**Transportation
Security
Administration**

Administration Guide

for Behavior Detection Officer (BDO) and Transportation Security Manager-BDO (TSM-BDO) Selection

Version 4

Organizational Assessment & Development
The Office of Human Capital

BDO Administration Guide Summary of Changes

Date Modified	New Version Number	Section	Change
12/29/06	v. 4	Quickhire Application	1. Removed on pg. 5 the bullet stating that BQ candidates must be interviewed and selected before Q candidates. - Added all candidates provided to an airport (whether only BQ or BQ and Q) must be interviewed.
			2. Modified expiration of interview and training demonstration scores from 3 months to 6 months from the date of the initial interview and demonstration.
		The SPOT Structured Interview	3. Amended the language referring to the composition of the interview panel. The panel should contain the FSD or designee and, at the discretion of the BDO program office, either a BDO program representative or another FSD designee.
		Preparing Documents for Selecting Official	4. Added clarifying language regarding the referral of 3 names per 1 vacancy from the interview in the section "Create Selection Referral List"
		Selection Decision	5. Added clarifying language under "Making the Selection Decision" regarding emailing tentative decisions to Kevin Drum, making tentative offers and submitting the eSF-52s after selections have been made.
		Appendix C	6. Added a new bullet to the Applicant Nondisclosure Agreement
		Interview Questions/Training Demonstration	7. Moved the Interview Questions and Training Demonstration Appendixes into their own documents. Separate Interview Guides are provided for F/G Bands and H Band.

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INTRODUCTION

To achieve the goals of the SPOT program, we must be able to hire and retain the most talented Behavior Detection Officers (BDO) and Transportation Security Managers – BDO (TSM-BDO). Our selection decisions will be based on valid assessments of candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to the areas of competence identified as critical to our success.

Selecting these employees is a vital and immediate objective and will be one of our most demanding and important responsibilities now and in the future. This document is designed to help you select candidates with the highest probability of success on the job.

If you have any questions for the BDO Program Office regarding the Selection Process, please contact John Locke: (b)(6)

SPOT SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW

The following materials are designed to provide you with a reliable and valid process to gain insight into candidates for selection. This is a multi-phase process in which each step is designed to assess specific aspects of a candidate's qualifications for the BDO, STI and TSM-BDO positions. Below is an overview of the entire process, including the responsibilities of each participant in the selection process.

Step	Responsibilities	Owner
Quick Hire application	o Review documents o Contact candidates to schedule the interview	BDO Program/STIs or FSD or designee
Structured interview	o Create a Candidate Folder for each applicant that will participate in the BDO Interview. o Administer the interview o Make individual ratings o Come to a consensus rating and make a final recommendation o Complete appropriate forms	BDO Program/STIs & FSD or designee
Training demonstration **(for SPOT STIs ONLY)**	o Administer the training demonstration o Make individual ratings o Come to a consensus rating and make a final recommendation o Complete appropriate forms	BDO Program
Selection Decision	o Review documents o Make selection decision o Document selection decision	Local FSD or designee (with information from the BDO Program/STIs)

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QUICK HIRE APPLICATION

- The Quick Hire Application is the first step in the SPOT selection process.

- The Quick Hire is an on-line questionnaire that asks candidates a series of questions about their qualifications, education, training, and experiences related to the BDO and TSM-BDO positions.

- Candidate responses to each question are scored and used to identify "Qualified" and "Best Qualified" candidates eligible for the BDO and TSM-BDO positions.

- Depending on the airport's vacancies and the number of candidates being certified, a BQ eligibility list, and in some cases a Q eligibility list, will be provided

- All BQ and Q candidates provided to the airport MUST be interviewed unless appropriate justification can be provided by the selecting official why a candidate should not be considered further in the selection process. (Note. Must follow guidance in Selection Decision Section.) As long as sufficient applicants are available, certified candidates will be referred to the airports based on a 4 candidates per 1 vacancy ratio.

- All interview and training demonstration scores will expire six (6) months after the initial interview and training demonstration. Eligible candidates only need to be interviewed or conduct the training demonstration (for STIs) one time if they have applied to multiple vacancy announcements during the six (6) month timeframe. Candidates will be instructed that scores from the interview and training demonstration will count toward the other positions for which he/she has applied during that time, however, additional requirements may need to be met if a candidate applies for a position in a different band.

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THE SPOT STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The SPOT Structured Interview

The SPOT interview is a structured interview consisting of standard questions and standard scoring procedures. In this type of interview, all candidates respond to the same interview questions and their responses to each question are evaluated based on a predetermined rating scale. Research on interviewing demonstrates that the more structure imposed on the interview process, the more reliable, valid, and fair the interview is as a selection device. As a result, structured interviews assess the competencies required to perform a job better than do unstructured interviews.

The SPOT interview will be conducted by two (2) trained interviewers. One interview panel member should be either be the FSD or designee. The second panel member, at the discretion of the BDO Program management staff, will either be a BDO Program representative or FSD designee. All panel members will be briefed on the SPOT program and interviewing techniques. A panel of three (3) interviewers can be used if desired.

All candidates will respond to one of two options for each question and responses will be evaluated based on a behavioral rating scale. The BDO interview will take approximately forty-five (45) minutes to administer to a candidate. The TSM-BDO interview will take approximately sixty (60) minutes to administer to a candidate. Interviews should be conducted in person when possible, but may be conducted telephonically if the need arises. All BDO-STI training demonstrations must be conducted in person.

SPOT Interview Questions

The BDO interview includes seven (7) behavior-based questions and the TSM-BDO interview includes nine (9) behavior-based questions that assess critical requirements for the jobs. Behavioral-based questions are based on the assumption that past performance is the most reliable predictor of future performance. They allow an interviewer to systematically collect factual evidence regarding a candidate's ability to perform successfully.

The Interview Guide is organized around the critical requirements for the SPOT jobs. For each competency (except Flexibility), two behavioral-based interview questions and follow-up probes are provided. The interviewer must choose one (1) of the two (2) behavior-based questions for each area and be sure to clearly indicate which question is asked. Flexibility has one (1) mandatory question.

