

structure and condition (arriving). Knowledge of supervision was measured by questions in both scenarios, and was scored for each. For the evolving scenario, candidates were provided with a 15-minute preparation period, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond. For the arriving scenario, a five minute preparation period was given and candidates had 10 minutes to respond.

The candidates' responses were scored on technical knowledge and oral communication ability. Prior to the administration of the exam, a panel of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) determined the scoring criteria, using generally approved fire command practices, firefighting practices, and reference materials. Scoring decisions were based on SME-approved possible courses of action (PCAs) including those actions that must be taken to resolve the situation as presented. For a performance to be acceptable, a candidate needed to present the mandatory courses of action for that scenario. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process. Each performance was evaluated by two SMEs who currently are a first level supervisor or higher. If the SME scores differed by 1 point, the score was averaged. If they differed by more than 1 point, the SMEs were required to confer with each other until they agreed on a score. Scores were then converted to standardized scores.

Candidates were rated on a five-point scale, with 5 as the optimal response, 4 as a more than acceptable passing response, 3 as a minimally acceptable passing response, 2 as a less than acceptable response, and 1 as a much less than acceptable response. For each of the scenes, and for oral communication, the requirements for each score were defined.

For the evolving scenario, the appellant scored a 2 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 3.5 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 3 for the technical component, a 3.5 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his score for the oral communication component of the arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

As to the oral communication component, the assessors noted weaknesses in organization and rate of speech. Specifically, they indicated that for organization, the appellant presented items out of order, for example he stated, "I'd like to begin again." For rate of speech, the assessors indicated that the appellant restarted phrases and sentences. For example, he stated, "I ... do not see... any... excuse me." On appeal, the appellant argues that the example for rate of speech was the sentence before he indicated that he would review his notes. He states he was

winding down then and wanted to ensure he gave a complete response. For the example for rate of speech, the appellant states that he was reviewing his notes

In reply, a factor in oral communication is organization, which is defined as presenting ideas in a logical fashion, stating a topic, and providing supporting arguments as well as a conclusion or summary. Another factor in communication is inflection/modulation/rate/volume. A weakness in this factor is defined as failing to speak at an appropriate rate (pauses), failing to maintain appropriate pitch and volume, and failure to properly use pitch to convey meaning or emphasis.

A review of the appellant's presentation indicates that his rate of delivery was choppy and variable as he did not deliver an even flow of information. At the beginning of the presentation, when he was told to begin, the appellant began speaking at a normal rate. Very shortly, however, the appellant began speaking more rapidly, but as he did so, he stumbled over words and then slowed down significantly. He had pauses which were inappropriate in sentence structure. For example, he stated, "I will then give, then proceed to give a brief description of the building and conditions that I have present. 47 Pine Street command to dispatcher we have a...a two story wood frame occupied dwelling of class 5 construction. (3 second pause) We have smoke sh...excuse me, I'd like to take a minute to review my notes. (7 second pause) We have visible smoke.. on div, on side A division ah, 1 and 2. (4 second pause) The...fire seems to be extending from the first floor to the second floor. I....do not see any there ah... excuse me, there, number 46 Pine Street is a possible exposure, problem and ... I will then give, I will then proceed to call for all my needed resources." The appellant's choppy delivery was difficult to follow. In addition, pauses further broke up the delivery. Also, the appellant asked to review his notes when he was in the middle of a sentence, rather than at the end of a train of thought.

At another time, the appellant stated, "I will, I will have, I will get a ah, I will get Red Cross for displaced victims of, of this incident and ah rehab for rest, rehab ah, rest, rehydration, ah rotation of crews. (6 second pause) I will, get, I'd like to take a moment to review my notes please. (6 second pause) I will, I'd like, I'd like to begin again. I would ensure that I announce what mode I will be conducting at this fire. The mode will be attack a fast attack mode. I will do this by, ah excuse me, I would like to say first I would have my, my chauffer pull past the building getting a multisided view of the building leaving, leaving the ah back open for the truck company to maximize the scrub area and have all incoming companies, have all incoming companies work in conjunction together ah with a tactical objective in mind and work together so as to minimize the chance of backdraft and or flashover." The appellant repeated words, phrases and ideas, and did so with inappropriate pauses and incorrect grammar. He backtracked by announcing his attack mode

after assigning resources. His oral communication contained at least two weaknesses and his score of 3 for this component will not be changed.

CONCLUSION

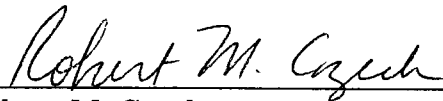
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
THE 19th DAY OF OCTOBER, 2016



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