

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 1 for the technical component and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the Administration scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component and a 4 for the oral communication component. For the Arrival scenario, the appellant scored a 3 for the technical component and a 3 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his score for the technical component 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 involves a report of a fire in a mobile home and in a tree on the property due to a lightning strike. Across the street from the tree on the A/D side is a 50-foot propane tank. Side B faces a similar mobile home. The wind is blowing from east to west at 17 mph. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company and is first on scene. Question 1 asked for initial actions to be taken upon arrival. Question 2 indicated that the wind shifts from an east to west direction to a west to east direction, and the high winds cause the trunk of the tree to collapse towards the east within feet of the propane tank. This question asked for actions that should now be taken based on 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 assessors indicated that the appellant failed to address the following mandatory PCA: protect exposures (side B and the propane

tank) in question 1; set up an isolation perimeter in question 1; and cool the tank in question 2. They also indicated that he missed the opportunity to give a progress report, which was an additional response to question 2. On appeal, the appellant argues that he said he would give frequent progress reports, and stated that he would set up a perimeter.

As noted above, credit could not be given for information that was implied or assumed. A review of the appellant's video indicates that in responding to question 1, the appellant ordered a line to the trailer, and a backup line, which could be used on the tree if not needed in the trailer due to the small setup. He then stated, "I would ensure that all companies ah the engine companies work together in unison, ah and in coordination with one another and give fre..., frequent progress reports to myself the Incident Commander." However, question 2 involved a tree which was on fire and had collapsed close to a 50-foot propane tank, and the wind was blowing towards the tank at 17 mph. In this situation, the SMEs indicated that progress reports should be *given* to dispatch in response to the evolution of the scene. This comment does not require that the candidate *ask* for progress reports from his personnel in question 1.

As to setting up an isolation perimeter, this was a mandatory action in question 1 given the exposures. The appellant monitored the condition of the tree in response to question 1, and stated, "Further, I'm going to monitor conditions of the tree. If this tree becomes unstable we're gonna consider withdrawal. Again, the design of the trailers are probably not going to be able to take up the load of the tree falling on it, due to the fact that it's a large tree. Um, so we want to set up for the potential for a withdrawal of if that tree becomes significantly involved. Due to the wind factor ah, I'm also going to consider evacuating the bravo exposure." It cannot be assumed that the appellant set up an isolation perimeter simply because he considered withdrawal. In response to question 2, the appellant set up a perimeter with a safe zone and a hot zone by taping off the area. This was an appropriate action, but it was too late. The SMEs determined that the Incident Commander should anticipate the danger of fire so close to a large propane tank and that it was mandatory to take this action before the situation evolved with the wind changing direction and the tree falling. The appellant missed the actions listed by the assessors, including three mandatory responses, and his score of 1 for the technical 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
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