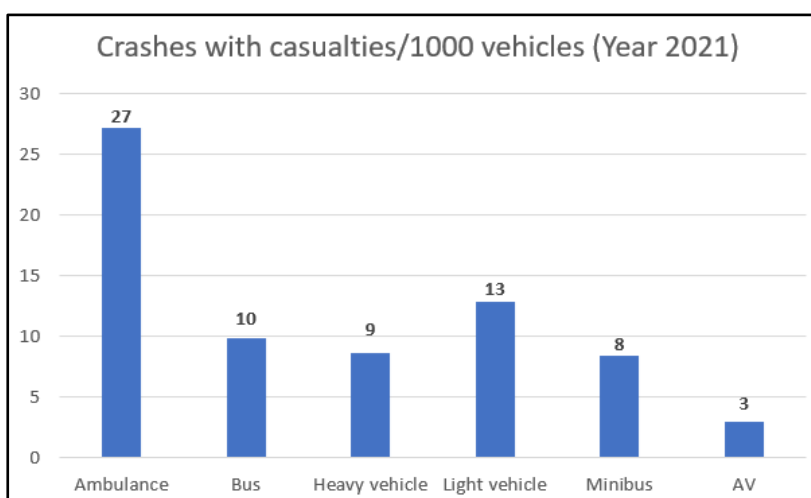
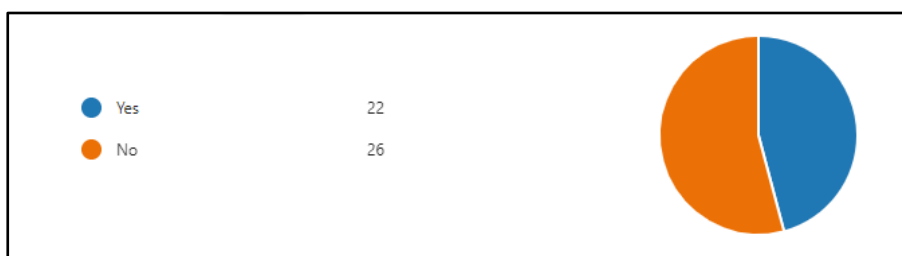


FIGURE 2. PROPORTION OF AMBULANCE PARTNER ORGANIZATION DRIVERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING IN UGANDA

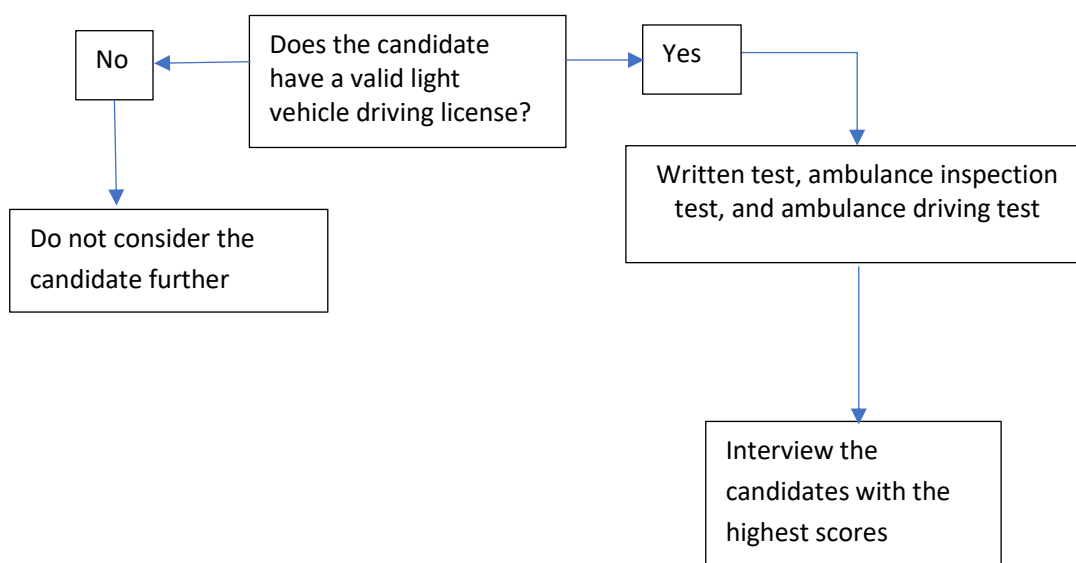


This practical guidance was designed to present different tests that should be used for assessing the drivers. Candidates should be subjected to three related tests, and the drivers who achieve the highest scores should be invited to an interview to select the most competent candidates. The explanation on how to apply the different tests is included in the second chapter (Methodology), and the different testing instruments are presented in the third chapter.

