

Demolition Worker interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Demolition worker interviews focus on safety awareness, practical skills and your ability to follow plans. You will likely meet a supervisor and a safety officer, and may be asked to walk through a recent demolition job.

- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about your understanding of WHS rules, asbestos handling, silica and lead paint controls, and how you apply them on site.
- **Technical and equipment:** Questions about operating excavators, skid steers, jackhammers, concrete saws and oxy-acetylene torches, and your tickets or licences.
- **Process and planning:** Questions about reading demolition plans, sequencing work, erecting hoardings and fencing, and sorting waste for recycling.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for real examples of teamwork, problem solving or following instructions under pressure.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a situations like finding unexpected hazardous material or a damaged structure, to see how you judge risk.

A typical interview starts with a phone screen, then a site-based or office meeting with a supervisor. You may be asked to describe a recent demolition job step by step. Some employers include a practical assessment or a walk-through of a current site.

1. What safety checks do you complete before starting a demolition task?

Why they ask

This tests whether safety is automatic for you, not an afterthought.

How to structure your answer

Walk through your checks in order: review the plan and permits, inspect the area for hazards like live services or unstable structures, confirm PPE, set up exclusion zones and signage, check tools and plant, then stop and ask if anything is unclear.

Example answer

"I start by checking the demolition plan and permits. I inspect the work area for hazards like live services, unstable structures or hazardous materials. I ensure PPE is worn, and I set up exclusion zones and signage. I also check tools and plant are in good condition. If anything is unclear, I stop and ask the supervisor before I touch anything."

2. Tell me about a time you identified a hazard on a demolition site.

Why they ask

This shows you can spot risks and act on them, which is the core of the job.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Situation: describe the site and task. Task: what you needed to do. Action: what you checked and who you told. Result: what changed because you spoke up.

Example answer

"On a residential strip-out, I noticed a wall that looked like it had asbestos sheeting under paint. I stopped work and told the supervisor. We isolated the area and brought in a licensed asbestos removalist. The result was that the material was removed safely and no one was exposed. It also meant the job kept to schedule because we dealt with it early."

3. How would you handle finding asbestos-containing material during a strip-out?

Why they ask

Asbestos is a constant risk in demolition, and employers need to know you will follow the rules.

How to structure your answer

Show judgement under pressure. Stop work, do not disturb the material, alert the supervisor, secure the area, and wait for a licensed removalist. Mention your training and the need to follow the asbestos management plan.

Example answer

"I would stop work immediately and keep everyone clear. I would not disturb the material. I would tell the supervisor and follow the asbestos management plan. I would make sure the area is taped off and signed. If I am not licensed to remove it, I would wait for a licensed removalist. The key is not to take chances with asbestos."

4. Describe your experience operating mobile plant like an excavator or skid steer.

Why they ask

This checks your practical skills and whether you hold the right tickets.

How to structure your answer

Name the machines and attachments you have used, the tasks you did, and the tickets or licences you hold. Then give a short example of a job where you used them safely and efficiently.

Example answer

"I hold an excavator ticket and have used a 5-tonne excavator with a bucket and hammer to break concrete footings. I have also operated a skid steer loader with a grapple to sort timber and metal. On a civil project, I used the excavator to load rubble into trucks while keeping the stockpiles separated for recycling. I always do a pre-start check and follow the spotter's directions."

5. How do you sort demolition waste for recycling?

Why they ask

Environmental controls are part of the job, and employers want to see you understand the value of recovery.

How to structure your answer

Explain your process: separate materials at the source, use designated bins or stockpiles, keep contamination out, and follow the site waste management plan. Mention common streams like timber, metals, concrete and brick.

Example answer

"I separate materials as I go. Timber goes into one pile, metals into another, and concrete and brick into a third. I keep the streams clean so they can be recycled. I follow the site waste management plan and check with the supervisor if I am unsure where something goes. This reduces what goes to landfill and makes the job cleaner."

6. Why do you want to work as a demolition worker?

Why they ask

This helps the employer see if you understand the role and will stick with it.

How to structure your answer

Talk about what draws you to the work, such as hands-on tasks, teamwork, or seeing a site cleared for new projects. Mention safety and doing the job properly. Keep it honest and specific to demolition.

Example answer

"I like the hands-on nature of demolition and the fact that every site is different. I enjoy being part of a team that clears a site safely and recovers materials. I also take pride in following safety rules and doing the job right. I want to build a long-term career in demolition and keep learning, including getting more tickets."