



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Nicholas DiGuilio,
et al., Fire Captain (PM2389C),
Jersey City

CSC Docket Nos. 2022-1124
2022-1216
2022-1092

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: October 12, 2022 (RE)

Nicholas DiGuilio, Anthony Montagne and Matthew Weisman appeal items on the multiple choice examination for first-level Fire Captain (PM2389C), Jersey City. These appeals have been consolidated due to common issues.

It is noted for the record that this two-part examination consisted of a written multiple-choice portion and an oral portion. The written portion of the examination included seven scenarios, each with a description and various accompanying diagrams, and candidates were required to answer questions pertaining to each scenario. The appellants challenge the correct responses to questions 6, 26, 28, 32, 46, 49, 50, 53, 56, 59, and 71. The results of this examination are not yet available.

Question 6 indicated that since the owner of the unit cannot be found the candidate decides to send a team to conduct a search of the second floor. This question asked for the **MOST** appropriate method of searching to use in this situation, given the building structure and layout. The keyed response was option d, Oriented Vent Enter Isolate Search (O-VEIS). Montagne selected option b, standard search. In support, he states that page 413 of *Fundamentals of Fire Fighting Skills*, Enhanced 3rd edition (*Fundamentals of FFS*) indicates that O-VEIS is a search intended for a porch in front of bedroom windows with a person in the bedroom that needs to be rescued. He argues that this ignores the rest of the house and that a standard search is the primary one used in searching residences. He states that *Fundamentals of FFS* states on page 410 that, "The standard search is the most commonly taught search method used by firefighters. The primary use of the standard search is in residential fires, where two fire fighters should be able to

search an average-sized house in 15 minutes or less.” As to the stairway, Montagne states that a search team should be working near a hoseline, which will knock down fire, and protect the team, fleeing occupants and the means of egress. Montagne argues that the O-VEIS is not in the “listed textbook.”

In reply, in this scenario, the property manager says that she cannot contact the owner, there are multiple vehicles parked in front of the building, and the owners cannot be found. It may be that they are in a bedroom on the second floor which is why a team was sent to conduct a search of the second floor. The diagram shows fire on the stairs between the first and second floors. As fire blocks access to the second floor, a standard search cannot be performed. According to page 413 of *Fundamentals of FFS*, “To conduct an O-VEIS search a team of two fire fighters places a ladder in front of *the window leading to the room* (emphasis added) or to the porch in front of the room to be searched. After assessing the room to determine if it appears to be tenable for a victim and for the fire fighter, they open or remove the window. O-VEIS should only be used in dire emergencies in which a sizeable risk has a large potential benefit.” Montagne stated that page 413 of *Fundamentals of FFS* indicates that O-VEIS is a search intended for a porch in front of bedroom windows with a person in the bedroom that needs to be rescued. In fact, it states that the vent-enter-search method was developed for this situation, and that it is very dangerous and should not be used, but that the O-VEIS is a safer modification. This reference does not isolate the use of O-VEIS to bedrooms with second floor porches, but states, “If no porch is present, the oriented-vent-enter-isolate-search method can be performed by placing a ladder to the window in the room to be searched. In this case, the second rescuer remains on the ladder to monitor the situation.” Accordingly, the keyed response is the best response.

Question 26 indicated that during the search, a victim who collapsed in the back corner of the yoga studio is found. The victim is a petite female who is unconscious and unresponsive, but fully clothed. This question asked for the **MOST** appropriate way to remove the victim from the building, and the keyed response was option b, Webbing Sling drag. Weisman selected option a, Firefighter drag, while DiGuilio selected option d, clothes drag. In support, Weisman states that “petite” is not defined and a petite woman can be heavier than Weisman is. He also argues against the key, stating that *New Jersey Fundamentals*, 3rd edition, published by Jones and Bartlett Learning (*NJ Fundamentals*), does not indicate that the Webbing Sling drag is faster than the Firefighter drag. DiGuilio argues that each option involved a “drag” not a “carry,” and that there is no mention that the units were equipped with a Webbing Sling. He maintains that the victim’s head is supported with the clothes drag, and it doesn’t require setting up additional equipment.