Note. For candidates who are interviewed a second time after the 6 months have passed (e.g., initial scores expired, failed previously, etc.), the interviewers must select the alternate question for each competency from the one that was asked during the original interview. Interviewers should not look at the candidate's responses from the original interview. **Only responses to the current questions asked can be utilized in determining a rating for each competency.**

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SPOT Interview Rating Scales

The SPOT interview utilizes a standard rating system to evaluate candidates' responses to each question. The rating system uses a 5-point scale (1 = Unsatisfactory to 5 = Exemplary) to assess the candidate's level of performance for each critical requirement.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

This section of the manual describes the process you should use to prepare for the SPOT interview. The following activities shall be conducted **prior to conducting the interview**.

- **Create a Candidate Folder for each person who is interviewed for a SPOT position**

A Candidate Folder must be created for each candidate who is interviewed for a SPOT position prior to conducting the interview. The candidate folder should include a label with the candidate's last name, first name, and the **last four (4) digits** of his/her Social Security Number. Candidate folders must be maintained in a secure location at the airport or by the program office. The Candidate Folder must contain the following:

- o Resume (optional)
- o The Quick Hire application (optional)
- o The SPOT Selection Process Nondisclosure Agreement
- o The SPOT Interview and Interviewer notes (all interviewers)
- o The BDO/TSM-BDO Interview Decision Sheet
- o Training Demonstration Assessor Checklist and notes (if applicable)
- o Training Demonstration Decision Sheet (if applicable)

Note. After the interview (and training demonstration if necessary) is complete, all of the candidate's paperwork must be placed in the Candidate Folder and stored in a secure location at the airport or by the program office. The Candidate Folder must be stored for a **minimum** of two (2) years. A longer retention period may be applicable if the information in the candidate's folder is required with respect to an administrative or judicial action.

- **Assemble the following materials:**
  - o The Candidate Folder for each candidate
  - o The BDO Fact Sheet (Appendix A)
  - o The Interview Guide, containing questions and evaluation sheets

- **Review the BDO Fact Sheet**
  - o Review the Fact Sheet in order to familiarize yourself with the duties, responsibilities, knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies required for the BDO position

- **Review the Interview Guide to familiarize yourself with the interview questions and rating scales you will use during the interview**

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- **Prepare for the Panel Interview**
    - The individual responsible for planning and documenting the interview process – the Lead Interviewer -- must ensure that interviews are conducted lawfully and elicit information about candidates that will assist in making successful selection decisions.
        - **Note**. The preferred method for administering the interview is in person. However, interviews can be conducted telephonically, if necessary. The Lead Interviewer will note when interviews are conducted via telephone on the final interview decision sheet, stating the reason for the telephonic interview.
        - All STI training demonstrations **must** be conducted in person.

    - While the guidelines that apply to individual interviews also apply to panel interviews, there are some additional steps that should be incorporated into the preparation for panel interviews.
        - To the extent possible, the make-up of the interview panel should reflect the diversity of the TSA workforce with respect to factors such as sex, race and ethnicity.

        - Interviewers should be the same band level or higher as the job being filled.

        - *Select the Lead Interviewer*. The role of the Lead Interviewer is one of leadership, not domination. The Lead Interviewer should be someone who is an experienced and effective communicator with the ability to establish rapport with the candidates.

        - *Prepare in advance for interviewer roles*. The Lead Interviewer must review each interviewer's roles in the interview prior to conducting the interview. The Lead Interviewer must inform the co-interviewer of his/her responsibility to conduct a lawful and impartial interview. Interviewer's can alternate when asking questions. Both interviewers should feel free to asking probing questions regardless of who asks the original question. In addition, the Lead Interviewer's duties include:
            - Creating the Candidate Folder
            - Scheduling the interviews
            - Distributing the interview schedule, copies of application materials, the BDO fact sheet, and the Interview Guide to the co-interviewers several days in advance.
            - Selecting the interview questions that will be asked during the interview and informing the co-interviewer of this decision prior to conducting the interview.
            - Determining which interviewer will ask each question during the interview and informing the co-interviewer of this decision prior to conducting the interview.
            - Documenting interview results and final pass/fail decision.

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- **Set the "stage" for the interview**
  - It is important that all aspects of the interview be well planned prior to conducting the interview. The Lead Interviewer must:
    - o Provide accurate information about the time and location of the interview to all candidates.
    - o Reserve a quiet, private, and well-lit room for the interview.
    - o Take steps to avoid interruptions during the interview (e.g., turn off all cell phones and pagers)
      - Do not answer cell phones, use Blackberry, or any other communication device during the interview and instruct the candidate to do the same.

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CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- **Establish rapport**
  - Greet the candidate and introduce yourself, providing your name and title.
  - Engage in a brief (2-3 minute) conversation unrelated to the interview (e.g., weather, traffic, sports, etc.).
  - Review the BDO Fact Sheet with the candidate to provide a realistic view of the position.

- **Have candidate sign SPOT Selection Process Nondisclosure Agreement (Appendix C)**

- **Orient the Candidate**
  - Read the SPOT Interview Script aloud to the candidate.
  - Inform the candidate you will be taking notes.
    - **Note**. Candidates are **NOT** permitted to take notes during the interview. All reasonable accommodation requests must be submitted before the interview as per the vacancy announcement. If a candidate requests an accommodation at the time of the interview, you must inform them that you can not grant their request at this time. The candidate can continue with the interview without the accommodation or can chose to reschedule the interview and go through the accommodation process. If a candidate chooses to continue with the interview, the Lead Interviewer must document that the candidate has agreed to continue with the interview without an accommodation on the Interview Decision Sheet.

- **Ask the SPOT interview questions**
  - Begin the interview by reading the first question from the SPOT interview aloud to the candidate. Ask the questions in the order in which they are presented in the SPOT Interview Guide.

  - There are two question options (Option A and Option B) for all but one of the competencies. The Lead Interviewer is responsible for determining whether to use Option A or Option B for each question. **Place a check (√) next to the appropriate blank to indicate which interview question was used to assess each competency.**

  - Limit your questions to the questions listed on the SPOT interview. Do **NOT** ask additional questions.

