

Loss Prevention Officer interview questions

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What to expect

Loss prevention interviews are usually run by a loss prevention or asset protection manager, often with the store manager sitting in. They are practical and legally aware: expect questions about what you would actually do on the floor, how you document it, and whether you understand the limits of your licence and state law.

- **Process:** A step-by-step walk-through of how you observe, verify, approach and report an incident.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of de-escalation, teamwork, or a time you handled pressure or confrontation.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Short situations where you have to decide whether to act, wait, or escalate, often involving staff rather than customers.
- **Technical and systems:** How you use CCTV, access control and point of sale exception reporting to build a case.
- **Safety and compliance:** Your obligations around detention, use of force, duty of care, privacy and incident reporting.
- **Integrity and background:** Questions that test honesty, judgement and reliability, since the role carries licence and police check requirements.

A typical process starts with a phone or video screen covering your licence, availability and shift flexibility, then an in-person interview at the store or a regional office. That second stage usually moves through your background, a couple of behavioural questions, one or two scenarios and a systems or reporting discussion, and finishes with your questions. Some employers add a short walk-through of the store or a written scenario response, and most will verify your security licence, police check and first aid certificate before an offer.

1. Walk me through what you do from the moment you notice something suspicious to the point the incident is closed off.

Why they ask

This is the core of the job and interviewers want to hear a repeatable, lawful sequence rather than instinct alone.

How to structure your answer

Use a chronological walk-through with clear decision points: observation, verification, decision to act or not, approach, documentation and handover. Name where you would pause and escalate rather than push on alone.

Example answer

"First I stay where I am and keep watching, because moving too early usually spooks the person and loses the matter. I note clothing, location, time and what has actually been selected, and I check the camera view so I have a clear record. If they pass the last point of sale without paying, I let the floor team know where I am and approach with a second team member, identify myself and ask them to come back inside. If they refuse or become aggressive, I step back and call police rather than escalate physically. Back in the office I write the incident up the same shift while it is fresh, export the footage with time stamps, and keep the file together for police or centre management. Then I brief the store manager on what happened and whether anything about the layout or rostering needs to change."

2. Tell me about a time you dealt with an aggressive or abusive person without it turning into a physical incident.

Why they ask

De-escalation is the skill that keeps officers, staff and customers safe, and it is hard to fake in an answer.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Keep the situation brief, spend most of the answer on what you actually said and did, and close with the outcome and what you learned.

Example answer

"I was working the entrance of a store when a man who had been asked to leave earlier came back and started shouting at a team member near the registers. My first move was to put myself between him and the team member without squaring up, keep my hands visible and lower my voice rather than match his volume. I gave him one clear instruction to step outside with me so we could sort it out, and I kept repeating it calmly while giving him space to walk out with some dignity. He left with me and we talked on the footpath until he settled and moved on. No one was touched and no stock was lost. Afterwards I wrote it up and suggested the team member not be left on that entrance alone during late trade."

3. You are working alone on the floor and you see a staff member concealing stock. What do you do?

Why they ask

Internal theft is a major source of loss and interviewers are testing whether you act rashly or build a proper case.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: pause and assess, avoid acting on a single observation, gather supporting evidence, escalate through the right channel, and protect confidentiality.

Example answer

"I would not approach them on the spot. I would keep watching discreetly, note the time, the item and the location, and check whether a camera covers that spot so the footage can be retained. Then I would report it immediately to the loss prevention manager or store manager, in writing, rather than discussing it with other team members. If I was asked to keep observing, I would document any further incidents and let the manager decide on the interview and any police involvement. If I was the most senior person on shift, I would still escalate to the regional contact before doing anything, because a staff matter done badly can end up as an unfair dismissal claim."

4. How do you use point of sale exception reporting to identify internal theft?

Why they ask

Systems literacy separates an officer who watches cameras from one who can actually reduce shrinkage.

How to structure your answer

Give a method: what data you look at, the patterns that stand out, how you verify with other systems, and how you escalate with evidence rather than accusation.

Example answer

"I start with the exceptions the system flags, mainly refunds without a receipt, voids after payment, repeated discount overrides and cancellations at the same register. I look for patterns rather than one-offs, so the same operator, the same time of day or the same product category coming up repeatedly. Then I pull the corresponding transaction records and the CCTV for those times to see whether the physical event matches what was keyed. If it does not, I put the timeline, transaction numbers and footage references into a report for the loss prevention manager. I never raise it directly

with the team member myself, and I keep the file private because it may go to police or an employment process.”

5. What are your obligations when you detain someone, and where does your authority end?

Why they ask

The employer needs to know you understand the legal and safety boundaries of the role before they put you on a floor.

How to structure your answer

Use a compliance structure: the legal basis, the limits, duty of care and use of force, then what you record afterwards.

Example answer

“My authority comes from my state security licence, the relevant state legislation and company policy, and it is not open-ended. I can only detain someone where the grounds are clear, the detention is for the shortest time necessary and police are called straight away. I use the minimum contact needed, never restrain around the neck or chest, and I watch for medical distress and anyone who is a minor or appears to be in crisis. Under work health and safety law I owe a duty of care to the person, to staff and to myself, so if the situation is unsafe I disengage and hand it to police. In any case involving physical contact I report it the same shift in writing, including the reason for the approach, what was said and who was present.”

6. How do you balance visible deterrence with good customer service?

Why they ask

Loss prevention sits inside a customer-facing business and interviewers want officers who can be firm without damaging the shopping experience.

How to structure your answer

Use a client-facing structure: what deterrence looks like in practice, how you read a situation before acting, and how you handle the moment when a customer notices you watching.

Example answer

“Deterrence works best when people can see me doing my job without feeling watched. I move around the store rather than standing on one spot, I greet people, I help with directions, and I keep my attention on the behaviour rather than the person's appearance. If a customer asks why I am looking at them, I stay polite, explain that I am doing a stock or security check, and get back to what I was doing without an argument. On the rare occasion a genuine shopper gets caught up in an approach, I apologise clearly and quickly, and I log it so my manager knows. The officer everyone remembers as aggressive usually creates more incidents than they prevent.”