

Topics that Employers Must Avoid in a Job Interview

During an interview, it is important for the interviewer to focus the questions around behaviors, skills, and experience desired to perform the job.

Federal law prohibits the use of the following factors in making employment decisions:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age• Race, ethnicity, or color• Gender or sex• Country of national origin or birth place | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religion• Disability• Marital, family status, or pregnancy• Political party affiliation |
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Any questions related to these topics have the potential to make your organization or company the subject of a discrimination charge.

Examples of Questions to Avoid:

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| <p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How old are your children?• When did you graduate from high school?• How long do you plan to work before you retire? <p>Race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would you feel uncomfortable if you were the minority among your co-workers?• Do you belong to any clubs or organizations?• What ethnicity are you? <p>Sex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you comfortable working for a female boss?• We've always had a woman/man in this role. How do you think you will handle it?• What's your sexual orientation? <p>Nationality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you a U.S. citizen?• Where did you live while you were growing up?• Are you bilingual? (unless job related) | <p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your view on the current presidency?• With what political party are you affiliated? <p>Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will you need personal time for particular religious holidays?• Do you plan to work on Sundays?• Are you a member of a religious group? <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you experienced any serious illnesses in the past year?• Do you have back problems?• What health problems do you have?• Can you read small print? (unless job related) <p>Family status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What arrangements are you able to make for child care while you work?• What does your spouse do for a living?• How many people live in your household? <p>Military</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How long do you plan to be in the reserves? |
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If a candidate offers undesirable information, do not pursue that topic further. Simply bring the discussion back to focus by asking another job-related question.

References:

- <https://www.thebalance.com/job-interview-questions-that-are-illegal-1918488>
- <https://www.utsa.edu/hr/docs/InterviewQuestions.pdf>
- <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-avoid-illegal-or-innapropriate-interview-questions>