2. Methodology

This practical guidance was designed based on a selection of different types of tests that are relevant for the driver selection process. The tests taken into consideration are a written test, an ambulance inspection test, a driving test, and interviews.

Before testing the candidates, it is required to check the driving license, and any individual who does not have a valid driving license for the category of vehicle required should be not considered further as shown on the next flow map.



Each test has been assigned grading criteria, and the total score of each candidate is the sum of each individual score they obtain during the different tests. At the end, candidates with the highest scores should be selected. To be consistent and fair with the selection assessment process, all candidates should be subjected to the same tests and the same number of questions.

2.1. Written test

All candidates must be subjected to a written test that has two parts: a stress management test and an ambulance driving knowledge test. The assessment, which can be found in section **Error! Reference source not found.**, should be printed out and given to the candidates on the day of assessment. Candidates should be informed in advance that they should bring a pen for taking the written test.

2.1.1. Stress management test

Good stress management skills are important for those drivers who will attend emergency situations as a routine task². The test has 10 questions that are rated from 1 to 6. They are used to evaluate three different skills of stress management: eliminating stressors, developing resiliency and short-term coping. The questions related to each skill are indicated on the table below. Please note that it is necessary to estimate the average on each stress management skill, and the average ratings of "4" or higher on each area are in the positive range.

TABLE 1. RELATION OF THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE WITH THE SKILLS TO BE ASSESSED

Skill Area Items	Questions
Eliminating stressors	1, 5, 8, 9
Developing resiliency	2, 3, 6, 7
Short-term coping	4, 10

2.1.2. Ambulance driving knowledge test

The section 3.1.2 presents a questionnaire for testing some basic ambulance driving concepts. The correct answer for each question is found on the next table.

² Becker, J., and Hugelius, K. (2021). Driving the ambulance: an essential component of emergency medical services: an integrative review. *BMC emergency Medicine*, 21,160.

TABLE 2. CORRECT ANSWERS OF THE AMBULANCE DRIVING KNOWLEDGE TEST (SECTION 3.1.2)

Correct answers	
Question 1	a
Question 2	b
Question 3	b
Question 4	b
Question 5	d
Question 6	a
Question 7	b

2.2. Ambulance inspection test

After the written test, all candidates must undertake an ambulance inspection test to assess if they understand the vehicle and equipment which should be inspected before starting to drive. This test is measured using a checklist to record if the driver checked various components of the vehicle and equipment properly. A qualified person needs to conduct the assessment. The assessment should be conducted with a three-category grading scale in which 0 should be used for those tasks the applicant did not do at all, 1 should be used for those tasks the applicant did attempt to review but did not complete fully, and 2 should be assigned for those tasks the applicant does correctly during the test.

2.3. Ambulance driving test

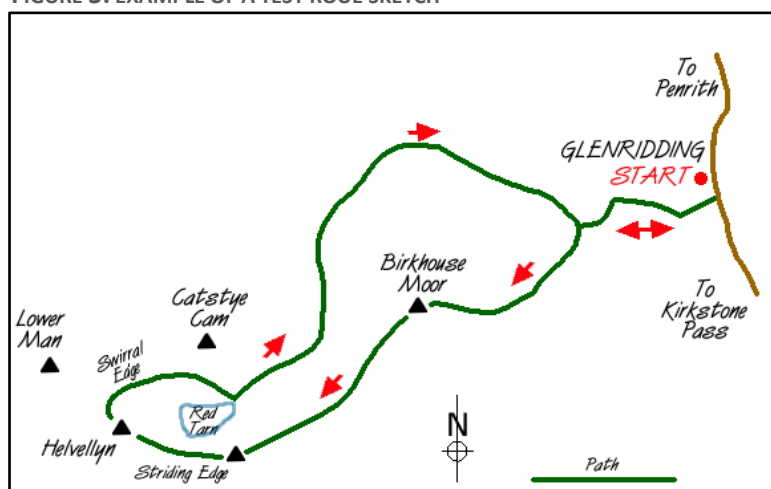
A practical ambulance driving test (see section 3.3) could help to identify the candidates with the desired skills, therefore such a test was included in this guidance, which also includes a section of attending an emergency situation. It is important to take into consideration that the results of the driving tests can depend on the duration of the test, so the longer the test takes, the more chances the candidate has of making mistakes. Consequently, when conducting ambulance driving sample assessments, the same test duration should be applied to all candidates. Therefore, a test route has to be selected, and to do it, it is recommended to consider the next elements:

