Fire Protection Technician interview questions

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What to expect

Fire Protection Technician interviews mix practical trade judgement with standards knowledge and safety awareness. Employers want to know you can work unsupervised on a live site, follow a compliance schedule, and communicate clearly with building managers when something needs fixing.

- **Technical and standards:** Questions that test your working knowledge of Australian Standards, system types and test methods, often framed around a real service task.
- **Process:** Walk me through how you do a routine job, such as an annual inspection or a pump test, to check your method and your record keeping.
- **Safety:** Isolation, permit to work, working at heights and confined space, because this role regularly touches live systems and plant rooms.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Faults, access problems and uncooperative site contacts, to see how you handle pressure and competing priorities.
- **Client-facing:** Explaining defects and non-compliance to building managers and owners who may not have a technical background.
- **Behavioural:** Tell me about a time questions covering fault finding, teamwork and taking responsibility for your own work.

Expect a short phone screen with a service manager or recruiter, then a face to face or site based interview with a supervisor and sometimes an HSEQ representative. Many employers include a practical component where you inspect a panel, explain a test procedure or talk through a set of drawings. The conversation usually moves from your trade background and qualifications to standards knowledge, then to safety and how you deal with clients.

1. Walk me through how you would complete a routine annual inspection of a sprinkler and hydrant system.

Why they ask

This is the core of the job. The interviewer wants to see a logical, standards based method and hear that you record results properly rather than just ticking boxes.

How to structure your answer

A process walk through: preparation, systematic inspection by system, testing, recording, and close out with the client.

Example answer

“I start with the site documentation, checking the current AS 1851 schedule and the logbook so I know what has been done and what defects are already open. Then I work through the system in a set order so nothing gets missed: alarm valves and pressure gauges first, then flow switches, hydrant landing valves, the booster assembly and the pump set. I run the pump start tests and record pressures and times as I go. Anything outside tolerance gets photographed, tagged and written up as a defect. At the end I walk the site contact through what passed, what needs attention, and leave the updated records with them so the building stays audit ready.”

2. Tell me about a time you found a fault during a routine service that the client had not reported.

Why they ask

Fault finding is a daily part of the role, and employers want evidence that you look beyond the checklist and follow a problem through.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

“I was doing a six monthly service on a commercial building and noticed the jockey pump was cycling much more often than it should. The client had not reported anything and the system was still running, so it would have been easy to leave it. I checked the pressure readings and traced it to a slow leak on a non return valve. I documented it, told the building manager the same day, and came back with the part once it was approved. It was a straightforward fix, but it stopped the main pump from being worked harder than it needed to be and kept the building's suppression coverage intact.”

3. You arrive for a scheduled service and the building manager will not give you access to the pump room. What do you do?

Why they ask

Access problems are common on occupied sites, and the interviewer is testing your judgement when you cannot simply push through.

How to structure your answer

A judgement under pressure structure: clarify the problem, look for a safe alternative, escalate through the right channel, and document what happened.

Example answer

“I would stay polite and ask what is behind the refusal, because often it is a timing issue or they have not been told I was coming. I would explain what the service involves and how long I need, and offer to work around their schedule if there is a window later that day. If access still was not possible, I would contact my supervisor and the client's nominated contact to rebook, and note the missed service in the system so the compliance position is clear. I would not force access or skip the pump test and sign it off, because that puts the building and my own record at risk.”

4. How do you confirm a smoke detector is working without sending the whole building into alarm?

Why they ask

This is a practical technical question about test methods and monitoring procedures, and it comes up constantly on detection system work.

How to structure your answer

A technical explanation: isolate first, use the right tool, verify at the panel, then restore and confirm.

Example answer

“First I check with the site and the monitoring company so everyone knows a test is happening and the alarm is not treated as a real event. I isolate the relevant zone at the fire indicator panel. Then I use a Testifire tester or approved aerosol to introduce smoke at the detector, which tests the actual sensing element rather than just the wiring. I confirm the panel responds as expected, then reset, remove the isolation and check the zone comes back into normal service. Everything gets recorded on the service sheet, including the isolation times.”

5. Describe your approach to isolating a system before you work on it.

Why they ask

Safety questions carry real weight here because technicians regularly work on live systems and plant. The interviewer wants to hear a repeatable discipline, not good intentions.

How to structure your answer

A safety framework: identify the hazard, plan the isolation, apply permits and lockout, verify, then control the work and restore.

Example answer

“I start by identifying what actually needs to be isolated and what else on site depends on it, because taking a system out can affect other services. I check the isolation procedure, arrange the permit to work, and let the monitoring company and site contact know. I isolate at the correct point, apply lockout or tagout, and then verify the system is genuinely dead rather than assuming the switch did it. Only then do I start work, with the right PPE for the task. When I am finished I remove my lock, restore the system, confirm it is operating normally, and close out the permit and paperwork.”

6. How would you explain to a site manager that a non compliant item needs rectifying and cannot wait?

Why they ask

Technicians are often the person delivering bad news about cost and timing. The interviewer wants to see clear, honest communication without overstating or understating the risk.

How to structure your answer

A client-facing structure: state the finding plainly, connect it to the standard and the risk, give options, then document it.

Example answer

“I would keep it in plain language and avoid jargon, because most site managers are not fire technicians. I would show them the item and explain what standard applies and what the consequence is if it is left, without dramatising it. Then I would give them the practical options: what needs to happen now, what can be scheduled, and what the interim measure looks like if a full fix has to wait. I would follow the conversation up in writing with photographs and a defect notice so there is a clear record for the owner and for compliance.”