

Mining Labourer interview questions

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What to expect

Mining labourer interviews tend to focus on safety awareness, physical capability and how you handle remote rosters. Employers want to know you can follow procedures, communicate clearly and stay reliable over long swings.

- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about inductions, JSAs, Take 5s, gas detection and working around heavy plant.
- **Technical and task-based:** Questions about spotting machinery, handling drill rods, cleaning and refuelling plant, and installing pumps and pipes.
- **Behavioural and reliability:** Questions about past rosters, teamwork, fatigue and staying on site for the full swing.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Questions about spillage, equipment faults, unsafe behaviour by others and how you respond under pressure.
- **Fitness and medical:** Some employers discuss the pre-employment medical and functional capacity test, and ask about heat, dust and underground conditions.
- **Roster and logistics:** Questions about FIFO or DIDO arrangements, travel, camp life and your ability to commit to a roster.

The interview is often a single session with a supervisor and a safety advisor, sometimes by phone or video before a site visit. You may be asked to walk through your last roster, then answer scenario questions about plant interaction and housekeeping. Some employers include a practical component or a functional capacity assessment on the same day. The conversation usually ends with roster and camp details, and a chance to ask about site conditions.

1. Walk me through how you would spot a haul truck reversing into a tip head.

Why they ask

This tests your technical understanding of plant movement and your safety awareness in a high-risk area.

How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walk-through. Start with positioning and communication, then cover the reversing sequence, spillage control and the all clear.

Example answer

"First I make sure I am in a position where the operator can see me and I can see the truck's mirrors. I check the tip head is clear of other vehicles and people, and I confirm the radio channel with the operator. I use clear hand signals and stay out of the truck's turning path. If I need to move, I move to a point where the operator can still see me and I re-establish eye contact before giving the next signal. I keep the area behind the truck clear of spillage so there is no chance of a sudden stop or roll. Once the truck is in position, I signal the all clear and move to a safe distance before the tray lifts."

2. Tell me about a time you had to work through a long swing or a difficult roster.

Why they ask

Employers want to know you can manage fatigue and stay reliable when the roster gets tough.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Describe the situation, the extra demands, what you did to manage your energy and communication, and how the swing ended.

Example answer

"On one swing, we were short a labourer and I ended up covering both the refuelling run and the spillage clean-up for ten days. By day six I was feeling it, so I made sure I ate properly, hydrated and got to bed early instead of staying in the crib room. I told my supervisor I was tired but still able to work, and we agreed I would take the odd extra break when the plant was down. I finished the swing without missing a shift and without an incident. It taught me that speaking up early is better than pushing through and making a mistake."

3. What would you do if you saw a workmate not wearing a seatbelt on a site vehicle?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question about safety culture, peer pressure and the courage to speak up.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure. State your immediate action, how you would escalate if needed, and how you would follow up without damaging the working relationship.

Example answer

"I would say something straight away, but I would keep it calm and direct. I would remind them that seatbelts are a basic site rule and that I am not comfortable with them driving off without one. If they ignored me, I would radio the supervisor or the shift boss and let them handle it. I would not let the vehicle move, because a rollover or sudden stop is exactly the kind of thing that ends a swing badly. After the shift I would check in with the workmate to make sure there was no bad blood, but safety comes first."

4. How do you approach cleaning and refuelling plant at the end of a shift?

Why they ask

This tests your technical routine and whether you understand isolation, pre-start checks and fault reporting.

How to structure your answer

A process walk-through. Cover pre-start checks, isolation, cleaning, refuelling, fault logging and handover.

Example answer

"I start with a pre-start check on the vehicle I am using, then I check the plant is parked on level ground, isolated if needed, and cool enough to work on. I use the high-pressure cleaner to remove mud and dust from tracks, access stairs and around the fuel cap. I check for leaks or damaged hoses before I refuel, and I log the litres and any faults in the service book. If I find something that needs a fitter, I tag it out and tell the supervisor before I leave the plant. I finish by cleaning my own area and returning the tools."

5. Give me an example of a time you had to install or repair a site service, like a pump or pipe.

Why they ask

This probes your hand skills, fault-finding ability and how you record maintenance work.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Describe the fault, your diagnosis, the repair or installation, and the result for the crew.

Example answer

"We had a dewatering pump that kept losing suction because the intake was clogged with fines. I isolated the pump, pulled the intake strainer and cleaned it, then checked the suction hose for cracks. I replaced a worn clamp and re-primed the pump. It ran without losing suction for the rest of the shift, and I told the supervisor so they could schedule a proper check on the other pumps. I wrote it up in the handover so the next crew knew what had happened."

6. Why do you want to work FIFO or DIDO, and how do you handle being away from home?

Why they ask

Employers want to know you will stay on site and not leave the crew short after the first swing.

How to structure your answer

A motivational and self-awareness answer. Give your reason, then describe the routine that keeps you steady on roster.

Example answer

"I want to work FIFO because I like the routine and the focus that comes with being on site. I have done swings before and I know the first few days can be tough, so I keep a routine: gym or walk before shift, proper meals, and a call home at the same time each night. I do not drink much on site and I make sure I sleep. Being away is easier when you know the crew is relying on you, and I would rather be on a site where people pull their weight than somewhere with a short commute and a disorganised crew."