

# THE NATIONAL

## Dispatcher Selection Test



## Product Information Packet

Test Description and  
Sample Test Items



**Stanard**  
& Associates, Inc.

*Data for Decisions in Management*

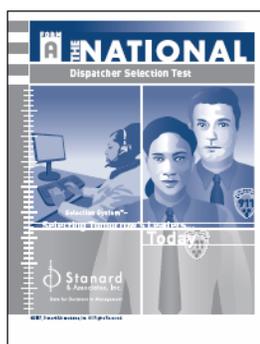


# The NATIONAL DISPATCHER SELECTION TEST (NDST)

## Overview

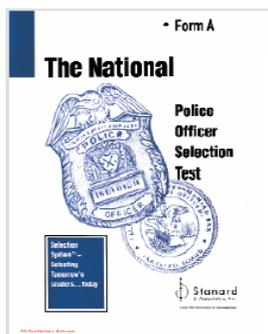
As the first point of contact in an emergency, dispatchers play a critical role in keeping not only the public safe, but responding law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel as well. Selecting the best person for such a demanding position requires more than an interview and background check. It requires a reliable, validated measurement tool that will ensure the person you select possesses the basic skills required to perform effectively as a dispatcher.

Stanard & Associates' National Dispatcher Selection Test (NDST) gives call centers the ability to objectively assess a candidate's skill level in five important areas: Reading Comprehension, Listening, Problem Solving, Prioritizing, and Multi-Tasking. And in keeping with Stanard & Associates' commitment to rigorous standards in test development, the NDST is backed by an extensive research and development effort involving input from hundreds of incumbent dispatchers across the country. So you can enjoy the ease of using an off-the-shelf test that targets the areas you need most – those that have been shown to be important to the position of dispatcher.

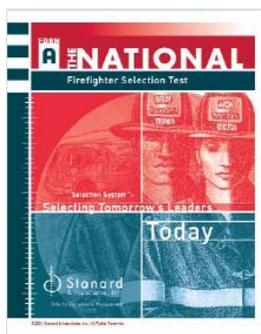


*Since 1976, Stanard & Associates, Inc. has been helping public safety agencies hire and promote the most qualified candidates efficiently and cost-effectively. Our wide array of research-based products and professional services addresses every phase of the employee life cycle, from entry-level selection tests and personality assessments, to promotional exams and customized exercises for specialty and command positions.*

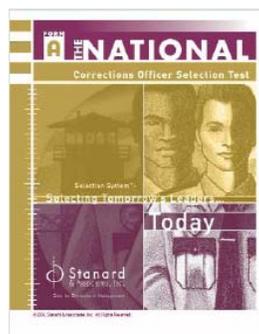
## **Stanard & Associates' Line of Public Safety Off-The-Shelf Tests**



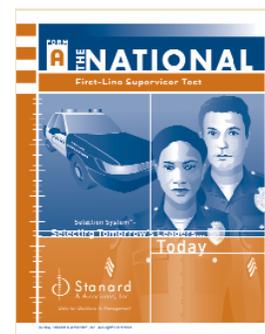
**The National Police Officer Selection Test (POST)**



**The National Firefighter Selection Test (NFST and NFST-EMS)**



**The National Corrections Officer Selection Test (NCST)**



**The National First-Line (NFLST) and Second-Line (NSLST) Supervisor Tests**

## Components of the NDST

The NDST is a timed test divided into five test sections:

NDST Test Section	Description	Number of Items	Minutes Allotted
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	This section measures a person's ability to read and understand written information.	20	20
<b>Listening</b>	This section measures a person's ability to listen and recall spoken information.	20	Approx. 30*
<b>Problem Solving</b>	This section measures a person's ability to evaluate information and assign units to emergency calls.	7	15
<b>Prioritizing</b>	This section measures a person's ability to evaluate information and prioritize response calls.	6	10
<b>Multi-tasking</b>	This section measures a person's ability to maintain accuracy while simultaneously attending to information presented in writing and via audio		
	➤ Name Identification	30	10
	➤ Data Checking	Up to 60**	

\* The Listening section consists of 4 listening passages, each 3 to 3.5 minutes long. Participants are given 4 minutes following each passage to complete the questions pertaining to that passage.

\*\* The Multi-tasking section of the test requires participants to compare columns of data while simultaneously identifying names on a separate list in response to audio cues; most candidates will not complete all data checking items in the time allotted.

The time limits established for the Reading Comprehension, Listening, Problem Solving and Prioritizing sections are set at levels where at least 90% of test-takers are anticipated to finish the section within the allotted time. The Multi-Tasking section is speeded, and most candidates are not anticipated to complete the Data Checking component.

