

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 5 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his score for the oral communication component of the evolving scenario, and the supervision component of the arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

In regard to the oral communication component of the evolving scenario, the assessors noted that the appellant's presentation had a weakness in specificity. Specifically, he stated that all lines are 2½ inch, however, he initially advanced a 1¾ inch line. On appeal, the appellant states that he made an adjustment during his size up to his initial strategy and tactics. He states that once he realized it was a commercial occupancy, he utilized 2½ inch lines.

In reply, the orientation guide that was available to each candidate indicated that oral communication, the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, was a component of this portion of the exam. A factor in oral communication is specificity, a weakness in which is defined as responses that are general in nature or lack the detail necessary to fully address the situation.

For the evolving scenario, candidates were given a 15 minute preparation period. Thus, the appellant should have been aware that the fire building was a commercial building when he began his presentation. Knowing this, he used 1¾ inch hand lines initially. Regarding his orders to the engine companies, the appellant stated, "They will stretch an inch and three quarter line through the B side, locating, utilizing the thermal imaging camera, locating, extinguishing, locating and confining, extinguishing the fire, in the rear of the kitchen. Advance an... Check that. Prior to, prior to ah, entering the building they will adhere to the accountability system of the, of the fire department. They will stay low to the side, bleed the line for air, and advance the inch and three quarter charged line to the rear kitchen. At that point in time they will locate, extinguish, extinguish the fire. Also working in coordination with the ladder company, giving progress and status report. My second arriving engine company will establish a secondary water supply. Stretch an, ah, stretch a two and a half. Check that. All lines will be charged, will be two and half inch lines going in. The second arriving engine company will secure a secondary water supply and back up the first arriving engine company."

In this passage, the appellant says "check that" twice, which is not indicative of decisive action and which detracted from the oral communication presentation. It also has no meaning in the context of a long passage, as it does not specify what the appellant would like to have disregarded. While it was the appellant's choice to change the hoseline size after giving his orders to the first engine, this affected the specificity of his presentation, and the manner of presentation lacked clarity and conciseness. Additionally, as shown in the above passage, the appellant repeats words and ideas, which results in grammatically incorrect sentences. In another example of repetition and incorrect grammar, the appellant states, "My first arriving ladder company will conduct a primary search, systematic primary search. I will split the crew in teams of two, in two teams of two. My search, primary search team will force entry through the front door, doing a systematic search of every room, sweeping with, utilizing a search rope, sweeping with the blunt end of tools, searching all areas, closets, bathrooms, utilizing a thermal imaging camera to locate any possible occupants." The appellant's argument that he changed his mind based on his size up of the situation, does not address the fact that this affected his oral communication. The appellant's performance was not "much more than" acceptable, and his score of 4 appropriately reflects an oral communication of more than acceptable. His score for this component will not be changed.

The arriving scenario involves a fire in a two-story, wood-frame townhouse built in the early 1980s. The townhouse is one of four connected units, with exposures B and D as similar townhouses. It is 9:30 AM on a Monday in September and the temperature is 61° Fahrenheit with cloudy skies and a wind blowing from west to east at 5 miles per hour. Upon arrival, it is noticed that smoke is coming from the first and second floor windows on side A. Dispatch reports the caller is an occupant in the second floor bedroom who awoke to smoke coming up the stairs and was forced back into his bedroom. He is at home with two other roommates. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company and is first on scene. The technical question, question 1, asked for specific actions to be taken upon arrival. The supervision question indicated that, after the incident, a rookie firefighter tells you he observed a veteran firefighter being careless with the tools at the incident. He noticed that a veteran firefighter was not properly using them and did not return them to their proper place on the apparatus. This question asked for actions to take to address the rookie firefighter's concerns. 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 supervision component, the assessors noted that the appellant missed the opportunity to interview other crew members. On appeal, the appellant states that he addressed the problem with both individuals directly. He states that back at quarters he reviewed the files and the standard operating procedures (SOPs) on equipment checks. He provides additional details regarding his interview with the veteran firefighter, indicated he would retrain all company members, and advised the chief of his actions.

In reply, the appellant received credit for interviewing the veteran firefighter and the rookie, reviewing the SOPs, and informing the chief. These actions contributed to his score of 4, but they are not the same as the action indicated by the assessors. Interviewing other crew members would allow the candidate to verify the rookie's observation. The appellant did not take this action, nor did he inspect the tools or apparatus used at the incident for verification. In this regard, he stated, "I will question, I will stop the rookie, ask him, ask him the issue what's going on. I will also speak to the senior firefighter on how to, to explain to the rookie on how to place, you know, place the ah, tools back." This was the only action taken on the fireground. At the firehouse, the appellant interviewed the two firefighters, but no other crew members. His presentation does not warrant a score of 5 for the supervision component.

CONCLUSION

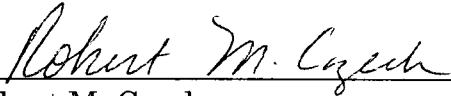
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

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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