- Go through an urban area where interactions with pedestrians, motorcyclists, and other motor vehicles will occur
- Different types of traffic control devices: stop signs, yield signs, traffic lights, etc
- Different road geometries: roundabouts, at grade intersections, entering and exit ramps, low and high-speed roads
- Different road surfaces: paved roads, gravel road, moody roads, etc
- Different traffic conditions: busy traffic areas, low traffic areas
- During the route consider a stop for attending a hypothetical emergency situation (a person with a cardiac arrest, a broken leg, traffic injuries, etc) to see if the candidates

proceed safely by parking properly, securing the scene, identifying the closest health care centre, and proper use of the warning lights and sirens

Once the test route is identified, it is also suggested to present a sketch to the candidates before starting the driving test. The sketch should present some of the key reference points (see Figure 3), so candidates can gain some knowledge of the route in advance. This will help avoiding confusion during the test.

FIGURE 3. EXAMPLE OF A TEST ROUTE SKETCH



A checklist for conducting an ambulance driving test is available in section 3.3. This test is divided in two categories: conformance with standard driving practices and attending emergency situations. The assessment should be conducted with a three-category grading scale in which 0 should be used for those tasks the applicant did not undertake at all, 1 should be used for those tasks the applicant did to some extent and 2 should be assigned for those tasks the applicant completed well during the test.

2.4. Interviews

After filtering some potential candidates, interviews should be conducted with the candidates with the highest scores from the previous assessments. A warm-up question and three competency-based questions could be enough for selecting the candidates. In section 3.4 there are some sample interview questions, with examples of expected responses highlighted with italic characters. Table 3 shows an example of selecting candidates based on the testing procedure.

TABLE 3. EXAMPLE OF THE APPLICATION OF THE ASSESSMENTS ACCORDING TO A SPECIFIC CONTEXT

Candidate's name	Test		Final Score	Interview
	Written and ambulance inspection test	Ambulance driving test		
Candidate 1	10	23	33	Consider the candidate for a final interview
Candidate 2	18	30	48	Apply the interview
Candidate 3	2	10	12	Don't interview this candidate
Candidate 4	19	38	57	Apply the interview

3. Assessment tests

3.1. Written test

Name: _____ Last Name: _____
ID number: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: This test has two parts. The first one was designed to assess your stress management skills, and the second one measures basic knowledge in relation to driving ambulances. You will have 30 minutes to complete it. Please carefully read the instructions of each question and answer them individually with a pen. Please turn off your mobile phone and do not talk with other candidates during the test. Any communication with them will be considered as fraud or “cheating”, and your assessment will be cancelled immediately.

3.1.1. First part: Stress Management test

Please respond to each statement by writing a number from the rating scale provided.

Rating Scale:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Strongly disagree | 4. Slightly agree |
| 2. Disagree | 5. Agree |
| 3. Slightly disagree | 6. Strongly agree |

When faced with stressful or time-pressured situations:

___1. I use effective time-management methods such as keeping track of my time, making to do lists, and prioritizing tasks.

___2. I maintain a program of regular exercise for fitness.

___3. I maintain an open, trusting relationship with someone with whom I can share my frustrations.

___4. I know and practice several temporary relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and muscle relaxation.

