



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of
Raymond Spellmeyer, Fire Officer 1
(PM1194S), Jersey City

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2016-2621

ISSUED: **OCT 25 2016** (RE)

Raymond Spellmeyer appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Officer 1 (PM1194S), Jersey City. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a final score of 84.920 and his name appears as the 97th ranked eligible on the subject list.

It is noted for the record that this two-part examination consisted of a written multiple-choice portion and an oral portion. Candidates were required to pass the written portion of the examination, and then were ranked on their performance on both portions of the examination. The test was worth 80 percent of the final score and seniority was worth the remaining 20 percent. Of the test weights, 31.35% of the score was the written multiple-choice portion, 22.49% was the technical score for the evolving exercise, 7.53% was the supervision score for the evolving exercise, 4.28% was the oral communication score for the evolving exercise, 19.23% was the technical score for the arriving exercise, 7.53% was the supervision score for the arriving exercise, and 7.59% was the oral communication score for the arriving exercise.

The oral portion of the Fire Officer 1 examination consisted of two scenarios: a fire scene simulation with questions designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of fire fighters and the ability to assess fire conditions and hazards in an evolving incident on the fireground (evolving); and a fire scene simulation designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of firefighters and the ability to plan strategies and tactics based upon a building's

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 5 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the evolving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The evolving scenario involved a report of a fire in a one-story, ordinary construction building consisting of a bakery, Laundromat, convenience store, and liquor store. It is 6:00 AM on a Sunday in September and the temperature is 72° Fahrenheit with clear skies, and a wind blowing from east to west at 5 MPH. Upon arrival, it is noticed that smoke is coming from the Laundromat on side A. A bystander said she noticed smoke coming from the closed Laundromat and called 911. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving ladder company and he establishes command. There were two technical questions. Question 1

asked for specific actions that should be taken upon arrival. Question 2 indicates that, during the incident, the parapet wall on side A partially collapses. The question asked what actions should now be taken, based on this new information. Instructions indicate that, in responding to the questions, the candidate should be as specific as possible in describing actions, and should not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to a score.

In regard to the technical component, the assessors noted that the appellant failed to evacuate and perform a primary search of the exposures, the bakery and the convenience stores, which was a mandatory response to question 1. He also failed to order an evacuation of the building and sound evacuation tones, which was a mandatory response to question 2. Lastly, they indicated that he missed the opportunity to call or request the building department, for question 2. On appeal, the appellant states that he stated that all truck companies would do primary and secondary searches under the protection of hose lines, utilizing search ropes, and securing a target exit device to a bomb proof fixed object. He states that he said that all engine companies would search off hose lines, which he had placed in all structures including the sides B and D exposures. He also states that he ordered an orderly withdrawal of all members inside the structure and both exposures, and conducted a personal accountability report.

A review of the appellant's video and related examination materials indicates that he received credit for stretching a hoseline to the Laundromat and the seat of the fire, and for performing a primary search of the Laundromat. The appellant stated that his first line and his backup line would be charged 2½ inch lines, and he would enter through side A to locate, confine and extinguish the fire. He stated, "All companies will search off the line, utilizing thermal imaging camera, hydraulically and horizontally ventilate. Ladder companies will force entry through the Laundromat via using a K-12 metal blade saw. Secure the gas, electric and water. Primary and secondary searches will be done under the protection of a hoseline utilizing thermal imaging camera, utilizing search ropes, securing a target exiting device to a secured, fixed, bombproof object on the exterior. Mark all areas searched." In this response, the appellant is not indicating that he is performing a primary search of the bakery and convenience stores. Rather, he specifically indicates he is searching the Laundromat, and he received credit for that response. If the appellant meant that he was going to perform a primary search of the exposures, he needed to have articulated this action in his response to question 1.

Regarding the exposures, the appellant stated, "Hoselines, 2½ inch in size, charged will be stretched into both exposures, bravo and delta. I will establish a bravo and delta division, utilizing thermal imaging cameras, opening walls, ceilings, and checking cockloft." This response does not establish that the appellant evacuated and performed a primary search in the bakery and convenience store.

For question 2, the appellant indicated, "I'm going to establish a collapse zone 1½ times greater the width and height of this structure. I will have an orderly withdrawal of all members inside any of the structure, the bravo division exposures included. I will have additional hoselines and increase ventilation to the area." In this response, the appellant orders an orderly withdrawal, which is not the same as an immediate evacuation. There should always be a clear signal when an evacuation is ordered, such as a series of short air horn blasts supplemented by mayday radio communications. Firefighters should get out of the structure immediately upon hearing the signal, leaving equipment and hoselines behind. Ordering an "orderly withdrawal" does not have the sense of urgency of an evacuation, and is not the same. The appellant missed two mandatory responses, as well as the additional response listed by the assessors, and his score of 2 for this component is correct.

CONCLUSION

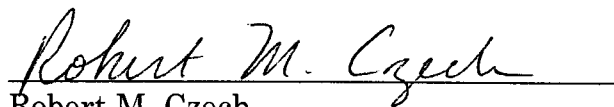
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

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



Robert M. Czech
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Raymond Spellmeyer
Michael Johnson
Records Center

