

Professional Shooter interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for professional shooter roles focus on your practical field judgement, safety and compliance knowledge, and ability to work humanely and professionally with land managers and regulators.

- **Technical:** Questions about firearms, night vision, ballistic calculators, and humane dispatch methods.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions on firearms regulations, animal welfare codes, and record keeping.
- **Scenario:** Field-based problems such as encountering illegal traps or non-target species.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of teamwork, difficult decisions, and client communication.
- **Process:** Walk-through of how you plan and execute a culling operation from survey to report.

A typical interview begins with a phone screen covering your licence and experience. Shortlisted candidates then attend a practical assessment of firearms handling and safety. The final stage is a panel interview with scenario, behavioural, and technical questions. Some employers include a field walk to assess your observational skills.

1. Walk me through how you plan a culling operation from initial property survey to final report.

Why they ask

This assesses your ability to organise a safe, effective, and compliant operation end to end.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step process: start with maps and previous reports, then field survey, safety check, plan development, briefing, execution, recording, and reporting.

Example answer

"When I plan a cull, I start by reviewing property maps and any previous pest activity reports. I then conduct a field survey using trail cameras and direct observation to confirm target species, numbers, and movement patterns. I check the property for safety hazards, sensitive areas, and boundaries, and I confirm the landowner's goals. Next, I develop a culling plan that includes timing, locations, firearms and equipment needed, and contingency for weather. I always brief any team members on safety and communication protocols. After the operation, I record each animal dispatched, its location, and any observations on non-target species. Finally, I compile a report for the land manager with cull numbers, effort, and recommendations for follow-up monitoring."

2. Tell me about a time you had to make a difficult decision about animal welfare in the field.

Why they ask

This probes your commitment to humane practice under pressure and your ability to reflect on tough calls.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task, the action you took, and the result. Focus on humane outcomes and compliance.

Example answer

"S - I was culling feral goats on a steep conservation reserve. T - I encountered a female goat with a dependent kid that was too small to survive on its own. A - I paused, assessed the situation, and decided to dispatch the mother first, then immediately and humanely dispatch the kid to prevent

prolonged suffering. R - I recorded both in my log and reported the incident to my supervisor, reinforcing the importance of quick, humane decisions even when emotionally difficult."

3. You arrive at a property and find a landowner has set illegal traps that could harm native wildlife. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement, safety awareness, and knowledge of reporting pathways.

How to structure your answer

Explain your priorities: safety first, do not touch the traps, document, inform the landowner, and report to the relevant authority if needed.

Example answer

"If I found illegal traps, my first priority is safety for myself and others. I would not touch the traps. I would photograph them, record GPS coordinates, and note any native wildlife nearby. I would then contact the landowner to inform them of the legal issue and ask them to remove the traps. If they refused or were not present, I would report it to the relevant state authority such as the local National Parks office or biosecurity officer. I would also document everything in my daily report and avoid any further work until the situation was resolved."

4. How do you ensure you stay compliant with firearms regulations and animal welfare codes?

Why they ask

This checks your understanding of the regulatory environment and your habits for staying current.

How to structure your answer

List your licence, regular training, knowledge of codes, pre-operation checks, record keeping, and how you keep up to date.

Example answer

"I stay compliant by holding a current firearms licence and completing regular safety refreshers. I follow the state firearms act and the relevant animal welfare code for each species. Before every operation, I review the code of practice for humane dispatch, check that my equipment is serviced and safe, and ensure I have landowner permission and any required permits. I keep detailed records of every dispatch. I also stay up to date with changes through my state's agriculture department and professional pest management networks."

5. Describe your experience with night vision and thermal equipment. How do you maintain accuracy in low light?

Why they ask

This assesses your technical proficiency with key tools and your attention to maintenance and accuracy.

How to structure your answer

Explain your experience, then detail your calibration, practice, shooting technique, and maintenance routines.

Example answer

"I have used both night vision and thermal scopes for nocturnal culling. To maintain accuracy, I calibrate my scope before each trip, practise at the range under low light, and use a rest or shooting sticks for stability. I also use a ballistic calculator app to adjust for distance and wind. For equipment maintenance, I clean lenses carefully, check battery levels, and store gear in dry cases. I always confirm my zero after transport and re-check if conditions change."

6. Give an example of how you have communicated cull results to a client or land manager who was unhappy with the outcome.

Why they ask

This tests your client-facing skills, diplomacy, and ability to use evidence to manage expectations.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR with a focus on communication: describe the dissatisfaction, how you explained the results with evidence, and the positive outcome.

Example answer

"S - A land manager was unhappy because we had culled fewer deer than expected on his property. T - I needed to explain the results and maintain a good working relationship. A - I sat down with him, showed the GPS tracks and camera evidence, and explained that the deer had moved to a neighbouring property due to a food source. I suggested a joint survey with the neighbour and a follow-up operation in the cooler months. R - He appreciated the transparency and agreed to the plan. We maintained a good relationship and later achieved better results."