  - Do **NOT** discuss SPOT rating scales, competencies, competency definitions, or which competency is assessed by a particular question with candidates.

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o Tips for asking behavioral questions

- In many cases, candidates may give incomplete or non-specific answers to questions, or their answers may be unclear. Thus, the interviewer may need to prompt or ask follow-up questions in order to get a complete answer. Use the provided probes to solicit specific behavioral examples, especially if the candidate speaks in generalities.

- If the provided probes still do not elicit the required information, the interviewer can ask additional probes to help the candidate answer the question. However, the interviewer must be careful not to provide too much information in the additional probes as to reveal exactly what the question is assessing.
    o Interviewers should follow the guidance on how to phrase good probes when creating their own (e.g., open-ended, not leading, etc.).

- Be careful not to build in your expected response or lead candidates. For example, enthusiastic note taking and nodding your head approvingly may provide the candidate with information about how they are performing.

The process of interviewing has been compared to "peeling an onion." The truth lies beneath the surface and through careful questioning and probing you can carefully "peel the onion" - one layer at a time - to reveal the candidate's true competence. You will know the onion is peeled when you have uncovered a complete behavioral example of the candidate's actions in a specific situation and the result of those actions.

The following example demonstrates how to "peel the onion" by using probes to gain detailed answers.
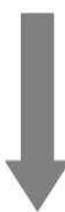
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Sample Behavioral Event Interview
Competency: Self Management

Behavioral-based Question

Can you give a specific example of an instance where you completed a project with minimal supervision?

PART A: What were the details of the situation?

We had many inquiries that we had to respond to. My supervisor was being pulled in other directions and couldn't offer any additional resources. There were just too many reports needed and too little time. The expectation was that I would evaluate and synthesize all these data and complete these requested reports quickly, but perfectly.
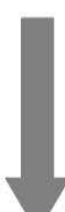
PART B: What did you do?

First, I thought about what I needed to do and the level of input I was going to need from my supervisor. I felt pretty confident that, time permitting, I could address each inquiry without input from my supervisor. I just needed to figure out what the priorities were.

PROBE: Tell me more about that.

I prioritized the reports according to who requested, when it was requested, and how difficult it would be to complete. Once I had an idea of what the priorities were, I created a plan and timeline for completion to ensure I stayed on track. I also adjusted my other tasks to accommodate these priorities.

PART C: What was the outcome?

I delivered all the reports on time. To my surprise, it was bittersweet for my supervisor. While I accomplished everything, I was not as good at keeping my supervisor as informed as she would have liked. I really learned from that experience. Now I remember to communicate the status of my work on a more regular basis.

o This form of interviewing is thorough, but not stressful. Because you've already chosen your questions, or "onions," you can focus your attention on listening and understanding the candidate's answers, while taking thorough notes.

o Keep the candidate talking so you can direct your energy to listening and taking notes. (See suggestions below for some of the many ways to say, "Please elaborate on that.")

o Suspend the temptation to make judgments about the candidate until after the interview is completed.

One Dozen Ways to Say, "Please elaborate on that."

Tell me more about that.	Help me understand that better.
What happened?	Please go on.
Why is that?	Explain that to me.
How did you react?	Could you be more specific?
Why is that important to you?	How come?
How did that come about?	Give me another example, please.

- **Take notes during the interview**
  o Taking good notes is extremely important in conducting a structured interview. Interviewers must not rely on memory for two reasons. First, what seems perfectly clear during an interview can easily be forgotten or confused, especially after interviewing several candidates. Second, all employee selection decisions must be documented. In the event of a legal challenge, documentation made at the time of the interview is more accurate and carries more weight than documentation created at a later time.

  o Tips for taking good notes
    - Only record the candidate's responses to interviewer questions – not your opinions of his/her response (e.g., avoid using phrases such as, "bad answer")

    - **DO NOT record information that does not pertain to the question, such as the candidate's sex, race, national origin, disability, etc., even if the candidate volunteers the information.**

    - Do not let your note taking influence the candidate's responses. For example, do not write furiously when the candidate says something that sounds good and then not write when the candidate says something that does not sound good.

    - Do not show candidates the contents of your notes.

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- While you can record key words or use personal shorthand, your notes should be written and organized in a way that clearly communicates the candidate's depth (or lack) of qualifications for the BDO or TSM-BDO position. The notes should be written so that someone who was not in the interview can easily understand the rationale behind each rating.

- **End the interview**
  - Ask the candidate if he/she has any questions.
  - Take the time to answer questions, provide relevant information, and discuss responsibilities, expectations, and opportunities. One of the primary causes of eventual turnover is an unrealistic expectation about a job. Therefore, it is important that you are positive, yet accurate, while describing the position.
  - Express appreciation for the candidate's time and interest.

- **Explain the next steps**
  - For STIs the next step will be to complete the training demonstration.
  - Tell the candidate when they can expect a decision on their candidacy, if a time frame has been established.
  - Tell the candidate how, by whom, and when the candidate will be contacted.
  - Thank the candidate and close the interview. For example, "Thank you for taking the time to interview with us today."

- **Documenting incidents**
  - The Lead Interviewer is responsible for documenting any incidents that may occur during the interview (e.g., fire drill, knock on the door, etc.) on the Interview Decision Sheet.
  - Regardless of the outcome of the interview, any incident must be documented.
  - If a candidate expresses concern that an incident during their interview affected the outcome of their interview, please notify the BDO program office for guidance on granting a re-interview.

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EVALUATING THE INTERVIEW

- **Complete the evaluation process IMMEDIATELY following the interview if possible.** Immediately after each candidate completes the interview and leaves the interview room, interviewers should review their notes and prepare their individual ratings. Each interviewer should form an independent evaluation, without discussing this evaluation with the other interviewer.

- **Review, organize, and record your notes**

    o As soon as possible after the candidate leaves, take a few minutes to review your notes and fill in any important details you may have missed.

    o Separate behavioral data from other information. Your decision must be based ONLY on the job-related information elicited from interview questions.