___5. I frequently affirm my priorities so that less important things don't distract me from more important things.

___6. I maintain balance in my life by pursuing a variety of interests outside of work.

___7. I have a close relationship with someone who serves as my advisor.

___8. I effectively utilize others in accomplishing work assignments.

___9. I encourage others to think on solutions, not just questions, when they come to me with problems or issues.

___10. I strive to redefine problems as opportunities for improvement.

3.1.2. Second part: Ambulance driving knowledge test

Select the best answer to the following multiple-choice questions about basic concepts of driving ambulances. **Maximum score: 7 points.**

1. What is the purpose of the emergency light and sirens? (1 point)
 - a) Communicate to other road users about the emergency
 - b) Improve safety
 - c) Both a) and b) are correct

2. Is it allowed to drive with the emergency lights and sirens when not responding to emergencies? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

3. Is it necessary to turn on the emergency lights and sirens every time an ambulance is requested? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

4. What would be the first task to do when arriving to a place where an emergency needs to be attended? (1 point)
 - a) Stabilize the patient
 - b) Secure the scene
 - c) Apply CPR

5. Which basic equipment should ambulances be provided with? (1 point)
 - a) Seat belts for every sitting position in the patient compartment
 - b) Extrication equipment
 - c) Emergency care supplies
 - d) All of the above

6. Does using the communication devices while driving increase the risk of traffic crashes? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

7. Do ambulances always have the right of way when approaching intersections? (1 point)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

3.2. Ambulance inspection test

This check list should not be given to the candidates. It was designed for the assessor to take notes of the ambulance characteristics the candidates checked. Besides, each candidate should be assessed individually. **Maximum score 8 points.**

Ask the candidate to perform an inspection of a UNHCR ambulance as if they would be starting a shift as a UNHCR driver. What would they check? If possible/applicable use a vehicle that will likely be used by them if they are a successful candidate

Candidate name and last name _____ Date _____

Topic	To be competent , the user/individual must be able to:	Grading scale		
		Bad (0 points)	Neither good nor bad (1 point)	Good (2 points)
Road and service worthiness of the ambulance	1. Check that the ambulance meets basic legal and compliance related requirements			
	2. Check ambulance for technical defects or immediate need for servicing like oil/filter change , coolant and fuel levels and tyre inflation levels			
	3. Check if the ambulance is equipped with the required emergency care supplies			
	4. Check the conditions of the emergency care supplies			

3.3. Ambulance driving test

This check list should not be given to the candidates. It was designed for the assessor to take notes of the ambulance characteristics the candidates checked. Besides, each candidate should be assessed individually. **Maximum score 34 points.**

Have the candidate perform a few manoeuvres in the parking area before going on the road to familiar themselves with the vehicle. Once on the road, the test route, give instructions to the candidate to attend a hypothetical emergency.

Candidate name and last name _____ Date _____

Topic	To be competent , the user/individual must be able to:	Grading scale		
		Bad (0 points)	Neither good nor bad (1 point)	Good (2 points)
Conformance to standard driving practices	5. Wear the seatbelt			
	6. Change lanes safely at appropriate speed and observing traffic conditions			
	7. Overtake other road users legally, safely and by using correct signalling			
	8. At all times observe the speed and distance in relation to vehicles ahead, behind and on the sides and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles.			
	9. Signal your intentions correctly to other road users within a safe, systematic routine			
	10. Respond appropriately to all permanent and temporary traffic signals, signs and road markings as well as hand signals of traffic policeman.			
	11. Use indicators and arm signals to signal intentions as per the traffic requirements			
	12. Use the parking light when stationary, where needed			
	13. Select a safe, legal and convenient place to stop; secure the ambulance safely on gradients using hand brakes and wheel choke			
	14. Check for oncoming motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians and other traffic before opening your door			
	15. Remain calm and composed during difficult situations like traffic jam, accidents and strictly avoid any feud with fellow commuters and other public.			
	16. Give preference and right of road usage to children, elderly and differently abled. Comply with any related rules, regulations and practices for handling general public issues as well as show consideration towards stray animals.			

Topic	To be competent , the user/individual must be able to:	Grading scale		
		Bad (0 points)	Neither good nor bad (1 point)	Good (2 points)
Attending an emergency situation	18. Parking the ambulance safely			
	19. Securing the scene			
	20. Identifying the best route to the hospital or health care centre			
	21. Proper use of emergency lights and sirens properly			

3.4. Interviews

A. Warm up questions

- I. Name, introduction, and short background information.

