

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, other than for oral communication, 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. 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 and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the Administration scenario, the appellant scored a 4 for the technical component and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the Arrival scenario, the appellant scored a 2 for the technical component and a 4 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the technical components of the evolving and arriving scenarios. 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 fireworks store, which is a single-story, non-combustible structure. Wind is blowing from south to north at 12 MPH. Upon arrival, it is noticed that smoke is coming from the front door on side A. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving ladder company. The owner states that the fire started when a customer lit a small firework within the store, all auxiliary appliances are inoperable, and he does not know if two employees in the back of the store are out of the building. Question 1 asked for initial actions to be taken. Question 2 indicated that fire has reached the larger sized items, and in the back of the store large embers are being blown off the roof to the ground. It has been 12 minutes since arrival, and the question asks for actions to be taken to address the current situation. 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 assessor indicated that the appellant failed to transmit an initial report to dispatch, or give a size up to dispatch in question 1, and to feed the Fire Department Connection (FDC) in question 1. They also indicated that he missed the opportunity to refer to the SDS sheets on inventory, which was an additional response to question 1. On appeal, the appellant argues that he stated he would hook up and charge the FDC. He also states that he said he did a 360-degree size-up.

A review of the appellant's video indicates that he stated he would perform a 360-degree size-up, which he did at the beginning of his response to the question. This was a separate action, for which the appellant received credit, than the mandatory response. As noted above, credit could not be given for information that was implied or assumed. The appellant cannot receive credit for transmit an initial report to dispatch, or give a size up *to dispatch*, when he did not state this action in his presentation.

When giving orders to his first engine, the appellant stated, "They will establish a primary water supply. They will connect it and charge it Fire Department Connection. They will go through the A side door with a 2½" charged line operating between means of egress and the fire. They will locate, confine and extinguish." In this passage, the appellant is stating that he will *charge his handline* using an FDC, not that he would charge the FDC. He may or may not have used this term out of context, but credit is not given for "buzzwords." Rather, all words are taken in context. Hydrants have connections for hoselines. In this instance, the appellant did not state that he would have the first line connect to the FDC to charge or feed it, but that he would "connect [the hoseline] and charge it Fire Department Connection." Then, he took the hoseline through the side A door to extinguish the fire inside. As such, no credit is warranted for this response. The assessor asked the appellant to be more specific regarding establishing the water supply, and the appellant identified the hydrant to be used, but did not mention feeding the FDC. The appellant missed two mandatory responses and an additional response, and his score of 2 for this scenario is correct.

The arriving scenario involves a fire in a two-story, multi-family, wood-framed condominium residence built in 1990. The unit involved has no firewalls. Upon arrival, it is noticed that smoke is billowing into the air. The owner of the unit next door states that the fire has been going for ten minutes, and she hasn't seen her neighbors, although their cars are parked out front. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company and is first on scene. The question asked for concerns and specific actions to take to fully address the incident.

The assessor noted that the appellant failed to address the concern of the length of time the fire has been burning before arrival, and to establish a secondary water

supply on a different main, which were mandatory responses. They also indicated that he missed the opportunity to request a fire investigator. On appeal, the appellant states that he assigned a water supply officer and had a water company respond to the scene.

In reply, again, instructions indicated 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. Assigning a water supply officer and having a water company respond to the scene are separate actions from establishing a secondary water supply, and it cannot be assumed that the appellant established a secondary water supply by taking those actions. The appellant stated that his second engine would pull a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " backup line to protect the interior staircase, and assist in locating, confining and extinguishing fire. His third engine also stretched a line, but he did not have either engine utilize a different water main. At the end of the presentation, the assessor asked the appellant to review his concerns of the scenario. The appellant responded that his concerns were unaccounted-for persons, and fire spread. He was asked then if he had any other concerns specific to this scenario and the appellant responded with an action to be taken regarding apparatus involved in an accident on the way to the scene. He did not state that the length of time the fire has been burning before arrival was a concern. The assessor then asked if the appellant if he had any other orders for arriving engine companies, and the appellant had the companies give progress reports and stretch lines into exposures. The appellant missed the actions noted by the assessor, including two mandatory responses, and his score of 2 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 ON
THE 30TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2020

Deirdre' L. Webster Cobb

Deirdré L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Christopher S. Myers
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Barry Kaverick
Michael Johnson
Records Center