- **Evaluate the candidate's responses individually**
  After gathering information from the interview, you will need to complete several ratings of the candidate.

    o First, **review** your interview notes and the rating scale for each question.

    o Second, **compare** the candidate's responses (as described on your interview notes) to the rating scale for each critical area provided on the Response Evaluation Sheets.

    o Third, **make a rating** of the candidate's level of performance for each competency. Circle the number next to your evaluation of the candidate's response for each competency. Only assign whole values, no half points.

        ▪ Anchors on the rating scale are provided as a guide. The candidate's responses may not exactly match any of the information that is provided in the anchor. Use your judgment in determining which of the provided anchors best reflect the responses provided by the candidate.

        ▪ Interviewers can use information gathered from one question to rate other questions. For example, you may use a response to "Multi-tasking" to help you evaluate "Self Management."

    o **Repeat** this process until you have rated the candidate's responses for each critical area.

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EXAMPLE: How to evaluate candidate responses

Question #6, Option A on the SPOT Interview is, *"Think about a time, either in your work or everyday life, when you completed a project with minimal supervision. What was the situation? What actions did you take to complete the project? What was the outcome?"* Utilizing the probing method demonstrated in the "Peeling the Onion" section, the interviewer obtained a complete behavioral example. The candidate revealed the following:

- o Had multiple inquiries that had to be addressed.
- o Recognized that she could independently handle request, time permitting.
- o Identified priorities based on sound criteria.
- o Created a plan and timeline to track progress.
- o Delivered all the reports on time.
- o Did not keep manager well informed of progress.

After gathering and evaluating the information obtained during the interview, you are ready to rate the candidate's responses. Following the above illustration, circle the number next to your evaluation of the candidate's response for the Self Management competency:

Self Management: Sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.	
5	(b)(2)
(4)	
3	(b)(2)
2	
1	(b)(2)

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- **Reach a final consensus rating for each competency**

After you make your individual ratings, interviewers should discuss their ratings in order to reach consensus on an overall rating for each competency.

- o First, **discuss** your numeric ratings for each competency with your co-interviewer. Sometimes one person sees, hears, or infers something that another does not.
  - Each interviewer should be prepared to back up his/her ratings with specific examples and notes from the interview.
- o Second, interviewers should discuss their rationale for their ratings and come to **consensus** about the overall rating for each competency.
  - If individual interviewer ratings are the same for a competency, that rating is the overall rating for that competency.
  - If ratings differ, both interviewers need to come to a consensus.
    - Consensus means that both interviewers agree on the final rating that is being provided and have documentation to support the rating.
- o Third, the Lead Interviewer must **record** all individual ratings and final consensus ratings on the BDO or TSM-BDO Interview Decision Sheet.
  - If consensus discussion results in a change to an interviewer's individual rating, that interviewer must initial on the BDO or TSM-BDO Interview Decision Sheet that he/she agreed with the final consensus rating.

- **Make a pass/fail determination**

After the interviewers come to consensus and document each competency rating on the BDO or TSM-BDO Interview Decision Sheet, the Lead interviewer shall make an overall pass/fail determination for the SPOT interview.

- o The interviewers must review the consensus ratings for each competency and document the overall pass/fail determination by circling "Pass" or "Fail" on the BDO or TSM-BDO Interview Decision Sheet.
  - Candidates who are rated (b)(2) on each of the 8 BDO or 10 TSM-BDO competencies pass the SPOT Interview.
  - Candidates who are rated (b)(2) on any of the 8 BDO or 10 TSM-BDO competencies fail the SPOT Interview.
- o The Lead Interviewer must document the following information on the BDO or TSM-BDO Interview Decision Sheet:
  - Name of the candidate being interviewed
  - The last 4 digits of the candidate's social security number (SSN)
  - Date of interview
  - Interviewer(s) name(s) and signature(s)
  - Individual interview ratings for each competency
  - Final consensus ratings for each competency
  - Pass/Fail decision

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INTERVIEWING TIPS AND TRAPS

Included in this section are helpful interviewing tips and important traps to avoid. You may find it helpful to review this section before conducting an interview or refer to it periodically as a refresher.

TIP: **Take Thorough Notes**

It is critical to take notes during the interview. Note taking will help you to remember what the candidate said, demonstrate the importance of the interview to the candidate, and prevent you from losing direction during the interview or skipping important information.

- **How to take notes**
    - Develop your own shorthand. This is especially useful for long responses during which you might lose track of the conversation. Shorthand still needs to be understandable for an outsider reviewer in case of a legal challenge.
    - Don't give signals to the candidate. Don't take notes only when something extremely positive or negative has just been mentioned.
    - Be specific and record the actual behaviors, not evaluative or summary comments.

TIP: **Be Flexible, but Stay in Control**

Gathering information during an interview is partly an "art" because the interview is a dynamic conversation between two people. You need to be flexible in your conversation, while still remaining in complete control.

- **You stay in control by:**
    - Following the format you developed and sticking to the questions in the Interview Guide.
    - Pacing yourself so you get to ask all of your questions.
    - Having the candidate do most of the talking.
    - Asking questions 20% of the time so you can listen to the candidate 80% of the time.
    - Keeping the interview on track. Be persistent if you feel your question wasn't answered. Don't badger or interrogate the candidate, but do repeat a question if necessary. Also, jump in and redirect the conversation if the candidate is very talkative and has gone off track.

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- Other tips:
    - Don't form judgments during the interview. Concentrate on the interview and leave the decision making for your review process.
    - Comments are useful in establishing rapport and showing that you are actively listening. If the candidate mentions a significant achievement, comment favorably. Likewise, major hardships can evoke sympathetic responses. A simple, "I'm sorry to hear that," can be enough to build trust.
    - Do not appear hesitant or apologetic when asking questions. You can distort the candidate's answers by hinting that you're unsure whether the question is an appropriate one for the candidate to answer. The request, "Tell me" or "Let's talk about…" are better than, "May I ask you if…?" or "Would you mind if I asked…?"

TRAP: **Beware of Common Interviewer Errors in Judgment**

Even the most skilled interviewers can fall into some common rating "traps".

