



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of  
Prince Jenkins, Fire Captain  
(PM1143S), Trenton

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2016-2796

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

Prince Jenkins appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Captain (PM1143S), Trenton. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a final score of 84.000 and his name appears as the 31<sup>st</sup> 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 Captain 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 3 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 3 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his score for the technical 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.

The evolving scenario involves a fire in a Chinese restaurant, which is the second store in a row of five in a single-story building with brick walls and steel-bar joist construction built in the early 1960s. It is 8:00 PM on a Friday in June, and the temperature is 78° Fahrenheit with clear 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 front door on side A. Dispatch states the caller was a customer picking up take-out food when they were overcome with smoke and left the building. The caller is unsure if employees managed to escape, and it is unknown if the automatic hood

suppression system has been activated. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving ladder company. There were two technical questions. Question 1 asked for specific actions to be taken upon arrival. Question 2 indicates that, while searching the meat store (exposure D), a fire fighter knocks over several overstocked displays and becomes trapped. He issues a Mayday. The question asked for actions that should 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 order a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR), and to rescue/remove the trapped firefighter, which were mandatory responses to question 2. Also, they noted that he missed the opportunity to stretch a backup line in response to question 1. On appeal, the appellant states that said he would have all members adhere to the accountability system, and assigned an accountability officer.

A review of the appellant's video and related examination materials indicates that, in response to question 1, the appellant stated that all firefighters would adhere to the accountability system, and accountability tags would be dropped off to the accountability officer. He also asked dispatch to send him an accountability officer. However, he did not order a PAR after the mayday had been issued by the trapped firefighter, which was a mandatory response to question 2. In response to question 2, the appellant stated, "Okay, I would have a safety officer to make sure the scene is safe. I'm gonna call an accountability officer to keep account of where the firefighter was last known and, and that concludes my answer to number two." As noted above, credit was not given for information that was implied or assumed. Candidates could be scored only on what they actually said. In this case, the appellant did not state that he would order a PAR, only that he would have the accountability officer account for the location of the trapped firefighter. A PAR would account for all of the firefighters, and not just the one who asked for the Mayday. Similarly, the appellant did not rescue and remove the trapped firefighter. Instead, he only indicated that he would search for him. In response to question 1, the appellant stated he would rescue any victims, but he did not specifically rescue or remove the trapped firefighter. The appellant's response to question 2 was very brief, and he missed two mandatory actions. He did not stretch a backup hoseline in response to question 1 as well. His score of 2 for the technical component of the evolving scenario is correct.

The arriving scenario involves the report of smoke in a single-story, wood frame constructed house with brick veneer built in the 1950s. It is 10:30 AM on a Thursday in September, 68° F, with partly cloudy skies and a wind blowing from west to east at 5 miles per hour. The candidate is the commanding officer of the

first arriving engine company and the first officer on scene. Upon arrival, the candidate notices smoke coming from the open garage door on side A. Dispatch states that the caller is a neighbor who saw smoke coming from an open garage door, and says that an elderly man lives in the house and is confined to a bedroom. All appliances in this house are fueled by natural gas, and sides B and D face similar houses 20 feet away. The rear yard is not accessible. The technical question asked for specific actions to be taken upon arrival. The supervision question indicated that, during the incident, the candidate observes that one of his firefighters does not have his assigned radio. This question asks for actions to be taken now and after returning to the firehouse. 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.

For the supervision component, the assessors indicated that the appellant missed the opportunity to assign a spare radio or buddy the firefighter with a partner. On appeal, the appellant argues that he told the firefighter to stay next to him, so he was the firefighter's partner.

In reply, the scenario indicated that the candidate was the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company and was the first officer on scene. As such, the candidate was the Incident Commander (IC). In his response to the supervision question, the appellant stated, "As soon as I find out that this firefighter does not have his radio, I'm going to immediately ask him to stop what he is doing and to come with me and that he needs to, he needs to stay next to me 'cause he does not have a radio." This was the only action the appellant took on scene, and the other actions were taken back at the firehouse. This action is impractical as a firefighter would not be partnered with the IC, who is commanding the scene. Rather, the firefighter should be assigned a partner, or a spare radio, and allowed to continue working. The appellant's score for this component is correct.

## CONCLUSION

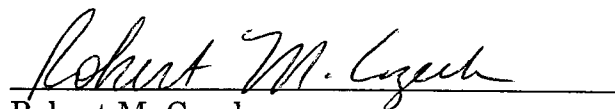
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

## 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 19<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2016

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert M. Czech", is written over a solid horizontal line.

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