



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Matthew Kemple,
Battalion Fire Chief (PM2146W),
Bayonne

CSC Docket No. 2020-1177

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: January 30, 2020 (RE)

Matthew Kemple appeals his score on the promotional examination for Battalion Fire Chief (PM2146W), Bayonne. It is noted that the appellant passed the examination with a final average of 84.710 and ranked eighth on the eligible list.

This two-part examination consisted of an integrated system of simulations designed to generate behavior similar to that required for success on the job. The first part consisted of multiple-choice items that measured specific work components identified and weighted by the job analysis. The second part consisted of three oral scenarios; a Supervision, Administration and Incident Command scenario. The examination was based on a comprehensive job analysis conducted by the Civil Service Commission, which identified the critical areas of the job. The weighting of the test components was derived from the job analysis data.

For the oral portion, candidates had 60 minutes to prepare for all three scenarios and had 10 minutes per scenario to present their response. For all three oral exercises, the candidate was to assume the role of a Battalion Fire Chief. Candidates were scored based on the content of their response (technical) and the how well they presented their response (oral communication). These components were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating.

Each candidate in a given jurisdiction was scored by a team of three different Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who were trained in current technical and oral communication scoring procedures. Each SME is a current or retired fire officer who held the title of Battalion Fire Chief (or Fire Officer 2) or higher. As part of the

scoring process, an SME observed and noted the responses of a candidate relative to the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that each exercise was designed to measure. An SME also noted any weaknesses that detracted from the candidates overall oral communication ability. The SME then rated the candidate's performance according to the rating standards and assigned the candidate a technical or oral communication score on that exercise.

In order to preserve the relative weighting of each of the components of the examination, the ratings for each portion were adjusted by a well-recognized statistical process known as "standardization." Under this process, the ratings are standardized by converting the raw scores to z-scores, an expression of the deviation of the score from the mean score of the group in relation to the standard deviation of scores for the group. Each portion of the examination had a relative weight in its relation to the whole examination. Thus, the z-score for the multiple-choice portion was multiplied by a test weight of 36.53%, the oral technical scores were multiplied by a test weight of 53.91% and the oral communication scores were multiplied by a test weight of 9.56%. The weighted z-scores were summed and this became the overall final test score. This was weighted and added to the weighted seniority score. The result was standardized, then normalized, and rounded up to the third decimal place to arrive at a final average.

For the technical and oral communication components of the Supervision, Administration and Incident Command scenarios, the appellant received scores of 5, 3, 1 and 5, 5, 5, respectively.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the Incident Command scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material and a listing of possible courses of action (PCAs) for the scenario were reviewed.

CONCLUSION

The Incident Command scenario involved a fire at a medical facility which is a chemotherapy center. Question 1 asked for specific actions upon arrival at the scene. Question 2 indicated that during fireground operations, one of the firefighters falls into an intravenous (IV) stand with IV bags containing doxorubicin, a potent chemotherapy drug, soaking himself with the fluid, and he sustained a head injury. It asked for specific actions to be taken based on this new information.

For this scenario, the SME noted that the appellant failed to identify materials (e.g., MSDS, stock, inventory, etc.), and to monitor and protect the truss roof. These were mandatory responses to question 1. It was also indicated that the appellant missed the opportunities to contact the railroad authority to shut down tracks due to smoke, and to ensure shelter of displaced patients who did not require EMS treatment and/or transport, which were additional responses to question 1. On

appeal, the appellant states that he requested the extra resources to be sent to the scene, and he requested EMS and the Red Cross for the occupants inside the structure. He also set up an EMS Branch Director and a unified command for victims that needed medical attention.

In reply, at the outset, it is noted that if the candidate fails to identify two or more mandatory PCAs, a score of 1 is warranted. In his appeal, the appellant requests credit for the additional action listed by the assessor. The SME noted that the appellant requested EMS, requested additional alarms, and expanded the Incident Command System (ICS), *e.g.*, requesting a safety officer and an accountability officer among others. In his request for resources, the appellant requested the Red Cross for all the occupants inside the building. The instructions in the scenario tell candidates to be as specific as possible and not to assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to a score. Calling for the Red Cross is not the same as ensuring shelter of displaced patients who did not require EMS treatment and/or transport. Even if the appellant received credit for this, as he missed two mandatory responses to his score would still be 1. As such, his score of 1 for this component is correct.

A thorough review of 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 29th DAY OF JANUARY, 2020



Deirdre 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: Matthew Kemple
Michael Johnson
Records Center