- Beware of the following errors:
    - **Stereotyping** results when an interviewer makes assumptions about a specific candidate based on his or her membership in a larger group rather than the individual's responses to the questions.
    - **First/Last Impressions** may be important, but can bias results if the interviewer makes a decision based on the first few minutes or last few minutes of the interview, or on information gained prior to the interview. Information gathering may cease if the interviewer loses interest in finding out more about the candidate and begins to consider ways to convince others of the candidate's value.
    - **Halo Error** occurs when very favorable or unfavorable ratings on one competency influences the interviewer's judgment on all other competencies. For example, if a candidate is very skilled in the area of "Interpersonal Skills" the interviewer then allows this positive impression to elevate all other competency ratings.
    - **Similar to Me** refers to the tendency to rate higher people who remind us of ourselves in terms of background or interests.
    - **Contrast/Comparison Error** refers to the tendency to compare and contrast candidates against each other, instead of the job standards and established rating criteria.
    - **Relevant Contact Error** refers to the tendency to make evaluations based on previous contact or lack of contact with a candidate. In addition to direct contact, feelings of familiarity may stem from a candidate's personality, non-verbal behavior, resume or test scores.
    - **Leniency** error is an interviewer's tendency to be generous and restrict ratings to the upper end of the scoring scale for all candidates.

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- o **Severity** error is an interviewer's tendency to be harsh and restrict ratings to the lower end of the scoring scale for all candidates.
- o **Central tendency** is the inability or reluctance to distinguish very strong or weak candidates so all candidates appear average. While ratings in the middle of the scale may "feel" more comfortable, all candidates have strengths and weaknesses. Ratings should reflect an accurate profile of the candidate. Remember, the role of the interviewer is to select those candidates with a high probability of success on the job.

The most effective tool you have for avoiding the interviewing **Traps** is to take consistent, thorough notes that emphasize behaviors. When you accurately record behavioral notes throughout an interview, it is much less likely that you will fall prey to any of the interviewing **Traps**.

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OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING*

Mistakes	Results
Failure to establish rapport with the candidate.	The interview never seems to generate the right dialogue or flow.
Focusing on the person, rather than skills, abilities, and experiences.	The goal of the interview is to compare a candidate's demonstrated skills, abilities, and experiences to the requirements of the job. Focusing on other things can create stereotypical perceptions.
Comparing a candidate's past life to the interviewer's.	Interview time is wasted on comparisons, rather than gaining relevant information.
Focusing on single (favorable or unfavorable) traits, or overemphasizing them.	This often includes characteristics that are irrelevant to the job. This can lead to halo error.
Talking too much. Not enough listening.	The interviewer talks too much and does not gather critical information from the candidate.
Moving too quickly through the interview, not allowing sufficient time to observe candidate's responses or behaviors.	Interviews must be sufficient in length to gain the necessary information. Short interviews are often superficial.
Misinterpreting information from candidate.	The interviewer can draw incorrect conclusions.
Making hasty decisions, or decisions based exclusively on intuition.	Decisions should be based upon an evaluation of the candidate's behavioral examples.
Not knowing what information is critical to obtain from the candidate. Not following the Interview Guide.	The interviewer does not gather relevant information and cannot make an accurate judgment.
Asking leading or judgmental questions.	This can guide the candidates to fit their responses to meet the interviewer's expectations rather than provide information about themselves.
Failure to direct or control the interview.	Politeness or an assertive/aggressive candidate can cause an interviewer to lose control of the interview. In regaining control of the interview, the transition must be skillful, not aggressive.
Asking closed-ended or yes/no questions.	The goal of an interview is to draw out the candidate. Yes/no questions limit the candidate's ability to provide in-depth answers.
Making quick judgments.	Judgments based on first impressions are often incorrect. It does not allow comparisons of responses to the relevant standards.

*Adapted from *Interview Guide for Supervisors* (5th edition). College and University Personnel Association. Edited by Mary Ann Wersch (1988).

NOTES

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LEGAL ISSUES

All employment interviews must adhere to applicable law and regulation, which is designed to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and have equal opportunity[1]. Such employment laws require that interview questions are job-related and that all aspects of the interview process are free from bias and are applied consistently. Structured interviews have an advantage over non-structured interviews because questions are job-related and interview administration and scoring are standardized for all candidates. These features have a greater potential to identify candidates that are better qualified to perform a specific job in a manner consistent with the job requirements. In addition, they ensure that all candidates are treated in the same manner, even if they are interviewed by different people or at different locations. However, regardless of the type of job-related interview, interviewers must be careful not to discuss inappropriate topics

Specifically, during the structured interview, the interviewer **cannot** request or suggest that the candidate provide information about topics such as:

- Age
- Race
- Religion
- National origin, lineage, ancestry, primary language, or native tongue
- Racial, national, or religious affiliations
- Marital status
- Maiden name or family surname
- Relationships or people applicant lives with
- Family issues (parental status, age of dependents, plans for children)
- Height and weight
- Physical/mental disabilities
- Arrests
- Avoid asking about convictions, unless related to performance of the job
- Military discharge
- Personal activities (that probe for personal affiliations)

Some of these topics, such as arrests, convictions and military history are questions that either have been covered during the candidate's initial hiring process or in some other context. In any event, the structured interview is not the appropriate forum for discussion of these topics.

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[1] Applicable laws and regulations governing selection procedures include but are not limited to: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1972), The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973,Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978), Regulations of the Fair Employment and Housing Commission (1980), Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), Federal Civil Rights Act of 1991, TSA Personnel Policies and Procedures

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TRAINING DEMONSTRATION

(BDO/STI positions ONLY)

The Training Demonstration

The Training Demonstration is designed to assess the candidate's ability to communicate and present technical content to a small group. The demonstration requires candidates to give a ten (10) minute presentation. Candidates are permitted to use any combination of lecture, demonstration, or exercise to achieve their training goals. All materials are provided to the candidate and he/she is given twenty (20) minutes to review all materials prior to giving the presentation. All training demonstrations must be conducted with the candidate and at least one (1) Assessor present in person.

