



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of Patrick Hilger,
Fire Lieutenant (PM1079V),
Jackson

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2019-2581

ISSUED: April 22, 2019 (RE)

Patrick Hilger appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Lieutenant (PM1079V), Jackson. It is noted that the appellant failed the subject examination.

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. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process.

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 1 for the technical component, a 2 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 3 for the technical component, a 2 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the technical and supervision components 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 fire in the basement of a 1½ story, wood frame residence. Two residents were in the cellar when the fire started, and a woman believes her husband and son are still there. As the commander of the first arriving engine, the candidate was ordered to establish a primary water supply upon arrival and attack the fire. Ladder 3 will conduct a primary search, and engine 6 will establish a secondary water supply. Question 1 asked candidates to describe in detail the orders they would give to their crew to complete this assignment. Question 2 indicated that the candidate and his crew were attacking the seat of the fire when they found a resident lying unresponsive on the floor by the couch, and this question asked for of specific actions that should be taken now.

The assessor indicated that the appellant failed to charge the hose line before going down the stairs, failed to check floors and stairs for stability, and failed to protect the means of egress, which were mandatory responses to question 1. On appeal, the appellant indicates that he had the engine chauffeur charge the hoseline before he entered the house.

In reply, a review of the appellant's presentation indicates that he received credit for establishing a water supply, which was another mandatory response. The appellant moved the engine short of the targeted address, and took tools and a 1¾ inch handline to side C. He then said, "While I'm stretching a handline dry, my fire fighters will be hooking up a five inch ah and once the five inch, the engine operator has hooked up the five inch to the truck, the ah, he'll give notice to the firefighter at the hydrant to charge the five inch line. Once that's done, I'll order my operator to charge the inch and ¾ handline ah, to the appropriate pressure. Um, we would have selected a straight bore nozzle 15/16th inch tip. I'd like 180 gallons per minute coming out of that." The appellant then forced entry to the structure. As such, he stated this mandatory response. However, he proceeded to the basement with the charged handline without checking the floors and stairs for stability before doing so, and he did not protect the means of egress. Based on this analysis, the appellant's score for this scenario should be raised from 1 to 2. However, this score change is insufficient to result in a passing score.

The supervision question involved a nozzleman using an incorrect and dangerous nozzle pattern for the fire conditions, and candidates were asked to provide specific actions now and back at the firehouse. The assessor noted that the appellant missed the opportunities to interview the firefighter, review applicable SOPs/SOGs, check the firefighter's records, keep his supervisor informed, document any actions taken, and monitor the firefighter's progress. On appeal, the appellant states that he said he had a formal "sit down" with the individual.

In reply, the appellant corrected the nozzle on scene and received credit for that. He stated that "Afterwards the firefighter um and myself, as the Lieutenant from the apparatus, would sit down ah have a discussion about the proper the selection of the appropriate ah nozzle and nozzle configurations ah the need to check that the nozzles are set in the appropriate fashion before we enter a structure. Issues that could arise ah from the inappropriate nozzle selection and, after having that direct sit down with the firefighter and correcting that action, we would then set up further training and discuss appropriate ah, nozzle selection, appropriate flow ah, flow levels ah, nozzle pressures." In his presentation, the appellant did not refer to this as formal, nor did he indicate that it was an interview. Rather, he called it a discussion and basically he did the talking. The appellant missed the actions noted by the assessor and his score of 2 for this component will not be changed.

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 ON
THE 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2019



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