



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of  
Thomas Anguella, Fire Lieutenant  
(PM1172S), Linden

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2016-2670

ISSUED: **NOV 16 2016** (RE)

Thomas Anguella appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Lieutenant (PM1172S), Linden. It is noted that the appellant failed the subject examination.

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 Lieutenant 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 1 for the supervision component, and a 2 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 1 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. In his letter, the appellant is not specific regarding which components he is actually appealing. A review of his submission appears to indicate that he challenges his score for the technical component of the evolving scenario, and for the supervision component of the arriving scenario. He provided no arguments regarding the supervision component of the evolving scenario. He acknowledged the weakness in grammar noted by the assessors for the oral communication component of both scenarios, and provided no opposing arguments. 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 historic, small, single-story brick church built in the 1940s. It is 2:30 PM on a Saturday in February, with a temperature of 23° F, overcast skies, and a wind blowing from west to east at 10 miles per hour. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine

company, who is on-scene and has established command. There are parked cars along the front of the building, and wood frame homes on sides B and D. Upon arrival, the candidate does not notice any fire but sees smoke coming from the windows near the peak of the slate roof on side A. A neighbor approaches and indicates a custodian may be in the church, cleaning it for services on Sunday, and a crowd of onlookers begins to gather. There were two technical questions. Question 1 asked for specific actions that should be taken upon arrival. Question 2 indicates that an interior crew reports high heat conditions, and soon after, a flashover occurs, injuring two firefighters. The question asked what specific 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.

For the technical component, the assessors noted that the appellant failed to request a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR), which was a mandatory response to question 2. They also indicated that he missed opportunities to call for DPW/salt in question 1, and to clear all unnecessary radio traffic in question 2. On appeal, the appellant argues that he has extensive experience, feels confident about his responses, and regrets the 10 minute time limitation. He states that the assessors did not recognize his correct answers, and he mentioned requesting a PAR, along with additional resources. He states that he found a water supply, performed a search, performed extinguishment, and ventilated using a thermal imaging camera (TIC).

In reply, a review of the appellant's presentation indicates that, in response to question 1, the appellant called for additional resources, such as EMS and utilities. He then performed ventilation, and paused to review his notes. He then stated, "So, also at this point, ah, two, there's a report, were also going to do, ah, ah, regular PARs about every 10 minutes and we're going to call for ah, um (pause), we're gonna to call for not only PARs but progress reports, and were also gonna set up a RIT team, in case we ah, we need to. And we're going to have a full response waiting for us and the ah, staging area." The appellant then indicated that at this point, there has been a flashover and two firefighters have been injured. The appellant took various actions in response to the flashover, but he didn't request a PAR because of it. The SMEs determined that this was a mandatory response to this situation, and the appellant did not take this action. He also did not take the additional actions listed by the assessor, and a score of 2 for this component is correct.

The arriving scenario involved a report of a fire in a single-story, wood-frame constructed house built in the 1970s. Similarly constructed houses are 10 feet away on sides B and D. It is 3:30 PM on a Saturday in September, with a temperature of

78° F, partly cloudy skies, and a wind blowing from the west to the east at 5 miles per hour. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company and is the first officer on scene. Upon arrival, the candidate notices smoke coming from the garage door on side A. Dispatch indicates the caller is in the bedroom, and indicated he was napping when he awoke to smoke in the house and is unable to get out. The supervision question indicated that the candidate has returned to the firehouse when he receives an alarm for the same address. The fire has reignited due to poor overhauling at the initial alarm. This question asked for actions to be taken after returning from the second alarm to ensure an incident like this does not happen in the future.

For the supervision component, the assessors indicated that the appellant missed the opportunities to: interview the crew(s) assigned to overhaul; review any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on overhauling; check for faulty equipment (TIC); and confirm/determine the point of origin. On appeal, the appellant argues that he mentioned search and overhaul, staging, and concerns of TIC use.

In reply, a review of the appellant's presentation indicates that, in response to the technical question, the appellant performed salvage and overhaul when the fire was out. He also stated that he would use a TIC in salvage and overhaul to look for hot spots, and he stated the purpose of TICs. He also took a TIC into the attic area to look for fire spread. After the two-minute warning, the appellant began responding to the supervision question. For this question, the appellant stated he needed to use TICs more, use more water resources, do a more thorough salvage and overhaul, leave fire watches at the scene, do more training, do a critique, and discuss what could be done. He then stated he would do documentation and a follow-up, made sure the residents had somewhere to go, and secured the site. None of these actions are the same as those listed by the assessors. The appellant took no specific actions regarding his subordinates' behaviors at the scene which may have led to the rekindle. He did not determine who was assigned overhaul and he did not interview them. He did not review SOPs, check for faulty equipment, determine the point of origin, or take further actions regarding his staff. His score of 1 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 10<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2016



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