The Training Demonstration Checklist

The Training Demonstration utilizes a behavioral checklist to evaluate the candidate's ability to communicate and present technical information. The checklist assesses behaviors that have been identified as critical for the BDO – STI job. Each behavior is scored on a scale from 1 – 3. The final checklist is scored by summing the ratings for each behavior.

Preparation for the Training Demonstration

- **Assemble the following materials:**
  - Candidate Folder
  - Candidate Instructions
  - Assessor Checklist and Notes
  - Training Demonstration Decision Sheet
  - BDO course preparation materials
  - Pad of paper, pen
  - Clock for candidate to monitor time of presentation
  - Easel, dry erase board or flip chart, and marker
  - Laptop and projector with PowerPoint presentation

- **Review the Candidate Instructions and Assessor Checklist to familiarize yourself with the process.**

- **Review the Assessor roles**
  - The BDO Training Demonstration will be conducted by two (2) trained assessors. Typically, these assessors will have also conducted the SPOT Interview. The person responsible for planning, administering, and documenting the training demonstration process (typically the Lead Assessor) must also ensure that the training demonstration is conducted appropriately.
    - **Note.** If logistical issues arise, the Training Demonstration may be conducted with one (1) assessor. An FSD or designee, from an airport for which the candidate applied, can listen to the demonstration via phone, however, only the assessor who is in person can score the demonstration.

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Conducting the Training Demonstration

- **Conduct the training demonstration IMMEDIATELY following the interview** if possible.
  - After each candidate completes the interview, allow him/her a 10 minute break. If the Interviewers/Assessors do not need a break, use this time to begin making your ratings of the candidate's responses from the interview. Immediately after the candidate returns from break, begin the Training Demonstration by following the steps outlined below. Use the time provided to the candidate for preparation to being making your ratings on the interview.

- **Read the Candidate Instructions aloud to the candidate (Located in the Training Demonstration Guide).**

- **Give the candidate the preparation materials and let him/her prepare for twenty (20) minutes.**
  - It is important that the candidate be given adequate time to prepare and that he/she do so in a quiet environment. If possible, direct the candidate to another room so that he/she can prepare. If that is not possible, the evaluators must be as quiet as possible while the candidate is preparing.

- **After twenty (20) minutes, tell the candidate to begin the training demonstration.**
  - Start timing once the candidate begins his/her presentation.

- **While acting as "students" during the demonstration, the assessors should observe and document the candidate's performance on the Assessor Checklist and Notes by:**
  - Asking and/or responding to questions during the training demonstration.
    - Assessors need to ask all candidates **TWO** of the predetermined candidate questions on the topic that was presented, preferably at the end of the demonstration.
      - **Note:** "Student" questions and responses should not be counted toward the ten (10) minute time limit.
  - Taking notes (please see the Interview section of this manual for guidance on note taking)

- **End the Training Demonstration**
  - Limit the candidate's presentation to ten (10) minutes.
  - Ask the candidate if he/she has any questions.
  - Take the time to answer questions, provide relevant information, and discuss responsibilities and expectations.
  - **Do not** provide any feedback about the candidate's performance on the training demonstration.

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- **Explain the next steps**
  - Tell the candidate when they can expect a decision on their candidacy, if a time frame has been established.
  - Tell the candidate how, by whom, and when the candidate will be contacted.
  - Thank the candidate and close the demonstration. For example, "Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today."

Evaluating the Training Demonstration

- Complete the evaluation process IMMEDIATELY following the training demonstration.

- Review and organize your notes.

- Rate the candidate's performance individually by circling the appropriate rating for each behavior

- Record the rating by summing your ratings for each behavior at the bottom of the Assessor Score Sheet.

Reaching Consensus & Scoring the Training Demonstration

- Assessors should discuss his/her individual ratings if a different final point total is reached. Based on this discussion, assessors should come to consensus for each behavior.

- The Lead Assessor must record all individual ratings and the final consensus ratings on the Decision Sheet. In addition, he/she must calculate the final demonstration score by adding the total number of points in the final consensus column to determine whether the candidate passed or failed.
  - If consensus discussion results in a change to an assessor's individual rating, that assessor must initial on the BDO Training Demonstration Decision Sheet that he/she agreed with the final consensus rating.

- The Lead Assessor must document the following information on the Training Demonstration Decision Sheet:
  - Name of the candidate conducting the demonstration
  - The last 4 digits of the candidate's social security number (SSN)
  - Date of training demonstration
  - Assessor(s) name(s) and signature(s)
  - Individual ratings and the final consensus ratings for each behavior
  - Final demonstration score

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Make a pass/fail determination

- After the assessors come to consensus and documents all the ratings on the BDO Training Demonstration Decision Sheet, the Lead Assessor shall make an overall pass/fail determination for the SPOT training demonstration.
  - Candidates who receive **22 or more points** pass the BDO Demonstration.

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PREPARING DOCUMENTS FOR THE SELECTING OFFICIAL

- **Finalize Candidate Folder**

After all of the interviews and training demonstrations (if applicable) have been completed the Lead Interviewer/Assessor must ensure that all required information has been documented for each candidate. The Lead Interviewer/Assessor must ensure that all Candidate Folders are complete and include the following documents:

- Resume (optional)
- Quick Hire application (optional)
- SPOT Selection Process Nondisclosure Agreement
- Both Interviewers' notes
- Both Interviewers' Response Evaluation Sheets
- SPOT Interview Decision Sheet
- Both Training Demonstration Assessors' notes (if applicable)
- Both Training Demonstration Assessors' Assessor Score Sheets (if applicable)
- BDO Training Demonstration Decision sheet (if applicable)

- **Populate Selection Referral Spreadsheets**

Once all of the interviews and training demonstrations (if applicable) are completed for a vacancy announcement, final Selection Referral lists must be created for the candidates who passed the interview and training demonstration (if applicable)(Appendix B). The final Selection Referral list is based on candidates' total scores (e.g., for BDO-STIs a combined score for the interview and the training demonstration).

