



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of
Christopher Williams,
Fire Lieutenant (PM1188S), Vineland
CSC Docket No. 2016-2952

Examination Appeal

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

Christopher Williams appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Lieutenant (PM1188S), Vineland. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a final score of 84.970 and his name appears as the fifth 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 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 5 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 4 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the technical and supervision components of the arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The arriving scenario involves a report of fire coming from a two-story, wood-frame house built in the 1970s. It is 1:00 PM on a Saturday in June, 92°F, with sunny skies and a wind blowing from the east to the west at 5 mph. The candidate is the officer of the first arriving engine company and the first officer on scene. Upon arrival, the candidate notices smoke coming from the first and second floor windows on side A. Dispatch reports that the caller is an occupant in a second floor bedroom and the caller said she was taking a nap, and when she woke up her bedroom was filled with smoke. The technical question asked for specific actions to

take upon arrival. The supervision question indicated that the candidate notices a rookie firefighter on his crew having trouble raising a ladder. The question asked for actions to take at the scene 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.

In regard to the technical component of the arriving scenario, the assessors noted that the appellant missed the opportunities to give an initial radio report to dispatch; check/perform forcible entry to the front door side A; establish a secondary water supply; perform a secondary search of the house; and check for extension. On appeal, the appellant states that he said, "Dispatch I got a 2 story wood framed single family dwelling with smoke showing from the A side divisions number one and number two."

In reply, the appellant believes that a size-up is the same response as an initial radio report to dispatch. However, an initial radio report may consist of command identification, a building description and description of conditions (size-up), actions to be taken by incoming units, the command mode, and immediate additional resources needed. In his response, at the start of his presentation, he checked with dispatch for additional information. He then established command and said he would give his size-up to dispatch, and he gave his size-up. The appellant's response regarding dispatch was too brief to indicate that he gave an initial report to dispatch, and as noted in the instructions, credit cannot be given for information that is implied or assumed. The appellant missed the actions noted by the assessors, and his score for this component will not be changed.

In regard to the supervision component of the arriving scenario, the assessors noted that the appellant missed the opportunities to interview other crew members separately; after the incident, have the firefighter demonstrate raising the ladder; and, stop any unsafe actions. On appeal, the appellant states that he set up training and kept an eye on his progress.

A review of the appellant's video and related examination materials indicates that the appellant provided training and was credited with this response. He was also credited with monitoring or following-up with the firefighter after a period of time. These are different actions than having the firefighter demonstrate raising the ladder, which the appellant did not state. He missed the actions noted by the assessors and his score of 4 for this component is correct.

CONCLUSION

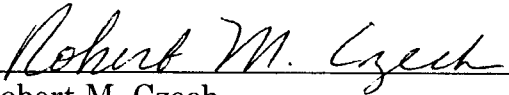
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

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 10th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2016


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and
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