# **Section Descriptions and Sample Test Items**

## **SECTION 1: READING COMPREHENSION**

### **Description**

This section of the test consists of a number of short paragraphs followed by questions. The information needed to answer the questions is contained in the paragraphs. In some instances, participants will have to draw a conclusion based on the information given.

### ***Sample Passage***

Inmates, cells and any area of the prison may be searched at any time, without prior warning. Searches are intended to improve security, not to bother inmates. They will be conducted on an unscheduled, random basis. If anything illegal is found, it will be seized and submitted as evidence in any hearing concerning inmate discipline.

### ***Sample Questions***

1. According to the passage, prison searches
  - A. are intended to annoy inmates
  - B. are conducted every day
  - C. can occur without notice
  - D. can be ordered by any corrections officer
  
2. According to the passage, prohibited items found in a prisoner's cell may be used in a disciplinary hearing.
  - A. True
  - B. False

In Question 1, the correct answer is **C**, because according to the information provided in the passage, the prison may be searched at any time, without prior warning.

In Question 2, the correct answer is **A**, because according to the information provided in the passage, results of a prison search may be submitted as evidence in any hearing concerning inmate discipline.

## **SECTION 2: LISTENING**

### **Description**

This section of the test consists of a number of simulated conversations between dispatchers/call-takers and callers, which are played from a CD player. The information needed to answer the questions is contained in the listening passages. Pages are included in the test booklet for taking notes during the listening passages. After each passage, participants are given 4 minutes to answer a set of questions regarding the passage. Once the four minutes have expired, the next listening passage is presented.

### ***Sample Scenario***

(Note: This is a transcript of a sample scenario that participants would hear and use to take notes)

OPERATOR: 911, what is your emergency?

MAN: Uh, yeah, my car just got side-swiped by a truck. My neck is really sore. And the driver of the truck, he just sped off.

OPERATOR: Where are you right now, sir?

MAN: I'm still in my car.

OPERATOR: And where is the car located?

MAN: Oh, Okay, Um, I'm at the corner of Wrightwood and Peachtree, by the shopping mall.

OPERATOR: Okay, help will be arriving soon. Can you give me a description of the vehicle that hit you?

MAN: Uh, well, I didn't get a really good look. Uh, it was a small red pickup truck, maybe a Ford.

OPERATOR: Okay, now, Okay, did you happen to get a license plate number at all?

MAN: Well, like I said, I didn't get a really good look, but I think I got the first three letters, DXV.

OPERATOR: Okay.

MAN: Oh, wait, it's DXW.

OPERATOR: Okay, now you said your neck is hurt?

MAN: Yeah, it feels like it's strained.

**Sample Questions:**

1. According to the sample passage, where is the victim's car located?
  - A. Wright Avenue and Peachwood
  - B. Wrightwood and Peachtree
  - C. Peachwood and Wright St.
  - D. Peachtree and Wood Street
  
2. According to the sample passage, what does the victim believe are the first three letters in the suspect's license plate number?
  - A. DXV
  - B. DVX
  - C. DXW
  - D. The victim did not see the suspect's license plate.

In the first example, **the correct answer is B**, because according to the information provided in the sample passage, the victim's car is located at the corner of Wrightwood and Peachtree.

In the second example, **the correct answer is C**, because according to the information provided in the sample passage, the victim indicated that he believed he got the first three letters of DXW after initially saying DXV.

## **SECTION 3: PROBLEM SOLVING**

### **Description**

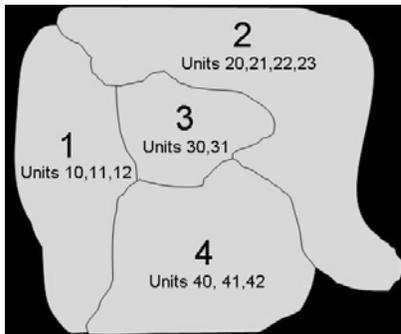
This section contains two problem types. In the first type, a scenario is presented and the participant must reach the most logical conclusion based on the information provided. Participants must either make decisions or deduce what may have happened based on the information provided. In the second problem type, participants will assign patrol units to emergency and non-emergency calls, subject to a set of rules. Each question presents four pieces of information: the **Sector** where a patrol unit or units are needed (Sector 1, 2, 3 or 4), the **type of call received** (emergency or non-emergency), the **number of units needed to respond** (1 or more) and the **current status of all patrol units** (each unit may currently be *Available*, responding to an *Emergency* call, or responding to a *Non-Emergency* call).

