Civil Rights Directorate

Inappropriate Interview Questions: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What interview questions should not be asked of federal employees or applicants?

It is not advisable to ask the following questions:

1. Are you a U.S. citizen? (adversely impacts national origin)
2. Do you have a disability?
3. Are you planning to marry/have a family? When?
4. Have you ever filed a workers' compensation claim?
5. How many days of work did you miss last year due to illness?
6. Have you had any major health problems in the past?
7. Are you taking any prescription drugs?
8. Do you have AIDS?
9. Have you ever been treated for alcoholism?
10. Have you ever been treated for depression?
11. What off-the-job activities do you participate in?
12. Would you have a problem working with a female partner?
13. Do you have children? How old are they?
14. How old are you?
15. When do you intend to retire?
16. What is your date of birth?
17. What year did you graduate from high school? (reveals age)
18. What is your race?
19. What is your religion?
20. Are you able to work on Saturdays or Sundays? (only inappropriate if the job does not require weekend work)
21. What is your ethnic background?
22. That is an interesting name, where is it from?
23. Do you speak English well?
24. You have a fascinating accent. Where are you from?
25. What neighborhood do you live in?
26. Tell me about your family. Do you have any kids or parents living at home with you?
27. What year did you get out of high school?
28. What is your ethnic background? (Not, "You have a nice name. Where is it from?" either.)
29. Do you have any religious activities that might be viewed negatively by your coworkers?
30. What was your attendance like at your last job? Of the days you missed, how many were for sick leave?
31. What's your idea of a fun party?

Source: EEO and HR/Everyday Accountability Course, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission