

Finding a gamekeeping job

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Tips on how to succeed

A number of factors, predominantly financial and economic, have led to a squeeze in the number of gamekeeping jobs available – at all levels. This means the jobs market is extremely competitive, with many of applicants applying for every vacancy. Making sure your application is the best it can be is all important. With this in mind here are some tips to help you to be successful in your applications for a gamekeeping job.

Do's

- Do read the job advert and job description – properly. You won't make the first cut if it's obvious you don't really understand what the role is about. Enthusiasm coupled with an understanding of what the job entails will go a long way.
- Do respond to each part of the specification. Don't get lazy! Employers know when you've missed a bit, so if you were thinking they won't notice...
- Do give specific and relevant examples of your experience and how you meet the criteria. It's not enough to say you're good at something if the only experience you had was at college years ago.
- Do follow the 'how to apply' procedure. Sending your CV and cover letter when only an application form is accepted won't get you an interview.
- Do give the employer a call if you're not sure about something (except when the advert says not to!). Often a conversation before you send in your application will make you memorable to the employer but keep it short – don't try and turn it into a telephone interview as this could make you memorable for all the wrong reasons!
- Do inject your CV with a bit of personality. This isn't an essay but sound human: a bit about you, what drives you and what you get out of your professional life will help you stick out from the rest.
- Do promote yourself and your passion in gamekeeping. Without making stuff up or being too long winded, make it known that you think you're worth the job and that you really want to do it – back it up with reasons and relate them to what the employer does.
- Do prepare some responses to stock interview questions. What are your strengths & weaknesses? How do you work to manage your time/your deadlines? How do you handle criticism?

Remember passion will get you so far but good punctuation might get your foot in the door.

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Don't's

- Don't forget to attach all the relevant documents to your application. This only creates work for your potential employer when you want to create work for yourself. It is generally not a good idea to send in references at application stage unless requested.
- Don't spell the name of the employer or contact person, or the job title, incorrectly. Apparently, it happens quite a lot and more than likely commits your otherwise excellent application to the bin.
- Don't send an application off without checking it for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Use your spell checker (but beware difficult words like wear/where, there/their) and get someone else to check it for you too.
- Don't send out blanket applications or make your CV too long. Tailor your letter and CV to the role and the employer – try to keep cover letters to one/two sides of A4, CVs to two/three. Don't be put off if you don't have all of the skills asked for – yet. It might be that you have something extra to bring – don't try to twist your experience to fit the specification, but do highlight where you show you've got initiative and the enthusiasm to learn.
- Don't forget to respond quickly to confirm an offer of an interview. No reply and they might give your slot to someone else.
- Don't go into the interview without doing a bit of research. Get to know what the employer does beyond the job you're going for, understand how you'd fit into the grand scheme and how you'd work with others. It's also worth preparing a few questions for your interviewers to answer for you.
- Don't rush your answers in the interview. If you need to hear the question again, just ask – make sure you understand and answer the whole question, avoid leaping on a couple of key words. It's ok to take your time!

What employers say

- **Employer A** Be selective. "People can make their CV's or application forms very long, describing everything they have done. Some of it isn't necessary so they would do better by being more concise in what experience they show."
- **Employer B** Spell it out. "Where there is a specification, candidates need to demonstrate, point for point, with examples, where they meet those requirements. For example, not just say: 'I am well organised', but say instead: 'In my job at xxx I organised my own workload using a diary and to do lists.'"
- **Employer C** Make it personal. "We get sent random speculative CVs without cover letters. This won't get you anywhere as it's just spamming really, however, if you send a speculative CV with a good cover letter saying why this is the place for you we are more likely to keep your details on file."

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- **Employer D** Be yourself. “In the interview we’re looking for a two-way conversation”.

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