### **All 5 Rules Must Be Followed When Assigning Patrol Units**

1. Units currently on Emergency calls are unavailable to respond to all other calls.
2. Units currently on Non-Emergency calls may respond to Emergency calls when necessary.
3. Emergency calls are responded to before Non-Emergency calls.
4. Available Units are assigned first, even if the call is in a neighboring Sector.
5. All else equal, units respond to calls in their home Sector first.

### **Sample Question**

*Patrol Unit Assignments for the 4 Sectors of Anytown, US*



#### **Call Information**

**Sector: 1**

**Call Type: Emergency**

**No. of Units Needed: 3**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Current Status Of the Unit</b>
10	Emergency
11	Non-Emergency
12	Emergency
20	Emergency
21	Emergency
22	Available
23	Emergency
30	Emergency
31	Emergency
40	Emergency
41	Emergency
42	Non-Emergency

Which of the following accurately reflects the order in which Units should be dispatched to this call?

- A. Unit 11, Unit 22, Unit 42
- B. Unit 11, Unit 10, Unit 12
- C. Unit 22 and then either Unit 11 or Unit 42
- D. Unit 22, Unit 11, Unit 42**

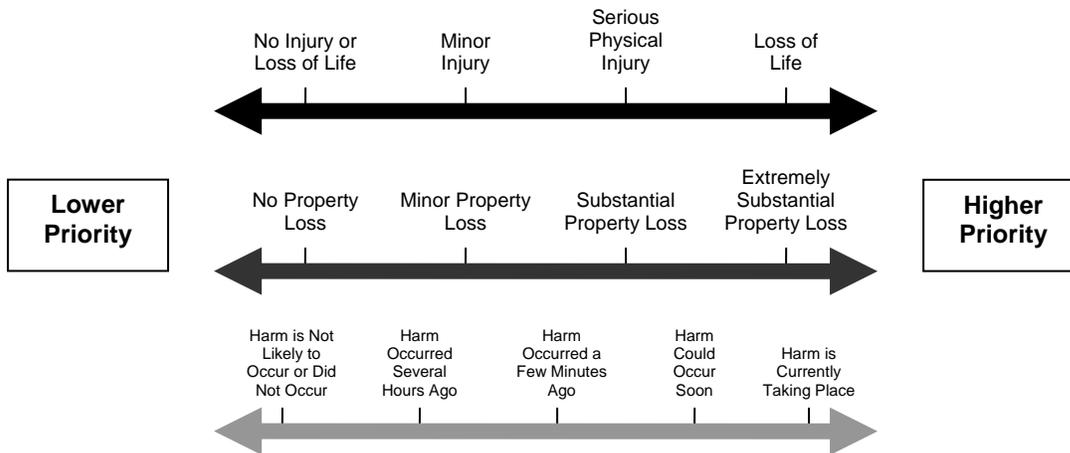
### **Explanation for Problem Solving Type 2 Question**

D is the only correct answer. Rule 1 states that Units currently on Emergency calls are unavailable to respond to all other calls. This leaves only Units 11, 22 and 42 in a position to respond. Unit 22 should be dispatched first because Rule 4 states that Available Units are assigned first, even if the call is in a neighboring Sector. Rule 2 states that Units currently on Non-Emergency calls may respond to Emergency calls where necessary. This is an Emergency call, and since two more Units are still required, Units 11 and 42 should respond. Rule 5 states that, all else equal, Units respond to calls in their home Sector first. Unit 11 must be dispatched second, because although both Units 11 and 42 are currently assigned to Non-Emergency calls, Unit 11 is responding in its home Sector (Sector 1).

## Section 4. Prioritizing

### Description

In this section, participants are presented with sets of calls that are received simultaneously and have varying degrees of priority. Participants will determine the priority of the calls and rank them by their priority. A rank of “1” will be given for the call with the highest priority, a rank of “2” for the call with the next highest priority, and so on. Each call may receive only 1 rank. The priority of calls is determined by three criteria: (1) whether the call involves possible loss of life or physical injury, (2) whether the call involves loss of property, and (3) whether the call involves harm that is in progress, is likely to occur in the future (if at all), or occurred in the past. To help determine the priority of the calls, the priority structure is provided below.



### Sample Question

It is about 7 p.m. on a weekday evening and you have received the following three calls simultaneously. In what order of priority would you rank the calls?

