

## Polygraph 101 – An Outline

By Kenneth E. Blackstone

A polygraph examination is composed of three phases, and every minute should be videotaped by the examiner. The first phase, the pre-test interview, includes a review of physical and mental health history, establishing the purpose of the examination, an explanation of the polygraph instrument, signing of a release form, review of personal history, and then a review of questions that will be asked during a second phase of the examination known as the in-test. While questions differ per issue, the questions asked must meet a specific standard. The examinee is not attached to the polygraph instrument during the pretest interview.

The second phase, the in-test or physiological measures, involves using an instrument to monitor the autonomic nervous system of a person while that person is answering pre-reviewed questions. The attachments are non-invasive and the basic attachments are two pneumographs that record respiration -- one GSR (galvanic skin response) instrument, which measures electro-dermal activity that is the result of perspiration, and one cardiograph, which records blood volume and pulse.

There are two types of polygraph instruments, analog and digital; both recording devices have the same attachments. Analog instruments look like suitcases, and tracings are made by ink pens on graph paper pulled by a kymograph, while the digital instrument uses a DAS (digital acquisition system) to convert these movements into digital value and send them to a computer. The third phase, or post-test interview, is for a review of the examination with the examinee. This phase is optional, in that the examiner may have been directed by the referring party to pursue or not pursue deceptive responses.

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