

Retail Supervisor interview questions

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What to expect

Retail supervisor interviews usually blend process questions about how you run a shift, behavioural questions about leading staff, and scenario questions about customer issues or safety. Expect to talk about rostering, stock, and conflict resolution.

- **Process:** How you plan a shift, manage breaks, and keep the floor covered.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of leading a team, handling a complaint, or dealing with underperformance.
- **Scenario:** What you would do if a customer became aggressive, or if two staff members disagreed.
- **Technical:** Familiarity with POS systems, roster software like Deputy, and stock management.
- **Safety:** Understanding of WHS obligations and how you maintain a safe store.
- **Client-facing:** How you balance customer needs with store policies.

Typically a phone screen with a recruiter or store manager, then an in-person interview with the store manager and possibly a regional manager. Some employers include a short practical task, such as walking through a mock roster or handling a customer scenario. You may also meet a couple of team members.

1. Walk me through how you plan a typical trading day, from opening to close.

Why they ask

The interviewer wants to see if you can prioritise tasks, manage a team, and keep the store running without constant supervision.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through. Start with opening checks, then move through the day in order, ending with close. Mention rostering, stock, customer flow, and handover.

Example answer

"I start by checking the roster and any planned promotions. I make sure breaks are staggered so we always have cover on the floor. Then I set priorities for stock replenishment based on what sold yesterday and what is on promotion. During the day, I keep an eye on queues and step in at the register when needed. At close, I check the float, make sure the store is tidy, and note anything that needs following up tomorrow."

2. Tell me about a time you had to resolve a difficult customer complaint.

Why they ask

They are testing your customer service, patience, and ability to follow policy while keeping the customer happy.

How to structure your answer

STAR. Set the situation, describe the task, explain the specific actions you took, and finish with the result.

Example answer

"At a previous store, a customer came in furious about a faulty product and wanted a refund without a receipt. I listened without interrupting, apologised for the inconvenience, and explained our returns policy while also offering to check the transaction on our POS system. I found the purchase using their loyalty card, processed the refund, and gave them a replacement. They left satisfied and even"

came back the next week."

3. A staff member is consistently late and it is affecting the team. How would you handle it?

Why they ask

This checks your leadership style, fairness, and whether you can have difficult conversations without avoiding them.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure. Show a step-by-step approach: private conversation, understand the cause, set expectations, document, and escalate if needed.

Example answer

"I would first have a private conversation to understand why they are late. If it is a temporary personal issue, I would see if we can adjust their start time for a short period. If it is a pattern, I would clearly explain the impact on the team and set expectations. I would document the conversation and follow up. If it continues, I would involve the store manager."

4. How do you make sure shelves are stocked and the store looks presentable during a busy sale?

Why they ask

They want to see how you prioritise and delegate when there is a lot happening at once.

How to structure your answer

Prioritisation and delegation. Explain how you break the store into zones, assign tasks, and check quality yourself.

Example answer

"I break it down into zones and assign team members to each zone. I keep an eye on the highest-traffic areas and jump in myself if needed. I use quiet moments to replenish and face up. I also check that promotional displays are tidy and safety hazards like boxes are cleared immediately."

5. What do you know about work health and safety in a retail store, and how do you apply it?

Why they ask

This role carries responsibility for staff and customer safety, so they need to know you take it seriously and know the basics.

How to structure your answer

Technical and safety. Cover your duty of care, regular checks, reporting, and leading by example.

Example answer

"I know I have a duty to keep the store safe for staff and customers. That means regular walkthroughs to spot spills, trip hazards, or blocked exits. I make sure team members know how to report incidents and that we have a first aid kit stocked. I also lead by example with safe manual handling when moving stock."

6. Describe a time you helped a new team member settle in and become confident.

Why they ask

They are looking for coaching skills and whether you can build a team that stays and performs.

How to structure your answer

STAR. Focus on the support you provided, the actions you took, and how the person progressed.

Example answer

"When a new casual started, I paired them with an experienced team member for their first shifts. I showed them how to use the POS and where to find stock. I checked in at the end of each shift to answer questions. Within a week they were serving customers independently and asking fewer questions. I also gave them positive feedback when they handled a tricky return well."