

Tanker Driver interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for tanker driver roles focus heavily on safety, compliance and practical driving knowledge. Employers want to know you can handle dangerous goods, manage fatigue and represent the company well with customers.

- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about dangerous goods regulations, fatigue management and pre-trip inspections.
- **Technical and operational:** Questions on loading and unloading procedures, tanker systems and emergency response.
- **Behavioural:** Questions asking for examples of past experiences, especially around safety and problem solving.
- **Scenario-based:** Hypothetical situations that test your judgement under pressure.
- **Customer service:** Questions about dealing with customers at depots and service stations.

A typical interview starts with a phone screen, then a face-to-face with the transport manager and a safety officer. You may also complete a practical assessment, such as a walk-around inspection of a tanker or a supervised drive. Expect a mix of technical questions and behavioural ones.

1. Walk me through your pre-departure inspection routine for a tanker.

Why they ask

This checks your familiarity with safety procedures and attention to detail, which are critical for dangerous goods transport.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: start with the vehicle exterior, then the tank and hoses, then safety equipment, and finish with paperwork.

Example answer

"First, I check the vehicle exterior for any damage or leaks, and ensure tyres and lights are in good order. Then I inspect the tank, hoses and couplings for wear or cracks. I test the emergency shutdown system and check that fire extinguishers are present and charged. Finally, I verify the dangerous goods placards match the load and confirm paperwork is complete before departure."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a dangerous goods incident or near miss.

Why they ask

This reveals how you handle high-pressure situations and whether you follow correct emergency procedures.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"During a delivery of diesel, I noticed a small leak from a hose connection. I immediately stopped the transfer, closed the valves and alerted the depot supervisor. I followed the emergency response plan, which included containing the spill and documenting the incident. As a result, the leak was fixed quickly and no product was lost, and we reinforced hose inspection checks to prevent a repeat."

3. You notice a drop in tank pressure while on a long haul. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your ability to troubleshoot and make safe decisions on the road.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: assess, stop safely, investigate, and communicate.

Example answer

"I would first check my mirrors and find a safe place to pull over. Then I would shut down the engine and inspect the tank and fittings for any obvious leaks or damage. If I cannot identify the cause, I would contact my dispatcher and follow company procedures, which might include calling a technician. I would not continue driving until I was sure it was safe."

4. What are the key steps for loading a fuel tanker safely?**Why they ask**

This assesses your technical knowledge of loading procedures and dangerous goods handling.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation: step-by-step, with emphasis on safety checks.

Example answer

"Before loading, I ensure the tanker is earthed and the engine is off. I check that all valves are closed and the tank is ready. I connect the loading arms or hoses securely and open the valves slowly to begin the flow. Throughout, I monitor gauges and watch for leaks. Once the correct quantity is loaded, I close the valves, disconnect hoses and secure the tank. Finally, I check placards and paperwork."

5. How do you handle a customer at a service station who is impatient about a delivery delay?**Why they ask**

This shows your customer service skills and ability to stay professional under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Customer service framework: acknowledge, explain, offer solution, follow up.

Example answer

"I would start by apologising for the delay and acknowledging their frustration. I would explain the reason if I can, such as traffic or a safety check, without making excuses. Then I would give a realistic time frame and offer to let them know as soon as I arrive. I would also inform my dispatcher so they can update the customer if needed. Keeping a calm and helpful attitude usually resolves the situation."

6. How do you manage fatigue on long trips?**Why they ask**

This checks your understanding of fatigue management rules and your personal strategies for staying alert.

How to structure your answer

Process and self-awareness: legal requirements, personal routines, technology.

Example answer

"I follow the Heavy Vehicle National Law fatigue rules, including minimum rest breaks and maximum work hours. I use an electronic work diary to track my time accurately. Personally, I plan my trips to include regular stops, stay hydrated and avoid heavy meals. If I feel tired, I pull over for a power nap or a break. I also use telematics to monitor my driving hours and ensure I am compliant."