A. A young woman calls saying that she just took a handful of tranquilizers in a suicide attempt, but no longer wants to die. She is crying and concerned that the drugs are going to kill her soon.
B. A young man calls to find out the phone number for a local fire department for the purpose of registering for a CPR class with the department. The caller indicates that his father recently had a stroke and he wanted to prepare himself to help his father in the future in case he has another stroke.
C. A man calls in reporting that his electronics store has just been robbed. He states that no one was injured during the incident, but that he was robbed of several thousand dollars of merchandise. The man does not believe he is in immediate danger.

### Answer:

Call A receives a rank of 1. This call has the greatest potential for physical injury or death, the greatest immediacy of harm. Call B receives a rank of 3. This call does not involve injury or loss of life, it has no possibility of property loss, and no harm is occurring, thus it has the lowest priority of the three calls. Call C receives a rank of 2. This call has no implication for injury or loss of life, it does have the possibility of substantial property loss, and it has occurred just a few minutes ago, so it has greater priority than Call B, but a lower priority than Call A.

## **SECTION 5: MULTI-TASKING**

### **Description**

In this section, two columns of data are provided next to each other. The participant will check the information in Column 2 against the information in Column 1. There are two types of information. The first will be random strings of letters and numbers, similar to a license plate number or a driver's license number. The second type of information consists of names (first and last). The participant will indicate whether the information is exactly the same or different across the two columns.

### **Sample Question**

	<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
1.	X35DK309D	X35DK309D
2.	L9D84K48DF	L9D84K40DF
3.	83KD9DKA09	83K9DDKA09
4.	CU5Y4YA	CU5Y4YA
5.	841S7Q9J27	841S7Q9J27
6.	Tasha Mariotti	Tasha Marriotti
7.	Clifford Sebring	Clifford Sebring
8.	Kristie Oxley	Kristi Oxley
9.	Francisco Remington	Francisco Remington
10.	Calvin Lessard	Calvin Lesard

While checking the information in the two columns, participants will also be required to check a list for the names of individuals who have outstanding warrants. The list of names is sorted from A to Z by last name and is provided on the answer sheet. Names will be read out loud at various intervals and participants will determine if the name read out loud is listed on the Warrant Check List. If the name appears on the Warrant Check List, the participants will fill in the circle on the answer sheet next to the name. If the name does not appear on the Warrant Check List, the participants will continue checking the data in columns 1 and 2. Most candidates will not complete all data checking items in the time allotted.

### **Sample Warrant Checklist**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Fill in if Read</b>
Kellie	Adger	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Eloise</b>	<b>Angel</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Francisco	Behrendt	<input type="radio"/>
Herbert	Culley	<input type="radio"/>
Paulette	Engels	<input type="radio"/>
<b>May</b>	<b>Feinstein</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Eddie	Kellogg	<input type="radio"/>

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### ***Is the NDST valid?***

Yes. The NDST was developed using a content approach to establishing test validity and has demonstrated criterion-related validity in a development sample. The test items were written based on results of an extensive job analysis process to mirror the types of tasks dispatchers actually perform on the job, and the skills necessary to perform those tasks – things like listening to simulated 911 calls and taking notes on important details. The NDST was also field-tested on a sample of incumbent dispatchers from several different agencies across the US. Supervisors rated the job performance of their incumbent dispatchers, and results showed that those rated as better performers by their supervisors also scored higher on the NDST overall.

### ***What supplies do I need on hand to administer the NDST?***

Your department will need a CD player, a supply of Number 2 pencils and a stopwatch for the administration. Stanard & Associates will provide the test booklets, scannable answer sheets, an administrator's guide and a pre-recorded CD. The CD will be played during the test administration for the Listening and Multi-tasking sections of the test.

### ***How will I know when the CD should be played during the administration?***

The administration guide provided with your test materials clearly outlines when the CD should be used and which tracks correspond to the different portions of the test.

### ***How is the NDST scored?***

Currently, Stanard & Associates will handle the scoring of the NDST. The test is computer-scored in our offices to ensure accuracy and a quick turnaround on results. Stanard & Associates will provide your department with the list of participants and their test scores. A self-score version is currently in development.

### ***How much does the NDST cost?***

The current cost for the NDST scored by Stanard & Associates is dependent on the quantity of tests ordered:

<b>Number of Tests</b>	<b>Cost per Test</b>
1 – 99	\$ 25.00
100 – 499	\$ 23.50
500 or more	\$ 22.00

The Stanard & Associates self-score version of the exam will start at \$16.00 per test.

### ***How can I order the NDST?***

To order the NDST, contact Stanard & Associates at 800.367.6919 and ask for a Public Safety Sales Consultant.