Verify or expand on information in the application form by encouraging applicants to talk about past employment, training, and other qualifications.

- II. Why are they applying for the position?

B. Competency-based questions

- I. Describe a situation in which you applied safe driving or defensive driving techniques. What did you do?

I drive safely every time I need to drive. I do it by wearing the seatbelts, complying with the traffic rules, adjusting my speed to conditions, being aware of other road users, using the turning signals to indicate other road users when turning or changing lanes, checking the blind spots, avoiding distractors, and being careful at intersections. Besides, I check the vehicle regularly to make sure it remains in good conditions.

- II. Describe a situation in which you drove an ambulance for attending an emergency. What did you do to arrive to pick up the patient and take him/her to the health care centre safely?

I received the notification and proceeded according to the emergency code. In this situation the emergency lights and sirens were required so I used them when needed to alert the other road users about the emergency situation. When arriving at the scene, my colleague and I secure the area to make sure our lives were not at risk, then we assessed the conditions of the patient, we stabilized him, we secured him to the medical bed, and put him inside the ambulance.

Finally I drove smoothly to the health care center to prevent worsening the patient's condition.

- III. Describe a situation in which you required to attend a person with some injuries that were not compromising his/her life. What did you do?

Despite the person was suffering, it was not necessary to drive too fast, nor was it necessary to turn on the emergency lights and sirens. Therefore, I just drove the vehicle carefully to apply first aids and take him/her to the nearest health care center.

- IV. Describe a situation in which you noticed a problem with the vehicle while driving. What did you do?

I noticed there was a flat tyre so I:

- a) Found a safe space to pull over in the meantime, Hold the steering wheel tightly*
- b) Eased off the gas/acceleration pedal*
- c) Applied brake gently*
- d) Shift to lower gear.*
- e) Activated turn signal to let others know you are moving to the side of the road.*
- f) Activated hazard lights if in danger*
- g) Used the warning devices and put on the safety vest*

- V. Describe a situation in which you used some of the key qualities that an ambulance driver should possess. What are those key qualities?

Key qualities: Observation skills, good reflex, proven driving skills, defensive driving skills and relevant training, planning skills, calm demeanor, able to work under pressure, paying attention to details.

First aid course, good stress management skills, observation skills, good reflex, proven driving skills, defensive driving skills and relevant training, planning skills, calm demeanor, able to work under pressure, paying attention to details.

- VI. Describe a situation in which you were a little delayed, and a vehicle in front of you was moving slowly. What did you do?

I was stress, yet I controlled my emotions, and waited until I had time to pass the front vehicle safely.

- VII. Describe a situation in which you needed to attend an emergency in a remote area with roads in bad conditions. Can you describe how you proceeded for attending it?

I identified the faster and safer route, drove carefully and adapted the speed to the terrain conditions, turned on the front light to increase conspicuity and the emergency lights and sirens only when necessary. Besides, I requested a colleague to be in charge of the communication devices while I was driving.

VIII. Describe a situation in which you were involved in a traffic crash. What did you do?.

I secured the scene, checked if there were casualties, called for support (medical, police etc.), administered first aids. Reported the crash my supervisor, completed the necessary forms following the organization SOP. Poor response would indicate bring the car for repairs themselves

IX. Describe a situation in which you were requested to drive to a place you haven't gone before. How did you prepare for the trip?

Response should include Review maps and talk to others that may have been to the area before and understand the time required to reach same. Understand the road conditions and places that can be used for stops on route. Understand the security environment, where there are emergency services, police hospitals etc. Plan the mission with the team leader, or have someone on board who has been to the area and has relevant contact points places to stop etc. Check and prepare the vehicle, ensure suitable additional spare tires and supplies are in the vehicle. Understand and carry communications equipment.

X. Describe a situation in which one of the medical team members refused to follow the safety rules. What did you do to solve such problem?

My colleague refused to wear the seatbelt, so I indicated that it is mandatory by law, by the organizational policy, that the driver has the responsibility to make sure everyone in the car is transported safety and this means wearing a seat belt that they would not feel comfortable driving knowing that one of the passengers could be injured if something happened quickly and they had to brake hard.