

INTERVIEW GUIDE

3-Step Interview Guide for Commercial Pest Control

A practical framework for interviewing commercial pest control candidates — license and technical fit, motivational fit, and culture fit, with real questions for each.

One framework, ten roles, and a scorecard you can actually compare across candidates.

This guide gives you a consistent 3-step interview framework — license/technical fit, motivational fit, culture fit — plus role-specific questions for the ten positions commercial pest control companies recruit for most. Use the general framework for every candidate, then pull the questions for their specific role from the reference section.

Score each step 1-5 as you go. A candidate who's strong on license/technical fit but weak on culture fit is a different hiring decision than one who's the reverse — the scorecard makes that visible instead of relying on a gut "good interview" feeling.

3-STEP FRAMEWORK

License and technical fit. Motivational fit. Culture fit. In that order.

Most pest control interviews go straight to "tell me about your experience" and never verify the one thing that actually gates whether someone can legally do the job: the license. This guide gives you three structured steps, each with real questions, so you leave the interview with actual signal — not just a good feeling.

Step 1 — License and technical fit: confirm license category and state directly, ask process-specific questions.

Step 2 — Motivational fit: understand why they're moving and how they handle a service call that goes wrong.

Step 3 — Culture fit: professionalism on a commercial site and how they work with a crew or account contact.

License and technical fit — verify, don't assume.

Before the interview: confirm license category and status directly with the relevant state department of agriculture — general, termite/WDI, fumigation, or another category is checkable, not just claimable. This takes minutes and eliminates the single most common bad-hire cause in this trade.

Ask in the room:

- "Which license category do you hold, and in which state?" (Confirm directly rather than taking their word for it.)
- "Walk me through how you'd design a treatment plan for [a specific commercial environment you actually service]." (A food-processing floor and a warehouse loading dock call for different approaches — listen for specifics, not a generic answer.)
- "Tell me about an account that failed a pest-related audit or inspection. What did you do?" (Listen for ownership and a real process, not blame-shifting.)
- "What's the largest or most complex commercial account you've serviced?"
- For inspectors specifically: "How do you handle a termite/WDI inspection report when the finding affects a pending real estate transaction?"

STEP 2

Motivational fit — why now, and how do they handle friction.

- "What made you start looking?" (Vague answers here are a bigger flag than an honest "the pay wasn't matching the work.")
- "Do you prefer a set route, rotating accounts, or a mix — and why?"
- "Tell me about a service call that didn't go the way you planned. What did you do?"
- "What does a bad day on this job look like to you, and what do you do about it?"

Candidates who can talk specifically about how they handle a callback, a schedule slip, or a difficult account contact tend to be far more reliable hires than candidates who only talk in generalities about "hard work."

STEP 3

Culture fit — professionalism on a commercial site.

- "Tell me about a time you had to explain a treatment plan to a facility manager or non-technical account contact. How'd you handle it?"
- "How do you handle it when a crewmate or a fellow technician on the account isn't pulling their weight?"
- "What's your take on documentation and compliance logging when it slows you down?"
- "How do you like to receive feedback from a branch or service manager?"

Red flags checklist

- Can't name a specific license category or state when pressed — only says "I'm licensed" generically
- License can't be verified with the state department of agriculture, or claims a category the state doesn't show as active
- Blames every past employer or account for every problem, with no self-reflection
- Dismisses documentation or compliance logging as "not a big deal"

Score every candidate on the same four dimensions.

DIMENSION	1-2	3	4-5
License & technical skill	Can't confirm license category or state	Confirms basics, vague on complex accounts	Specific on category, state, and largest account serviced
Stability	Frequent short stints, vague reasons	Reasonable tenure, plausible reasons	Strong tenure or clear, specific reason for each move
Culture fit	Dismisses documentation, blames others	Says the right things generically	Specific compliance story, owns mistakes
Trajectory	No interest in adding a license category	Open to it, no plan	Actively pursuing a termite/WDI or fumigation add-on

A candidate scoring 4-5 across the board is a fast yes. A candidate scoring 1-2 on license and technical skill is a no regardless of the other three — a verified, current license is non-negotiable in this trade.

