

APA Model Policy for Relationship Polygraph Testing

Adopted August, 2025

Purpose

This model policy is intended to guide polygraph examiners and referring professionals in conducting examinations related to personal relationships. It supports adherence to established APA Standards of Practice and applicable legal requirements.

1. Definition of Polygraph Relationship Testing

1.1 Relationship-based polygraph examinations involve issues related to the credibility of interpersonal behavior within personal, domestic or familial relationships, including:

1.2 Spouses, partners (cohabitating or not), children, parents, extended, or blended family members and dating relationships.

2. Examiner Responsibilities

2.1 Legal and Professional Compliance

2.1.1 Examinations must follow APA Standards of Practice and all applicable laws, covering areas such as instrumentation, sensors, audiovisual recording, test formats, acquaintance testing, analysis, and reporting.

2.1.2 Informed consent must be obtained independently from the examinee, outside the presence of any other referring party. It must clarify that participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time.

2.1.3 All case files, including referral notes, interviews, charts, analysis, reports, and recordings, must be maintained securely in accordance with APA standards and legal requirements.

2.2 Professional Boundaries

2.2.1 Examiners should focus solely on assessing credibility and avoid providing advice, counseling, or mediation in domestic or relationship matters.

2.3 Referrals and Documentation

2.3.1 Clearly document whether the case was self-referred or initiated by another professional.

2.3.2 Self-referrals include those initiated by a domestic partner without involvement from other professionals.

2.3.3 Reporting Results:

2.3.3.i Professional referral cases: Results should be provided directly to the referring professional and the examinee, or as detailed on the examinee's polygraph consent form.

2.3.2 ii Self-referred cases: Results may be shared with the examinee and others identified in the consent form.

2.4 Testing Environment

2.4.1 Examinations must be conducted in a neutral, professional setting—not in private residences.

2.4.2 No individuals with a personal interest in the outcome should be present during the examination process, however people with interest may participate in the pre-test interview, at the discretion of the polygraph examiner.

2.5 Examination Reporting

2.5.1 A written report summarizing the examination should include details on:

2.5.2 Test instrumentation and format

2.5.3 Pretest interview content

2.5.4 Test questions and results

2.5.5 Interpretive analysis and conclusions

2.5.6 If no formal report is requested, the examiner should retain either a draft report or detailed notes or video sufficient to prepare a report later if needed.

2.6 Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

2.6.1 Test results and related information must remain confidential unless disclosure is authorized by law or with the examinee's consent.

2.6.2 Examiners shall engage in mandatory reporting (e.g., child or vulnerable person abuse) when legally required.