In order to determine an individual's total score, the Selection Referral Spreadsheet (Excel file) must be populated. The following steps must be followed in order to complete the Selection Referral Spreadsheet:

- o Fill in the candidate's last name, first name, and last 4 digits of SSN,
- o Indicate whether all A options, all B options or a mix of both interview options were used for each competency,
- o Enter the candidate's score for each competency (and the training demonstration, if applicable),
- o The yellow cells will automatically calculate each candidate's total score.
  - If the candidate passed the interview (all responses >=3) and passed the training demo (>=22 points, if applicable), the program will calculate a total score for that candidate.
  - If the candidate does not pass the interview (any response <3) or does not pass the training demo (<22 points, if applicable), the program will note "FAIL" in the total score column.
- o The second spreadsheet (Sort Table) contains the list of names, SSNs and total scores. This spreadsheet is auto populated based on the information entered into the first spreadsheet. This spreadsheet should be sorted by total score in descending order.

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Note. Once completed, the Selection Referral Spreadsheet must be password protected and submitted via e-mail to Kevin Drum ^{(b)(6)} in the BDO Program Office.

- **Create Selection Referral List**

The Selection Referral list (Appendix B) is determined based on a candidate's total score and contains the candidate names that will be referred to the Selecting Official in alphabetical order. The following steps must be followed in order to create the Selection Referral List:

   o   Using the spreadsheet sorted by total score, the top three (3) candidates based on total score must be referred for every one (1) vacancy or all candidates who passed will be referred, if the 3-1 ratio is not available after the interview process. No additional candidates will be referred from the interview, until the referral sheet is exhausted.

   o   This process should be repeated until the proper number of referrals can be made. For example, if an airport has 5 vacancies then 15 candidate names should be referred to the Selecting Official.

      o   In the case of tied scores, all candidates with the same score MUST be referred. If there are not enough candidates to meet the 3:1 referral ratio, ALL passing candidates must be referred to the Selecting Official.

   o   Once all of the candidates have been identified for referral, their names should be listed in **alphabetical order** on the Selection Referral List

      o   The Selection Referral list only includes those candidates being referred, not their total score. The total score for the interview is provided in the Candidate folders.

Only the final BDO Selection Referral List is provided to the Selecting Official with all the corresponding Candidate Folders for those candidates being referred. Candidates who failed the interview or passed the interview but were below the 3-1 threshold are not referred to the Selecting Official..These remaining names must be submitted via e-mail to Kevin Drum ^{(b)(6)} in the BDO Program Office. All Candidate Folders are maintained in a secure location at the airport.

Note. Selecting Officials can request additional candidates if they have either selected all of the candidates they want from the Selection Referral list and have job-related reasons for not selecting the remaining candidates on the list. Additional names will be provided utilizing the same 3 names per 1 vacancy ratio if additional names remain from those candidates who were previously interviewed. If no additional names remain from the interview, 4 new names will be provided per 1 vacancy. All of these candidates will need to be interviewed. Selecting Officials should contact Kevin Drum ^{(b)(6)} to request additional names.

SELECTION DECISION

After all the candidates for a vacancy announcement have completed the BDO/TSM-BDO selection process and their total scores have been calculated (for STIs the combined total score from the interview and training demonstration), the Lead Interviewer/Lead Assessor will have prepared the final BDO Selection Referral list, which contains a list of candidates for selection consideration. The Lead Interviewer/Assessor will provide the BDO Selection Referral list and Candidate Folder for each candidate referred to the Selecting Official.

The Selecting Official shall be the FSD or FSD's designee. The Selecting Official is required to make the final selection decision for all BDO positions. FSDs are responsible for ensuring that all candidates are treated fairly and have equal opportunity during the BDO selection process. In addition, the FSD must be able to support his/her BDO selection decisions. All selection decisions must be supported by justification as to why a candidate was either selected or not selected. It is up to the FSD to ensure that documentation can be provided if needed.

Preparing for the Selection Decision
- Assemble the following materials:
  - The BDO Selection Referral List
  - The Local Personnel Folder for all candidates on the final BDO Selection Referral list
  - The Candidate Folder for candidates on the final BDO Selection Referral list
  - TSA Certificate of Eligibles Form

- Review the BDO Fact Sheet for the BDO position
  - Review the BDO Fact Sheet in order to familiarize yourself with the duties, responsibilities, knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies required for the BDO position.

Making the Selection Decision
- Selecting Officials have the option of either selecting candidates from highest to lowest score based on a candidate's total score (found in his/her Candidate Folder) OR using additional job-related information in conjunction with the total score.

- If the Selecting Official wants to consider other job-related information (i.e., Candidate Folder, local Personnel Folder and interview score and training demonstration), this information must be reviewed for all candidates on the Selection Referral list.

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- Examples of additional job-related criteria include:
    - Length and quality of specialized experience
    - Past performance and awards
    - Job-related training completed
    - Responses to structured interview questions and demonstration performance
    - Input from current Lead and Supervisory Screeners, and other airport managers and supervisors as appropriate

- Any of the below documented factors are acceptable reasons for not selecting a candidate for a position:
    - is currently under a Performance Improvement Plan.
    - has a performance/disciplinary action of record, documented in the employee's Official Personnel Folder, effected during the year prior to the date of the selection decision.
        - Performance/disciplinary action includes:
            - Letter of Reprimand
            - Suspension
            - Indefinite Suspension
            - Reduction in Band for reasons of conduct/performance
    - Absences Without Leave (AWOL), that fall below the PASS, "Readiness for Duty", definition of "Achieves," from October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006.
    - Current Leave Restriction letter

- The Selecting Official or designee will e-mail tentative selections to Kevin Drum for review.

- After review, Selecting Officials will make tentative offers to candidates.

- The Selecting Official will document his/her final selection decision by completing the Certificate of Eligible form provided by CPS. The Selecting Official indicates his/her final selection decision by marking the appropriate code in the action block, signing and dating the document, and returning it and an application for each candidate to CPS.

- Local HR initiates an e-SF-52 and FSD or designee approves the e-SF-52.