Commercial Pest Control Technician & Licensed Pest Control Applicator.

Commercial Pest Control Technician: "How many commercial accounts have you managed on a route at once?" · "Walk me through how you handle a multi-site account with different pest pressures at each location."

Licensed Pest Control Applicator: "Which restricted-use pesticides are you licensed to apply, and in which state?" · "How do you decide when a job needs a restricted-use application versus a standard treatment?"

Termite / WDI Inspector & Fumigation Technician.

Termite/WDI Inspector: "Walk me through a WDI inspection report from start to finish." · "How do you handle a finding that could delay or complicate a real estate closing?"

Fumigation Technician: "What fumigation certification do you hold, and what structures have you fumigated?" · "Walk me through your safety protocol for tenting a commercial structure."

Commercial Account Manager & Pest Control Branch / Route Manager.

Commercial Account Manager: "Tell me about a renewal you almost lost. What turned it around?" · "How do you manage compliance documentation across a portfolio of accounts?"

Branch / Route Manager: "How do you cover a route when a technician calls in on short notice?" · "Walk me through how you'd re-route a branch that's down a technician for a month."

Pest Control Service Manager & Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Specialist.

Service Manager: "Tell me about a time you had to manage a customer escalation personally." · "How do you monitor technician quality across a branch?"

IPM Specialist: "Walk me through designing a prevention-first program for a commercial or institutional account." · "How do you balance lower-chemical treatment goals against a client's pest-pressure reality?"

Bird / Wildlife Exclusion Technician & Pest Control Sales / Business Development Rep.

Bird/Wildlife Exclusion Technician: "What wildlife-control permit(s) do you hold, and in which state?" · "Walk me through an exclusion job on a commercial structure with an active bird or nuisance-wildlife problem."

Sales/Business Development Rep: "Tell me about a commercial contract you won from a competitor. What made the difference?" · "How do you talk a prospective commercial account through licensing and compliance without overselling it?"

Move fast once license verification is done — referral candidates don't stay uncontacted for long.

Once you've verified the license category and state directly and the candidate scores well across all four scorecard dimensions, don't let the offer sit. Because so much of this hiring runs through referral and vendor networks rather than open search, a strong candidate who scored well in your process is very likely already known to — or being courted by — a competitor in the same network.

If you're building this pipeline continuously rather than per-opening, this is exactly the stage where a standing, license-verified bench pays for itself — you're not starting the search from zero every time a route opens.

Four ways this interview goes wrong before it starts.

- **Taking "licensed" at face value.** Verify the specific category and state directly with the department of agriculture before the interview, not after the offer — this is the single most common source of a bad hire in this trade.
- **Assuming one license category covers every job.** A general applicator is not automatically qualified for termite/WDI inspection or fumigation work — ask specifically.
- **Skipping the documentation conversation because the résumé looks strong.** A technically capable applicator who's dismissive about compliance logging is still a liability on a commercial account.
- **Making the offer slowly.** In a referral-driven market, a strong candidate rarely stays unclaimed for long. Compress the time between a passing scorecard and an offer.

The interview is only half the funnel in this trade.

With hiring-intent search volume for this trade running at roughly 10 combined monthly searches, the candidates worth interviewing are disproportionately going to come from technician referrals, vendor and distributor relationships, and word of mouth within the local pest control community — not from whoever happens to apply to a posting. Building those relationship channels deliberately, rather than treating them as a lucky bonus when they happen, is what keeps the interview pipeline full enough for this framework to matter.

The eight questions to ask every candidate, regardless of role.

Which license category do you hold, and in which state?

Walk me through the largest or most complex commercial account you've serviced.

Tell me about an account that failed a pest-related audit or inspection — what did you do?

What made you start looking for something new?

Tell me about a service call that didn't go as planned.

How do you handle documentation and compliance logging?

Tell me about a time you had to explain something technical to a non-technical account contact.

How do you like to receive feedback from a manager?



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