



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Christopher Eodice,
Battalion Fire Chief (PM2157W),
Newark

CSC Docket No. 2020-1291

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: January 30, 2020 (RE)

Christopher Eodice appeals his score on the promotional examination for Battalion Fire Chief (PM2157W), Newark. It is noted that the appellant failed the examination.

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 4, 2, and 1 and 5, 3 and 5, respectively.

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

CONCLUSION

In the administration scenario, the Deputy Fire Chief assigns the candidate to develop and be ready to implement a preplan for emergencies in places of worship in the first due response area, with an emphasis on risk management. Question 1 asked for actions to be taken to bring the first due response area incident action plans for places of worship in line with the Deputy Fire Chief's assignment. Question 2 asked for specific information to be included in the pre-plans to effectively cover the arsonist threat.

For this scenario, the SME indicated that the appellant missed the opportunities in question 2 to identify exposures, outline the building construction and include response routes in the pre-plans. On appeal, the appellant states that he did not have identify exposures as places of worship may not have any, outlining building construction would involve all classes of buildings, and preparing response routes

would be difficult. Thus, he concludes that these responses should not be in the scoring criteria.

In reply, a review of the appellant's presentation indicates that he missed the responses noted by the assessor. Each of these was specific information identified by the SMEs that should be included in preplans to cover the arsonist threat. For question 2, the appellant only provided two items, locating building features, such as exits, and listing outside agencies. This was the sum of the information he wanted to include in preplans to cover the arsonist threat. This is very sparse, and would not effectively cover the arsonist threat. The appellant's score of 2 is correct based on his responses to both questions.

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 monitor or protect the truss roof, which was a mandatory response to question 1, and that he failed to conduct emergency gross decontamination with a hoseline, which was a mandatory response to question 2. It was also indicated that the appellant missed the opportunities to set up a collapse zone, and to communicate with a building representative, which were additional responses to question 1. On appeal, the appellant states that he activated the RIC, and set up emergency mass decontamination rather than gross decontamination in order to avoid over-spray and water runoff. He also argues that he staged units outside of the collapse zone.

In reply, question 2 indicated that a firefighter was soaked in doxorubicin, a potent chemotherapy drug, and he had also sustained a head injury. The SMEs determined that it was mandatory that the Incident Commander (IC) conduct emergency gross decontamination with a handline, and the appellant did not take this action. The toxic effects of antineoplastic drugs used for cancer treatment have been well known since their introduction in the 1940s. Clearly the firefighter has had dermal exposure to a toxic medicine, and might have inhaled it, swallowed it, or had it enter his head injury. The appellant may not know that doxorubicin is extremely acidic, or that accidental contact with the skin or eyes should be treated immediately by copious washing with water, or soap and water, or sodium bicarbonate solution, but his argument that he did not need to decontaminate this particular firefighter so as not to over-spray or cause water runoff of an unknown chemical, is unpersuasive. He did not perform an emergency gross decontamination of the firefighter, which involves evacuating the patient (firefighter) from the high-risk area, removing his clothing, and performing a one-minute quick head-to-toe rinse with water. This was a

mandatory response for the safety of the firefighter. Activating the RIC was a separate response for which the appellant received credit. Also, staging units outside of the collapse zone is a separate response from setting up a collapse zone, and credit is not given for information that is implied or assumed. As the appellant missed two mandatory responses, 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



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