Creating the Vacancy Announcement Folder
After the selection decision has been made, a Vacancy Announcement folder must be created. The folder must be labeled with the vacancy announcement for each position for which selection decisions were made. The folder must contain the Selection Referral Lists and any other documentation the Selecting Official would like to retain to support his/her selections.

- **Reminder**: All Candidate and Vacancy Announcement folders must be retained by the airport in a secure location for a period of 2 years and should **not** be submitted with the certificate packet.

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APPENDIX A
BDO Fact Sheet

Screening Passengers by Observation Technique (SPOT) Position Fact Sheet

SPOT PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the Screening of Passengers by Observation Technique (SPOT) program is to protect the nation's transportation systems by identifying individuals with the intent to cause harm to other passengers, property and the transportation industry, in all modes of transportation, through the use of behavior detection screening. SPOT utilizes behavior observation to identify individuals that may be involved in surveillance, planning, or carrying out a terrorist/criminal activity.

POSITION TITLES

Master Transportation Security Officer/Behavior Detection Officer (BDO)

Expert Transportation Security Officer/Behavior Detection Officer (BDO)

Expert Transportation Security Officer/ Behavior Detection Officer (BDO)–Screening Training Instructor (STI)

Transportation Security Manager – BDO (TSM-BDO)

POSITION OVERVIEW

The BDO position is part of the recently introduced Transportation Security Officer (TSO) Career Progression Program which includes a technical career track at advanced grade levels for TSOs. The BDO position was created specifically for the SPOT program. This advanced position has higher qualification requirements and is filled competitively. BDO positions exist at the F Band (Master TSO) and G Band (Expert TSO). Currently, FSDs have discretion on how to assign BDOs based on operational needs. In some airports, BDOs may perform SPOT functions exclusively. In others, the FSD may assign BDOs screening or other duties to support operation requirements.

PRINCIPAL DUTIES

BDOs perform passive observation and engage in voluntary encounters with the public to determine whether individuals may be involved in suspected criminal and/or terrorist activities. BDOs develop an understanding of the anticipated composition of travelers associated with flights, or other modes of transportation, the behaviors to be expected and then assess deviations from these behaviors. As assigned, BDO-STIs plan and carry out training sessions within established guidelines and provide formal training and structured training materials covering SPOT and related topics.

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

Attention to Detail, Decisiveness, Flexibility, Interpersonal Skills, Multi-Tasking, Self-Management, Teamwork, and Oral Communication. Refer to the vacancy announcement for specific information on qualifying experience.

TRAINING

All new BDOs must successfully complete a 4-day SPOT training course focusing on behavioral observation techniques. In addition, new BDOs must complete 24 hours of on-the-job training designed to provide reinforcement of classroom learning and improve understanding of SPOT procedures and the practical issues related to their implementation.

Selectees must successfully complete all BDO training and OJT requirements to remain in the program. Those unable to successfully complete the program requirements will be returned to their former position (from which they were selected) with their pay adjusted to the salary they would have been earning if they had not left their former position.

APPENDIX B

SPOT Selection Referral List

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BDO/TSM-BDO
SELECTION PROCESS REFERRAL LIST

FOR LEAD INTERVIEWER/ASSESSOR USE ONLY:		
Location hiring (please write complete Airport name):		
Vacancy Announcement:		
Date:		

Interviewer A	Interviewer B	Interviewer C (if applicable)
Name (please print legibly and sign):	Name (please print legibly and sign):	Name (please print legibly and sign):
Assessor A (if applicable)	**Assessor B (if applicable)**	**Assessor C (if applicable)**
Name (please print legibly and sign):	Name (please print legibly and sign):	Name (please print legibly and sign):

The Lead Interviewer/Assessor must list each candidate's name being referred in *alphabetical order* based on a candidate's final total score in the table provided below. Three (3) candidate names are referred for every one (1) vacancy. In the case of tied scores, all candidates with the same score will be provided. If there are not enough candidates to meet the 3:1 referral ratio, all passing candidates will be referred. All candidates failing the interview will not be referred.

Note:
- **For each competency, a minimum rating of** [(b)(2)] **was needed in order to PASS the interview.**
- **A minimum score of 22 was needed in order to PASS the training demonstration.**
- **For BDO-STIs, the training demonstration accounted for 60% of the total score and the interview accounted for the remaining 40% of the total score.**

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Transportation Security Administration

Candidate Name	SSN (Last 4 Digits)

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APPENDIX C

SPOT Selection Process Nondisclosure Agreement for Applicants

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Transportation
Security
Administration

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT FOR CANDIDATES
PARTICIPATING IN THE

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA)
SCREEING PASSENGERS BY OBSERVATION TECHNIQUE (SPOT) PROGRAM
ASSESSMENT PROCESS

I understand and agree to adhere to the following non-disclosure requirements as a pre-condition to being administered the either Behavior Detection Officer (BDO) or TSM-BDO Assessment Process as part of my application for employment with the Screening Passengers by Observation Technique (SPOT) Program:

- The tests are the property of the TSA. They are protected from unauthorized disclosure in order to afford each applicant fair and equal opportunity for selection. All oral and written examination information, including instructions and test questions, are strictly confidential and must not be discussed with or shown to any person(s) *inside* or *outside* the TSA without prior written authorization. Oral or written disclosure, or any use of any portion of these selection materials without prior written authorization, is strictly prohibited.

- Any unauthorized discussion and/or written disclosure of any TSA test materials, or their removal or attempted removal, whether physically or electronically, from the testing room, will constitute a violation of this nondisclosure agreement.

- By signing below, I am acknowledging that my interview score (pass or fail) will remain valid for six (6) months from the date of this interview and be used for all of my applications for an equivalent SPOT position during that timeframe.

- Any applicant who fails to abide by this agreement will be subject to a TSA inquiry that could lead to adverse action(s) against this applicant, including but not limited to disqualification as a candidate for employment. In addition, TSA employee candidates who violate this agreement may be subject to dismissal from the TSA.

_____   _____
Print Full Name (First/Middle/Last)   *Social Security Number (Last 4 digits)*

                                                                          ____/____/____
_____   _____
Signature   *Date (mm/dd/yyyy)*