

Truck Offsider interview questions

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What to expect

Truck Offsider interviews are practical and short. Employers are checking that you'll turn up at 4am, handle the physical load, and not cut corners on restraint or paperwork when the run is running late. Expect the transport manager or depot supervisor rather than a recruiter, and expect the site itself to be part of the interview.

- **Availability and reliability:** Early starts, weekend rosters and how you get to a depot before public transport runs.
- **Safety and compliance:** Load restraint, manual handling, Chain of Responsibility and what you do when something looks wrong.
- **Process and technical:** How you load and secure a truck, how you read a docket, how you use EPOD and scanning gear.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Damaged freight, refused deliveries, a dock you can't get into, or a run falling behind.
- **Client-facing:** How you handle a frustrated consignee or a signature you can't get.

Usually a phone screen of ten to fifteen minutes covering licence, availability and physical capacity, then a face-to-face at the depot with the transport manager or leading hand. That conversation often includes a walk around the yard or a look inside a loaded truck, and you may be asked to demonstrate a strap or a restraint on the spot. If it progresses, expect a pre-employment medical, a drug and alcohol screen, a police check for some customers, and a depot induction before your first shift.

1. Walk me through how you load a truck for a multi-drop run.

Why they ask

This is the core of the job, and the answer tells the interviewer whether you think about drop order and weight distribution or just stack from the tailgate.

How to structure your answer

Give an ordered walk-through from paperwork to final check. Name the sequence: read the run sheet and delivery dockets, plan the drop order, place heavy and stable freight low and forward, keep first drops near the door, brace and strap the load, then do a final walk-around before the driver moves off.

Example answer

"First I read the run sheet and work out the drop order, because the last drop has to go in deepest. Heavy pallets and anything stable go low and forward, lighter cartons and fragile stock go on top where they won't get crushed. I keep the first drop nearest the tailgate so we're not digging through the truck at seven in the morning. Anything loose gets braced against the walls or strapped down, and pallets get restrained even if they feel heavy, because a pallet that shifts on a roundabout is a problem for everyone. Before we move I do a lap of the truck, check the tailgate is latched and make sure nothing is overhanging."

2. Tell me about a time you picked up an error on a delivery docket before it went out.

Why they ask

Docket accuracy is where offsideers either save the business money or cost it a failed delivery, so interviewers want a real example.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Situation: the run, the customer or the load type. Task: what you were responsible for checking. Action: what you compared, who you told, what changed. Result: what it prevented, described plainly rather than exaggerated.

Example answer

"We were loading a mixed run for a regular hardware account, and the docket listed three pallets of fasteners but only two were on the dock and one was a different size. I count and check labels on every consignment, so I picked it up before we left the yard. I flagged it to the dispatcher and rang the customer to confirm what they actually needed that day. The third pallet was still in the rack, so it went on the truck and the run went out complete. Without that check the customer would have been short and we'd have worn a return trip the next morning."

3. You get to a customer site and the consignee says a carton is damaged and refuses the whole delivery. What do you do?

Why they ask

It's a pressure question. They're watching whether you argue, panic, or follow a process and keep the customer relationship intact.

How to structure your answer

Show judgement under pressure in order of priority: stay calm and don't argue, inspect and record, protect the business, keep the run moving. Finish by saying who you escalate to.

Example answer

"I wouldn't argue with them. I'd ask them to show me the damage and check the carton against the docket so I know which line item it is. I'd photograph it and note it on the docket, then ask whether they'll accept the rest of the delivery, because most of the time they will once the damaged item is separated out. I'd get a signature for what's accepted and make sure the driver knows before we leave. Then I'd ring dispatch straight away with the photos so they can raise the claim and decide on a replacement, rather than leaving it until we're back at the depot at the end of the day."

4. How do you secure an awkward load, say a mixed pallet with an oversized item on top?

Why they ask

This is a technical question about load restraint, and it separates people who have actually done it from people who have only watched.

How to structure your answer

Explain the method step by step and reference the standard you work to. Cover placement first, then restraints, then the checks that matter: angles, tension, edge protection and no crush damage.

Example answer

"I start with placement, because restraint can't fix a badly built load. The oversized item goes low and forward if it fits, or if it has to sit on top it needs a flat base and something underneath so it doesn't bite into the pallet below. I'd strap it down to the deck with the angles wide enough to actually hold, using edge protectors on anything sharp so the strap doesn't cut or rub. I work to the Load Restraint Guide, so the load has to stay put under braking, not just under normal driving. Then I check the tension again at the first stop, because straps settle once the truck moves."

5. Describe a time you dealt with a frustrated customer at the point of delivery.

Why they ask

Offsiders are often the only face the customer sees, so they're assessing whether you can hold a professional line without escalating.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, but keep the focus on what you said and how you kept the exchange calm. Be honest about the outcome, including if it was resolved later by someone else.

Example answer

"We delivered to a cafe during their lunch rush and the owner was already under pressure, then found a box of stock that had been substituted without anyone telling them. She was short with me, which was fair enough. I let her finish, apologised for the surprise rather than defending the substitution, and checked the docket with her so we both knew exactly what had arrived. I wrote her preferred contact number on the paperwork and told her I'd have dispatch ring her that afternoon to sort the swap. She signed for the rest and we got out of their way. Dispatch rang her the same day and the account stayed with us."

6. This job starts early, involves repetitive lifting and the runs don't always finish on time. How do you handle that?

Why they ask

Employers know the work is physical and the hours are unsociable, so they want to hear a straight answer about how you'll actually sustain it.

How to structure your answer

Answer directly and concretely. Cover transport to the depot, your physical routine, how you manage fatigue, and your record on attendance, without overpromising.

Example answer

"I'm used to a four o'clock start. I live close to the depot and drive, so public transport isn't an issue on early shifts. On the physical side I lift properly, use the pallet jack or forklift whenever it's available rather than trying to be a hero, and I keep a decent pair of gloves and steel caps in the truck. If a run is running late I'd rather ring dispatch early and tell them where we are than let it get away from us. I've got a good attendance record and I'd rather be honest with you now about the lifting than pretend it's nothing."