

Warehouse Manager interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for warehouse manager roles usually focus on your ability to run a site day to day, lead a team and keep safety and inventory accurate. Expect a mix of process, behavioural and scenario questions, with some technical detail about WMS and layout.

- **Process:** Questions that ask you to walk through how you handle a routine task, such as reconciling stock or planning a roster.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example of how you have led a team, solved a problem or handled pressure.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a hypothetical situation, such as a staffing shortage or a dispatch deadline, to see how you judge and prioritise.
- **Technical:** Questions about WMS software, inventory tracking, storage layout and picking routes.
- **Safety:** Questions about WHS compliance, forklift licences, load restraint and storage codes.
- **People leadership:** Questions about how you manage experienced staff, resistance to change and day-to-day team performance.

Typically you will have a phone screen with a recruiter or HR, then an interview with the operations manager or site manager. Some employers include a site walkthrough where they ask you to spot issues or describe how you would improve layout. For senior roles, there may be a second interview with a general manager or a panel that includes a safety advisor.

1. Walk me through how you manage stock reconciliation when the WMS shows a discrepancy between physical count and system quantity.

Why they ask

This tests your process knowledge and whether you can keep inventory accurate before it affects dispatch.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through structure works best: start with how you detect the discrepancy, then the steps you take to investigate, correct and prevent it from recurring.

Example answer

"First I check the WMS report for the affected line and compare it with the last cycle count. If the count was recent, I look at recent put-away, picking and dispatch records to see where the error might have crept in. Then I go to the floor with a scanner and do a physical count of that location and nearby locations, because a misplaced pallet is a common cause. Once I find the stock, I adjust the WMS, note the root cause and decide whether to increase cycle counts for that line. Finally, I brief the team on any process change, such as making sure put-away is confirmed immediately, so the same discrepancy does not keep happening."

2. Tell me about a time you had to manage a team through a sudden surge in orders or a staffing shortage.

Why they ask

This looks at how you lead under pressure and whether you can keep dispatch on track without burning out your team.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task you faced, the action you took and the result.

Example answer

"We had a major customer order land on a Friday afternoon with a Monday morning deadline, and two pickers had already booked leave. I called in one forklift operator from another shift, moved two experienced pickers to the fastest-moving lines and jumped on the floor myself to help pick. I also staggered breaks so we kept a steady pace without anyone stopping. We got the order out by Sunday midday, and the customer kept their contract with us. I later introduced a simple on-call list for peak periods so we were not caught short again."

3. You arrive on a Monday morning and two forklift operators have called in sick, with a large dispatch due by midday. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and how you prioritise safety, staff and deadlines.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: assess the situation, prioritise safety and the deadline, then act and communicate.

Example answer

"First I check who is licensed and available on the floor, because I cannot put an unlicensed person on a forklift. I look at the dispatch list and see which loads are urgent and which can wait. If I have one licensed operator, I focus them on loading the trucks and I jump in to help with picking and staging. I call the operations manager to let them know the situation and ask if we can borrow a licensed operator from another site or shift. If the deadline is at risk, I contact the customer or transport company early to agree on a realistic time. Throughout, I keep the team updated so nobody is guessing what to do next."

4. What WMS platforms have you used, and how do you go about optimising storage layout and picking routes?

Why they ask

This checks your technical hands-on knowledge and whether you can improve efficiency without disrupting operations.

How to structure your answer

A technical explanation works best: name the systems, then describe your method for layout and route optimisation with a concrete example.

Example answer

"I have used WMS platforms such as SAP and a couple of smaller systems, and I am comfortable with RF scanners and inventory tracking tools. When I look at layout, I start by pulling data on pick frequency. I move fast-moving lines to the golden zone near dispatch and put slow movers further back. For picking routes, I group orders by zone so pickers are not crossing the warehouse multiple times. On one site I reconfigured the layout and introduced zone picking, which cut order turnaround from five days to three. I always test changes on one shift first and get feedback from the pickers before rolling it out."

5. How do you ensure compliance with forklift licences, load restraint and storage codes across a busy warehouse floor?

Why they ask

Safety is a core part of the role, and this question checks whether you know the rules and can embed them in daily practice.

How to structure your answer

Use a compliance checklist structure: describe how you verify licences, monitor practices and respond to issues.

Example answer

"I keep a register of all forklift and order picker licences, with expiry dates, and I check it monthly so no one is operating without a current licence. I do daily pre-start checks on equipment and walk the floor regularly to watch for unsafe load restraint or storage that blocks exits. If I see a problem, I address it immediately with the person involved and record it. I also run short toolbox talks on topics like load restraint and pedestrian movement. When we had an audit, our records were clear and we passed without any major findings."

6. How do you handle a long-standing team member who is resistant to a new picking process?

Why they ask

This looks at your people leadership and whether you can bring experienced staff along with change.

How to structure your answer

Use a leadership approach structure: listen first, explain the why, involve them in the solution and follow up.

Example answer

"I start by sitting down with them privately to hear their concerns. Often resistance comes from feeling that their experience is not valued or from a worry that the new process will slow them down. I explain why we are making the change, using data from our pick accuracy and dispatch times to show the problem we are solving. Then I ask for their input on how to make the new process work on the floor, because they know the job better than anyone. I pair them with someone who has taken to the change well and check in daily for the first two weeks. Most people come around once they see it makes their day easier."