In reply, the Firefighter drag is used when the victim is heavier than the rescuer. This victim does not fit that description as she is petite, and petite means

small. Using Weisman's logic, only children would fit the description of petite, while clearly this drag was intended for adults as well. Questions are not designed to account for individual candidate attributes. Nonetheless, page 424 of *NJ Fundamentals* states that, "the webbing sling drag provides a secure grip around the upper part of a victim's body, allowing for a faster removal from the dangerous area." Page 427 instructs the firefighter to support the victim's head while performing the Webbing Sling drag. Further, the assumption of a possible unavailability of equipment is not a variable in this determination, unless the question or the scenario indicated that it was unavailable. The victim is in a dangerous part of the building, as the yoga room was one of the first areas impacted. Further, the clothes drag is also used for victims who are on the ground and are too heavy to carry. Given the circumstances, the Webbing Sling drag is the most appropriate method.

Question 28 indicated that the candidate instructs two men from the ladder truck to ventilate the roof of the storage room. The question asked for the **MINIMUM** number of rungs the ladder needs to extend past the roof, and the keyed response was option d, 5. DiGuilio selected option b, 3. In support, he states that Page 369 of *NJ Fundamentals* states that a rule of thumb is at least five rungs above the edge of the roof, but that a rule of thumb is not an industry standard. He argues that a 30-foot roof would require a ladder longer than 35 feet. He maintains that *NJ Fundamentals* states that a ladder requires one additional foot in length for every 15 feet of vertical height, and a roof that is 30 feet above grade would require a 35-foot ladder. He indicates that the ladder should be at least 35 feet, as two feet is lost due to height over climbing angle, which leaves three rungs past the roof line. He also states that the examination did not require the use of an aerial ladder, or specify the number of rungs according to *Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics*, 5th Edition, by John Norman (*Tactics*).

In reply, the fire building measures 200 feet by 150 feet at its largest points, and the question involves a ladder truck. While it is one story, an aerial ladder should be used, and as such, the appellants arguments regarding ground ladders are moot. Page 172 of *Tactics* states that, "When raising an aerial to the roof, the ladder should be extended so that at least five rungs project above the level of the roof." As such, the keyed response is correct.

Question 32 indicated that two members of the search crew become disoriented and lost in the gym. They send out a Mayday signal over the radio. The question asked how the candidate should respond during the first exchange, and the keyed response was option c, ask the firefighters for their names and units. Weisman selected option d, try to determine the major source of the problem. In support, Weisman states that Fire Service Reference Booklet Number 12, Rapid Intervention Crew Training Guidelines (*Booklet 12*), pages 7 and 8 provide a procedure where the Incident Commander (IC) does not ask any questions, but the

crew provides the information in a LUNAR report. Nevertheless, the IC must determine the source of the problem, which is the location and what happened prior to getting names and units. He argues that step 2 on page 317 of *Tactics* states “gather information about the identity of the distressed member, location, and nature of the situation,” and that there is no particular order in which these three pieces of information should be obtained. He also argues that the nature of the situation is the same as the source of the problem, and to think otherwise is just an opinion. He refers to the LUNAR acronym, where L is the location and what happened, and therefore, the source of the problem should be in the first exchange.

In reply, *Booklet 12* refers to training guidelines for the RIC crew, not the IC. The question asked how the candidate should respond during the first exchange, and the candidate is the IC. It did not ask what the Mayday issuer should provide. In this case, the question is referencing the IC’s duties. The question also stated that two members of the search crew send out a Mayday signal over the radio, but it does not state that they provided a first report. *Tactics* states on page 317 that, “When the IC is informed of a Mayday for a missing, trapped or unconscious member, the IC should take the following steps, as appropriate: 1. Take control of walkie-talkie channel(s) and direct all nonessential walkie-talkie traffic to stop. 2. Gather information about the identity of the distressed member, location and nature of the situation.” Members may not always follow protocol, and if they don’t, the IC would be remiss to provide reassurance before he was certain of who he was reassuring. In a LUNAR report, the U is for Unit and the N is for names. Only the location and what happened (L) comes before that information. Determining the major source of the problem is a different action than determining location and what happened, and does not precede the names and units. For example, what happened was provided in the question, that the crew was disoriented and lost in the gym. It does not follow that crew disorientation, or that they don’t have the faculties to find their way around the gym, is the major source of the problem. The major source of the problem is not the same as the location and what happened, and thus, the keyed response is correct.

Question 46 indicated that Engine 4 is traveling down Kline Avenue from the east to the west. Engine 1 is traveling down Kline Avenue from west to east. Both engines will arrive on scene at approximately the same time. It asked for the **BEST** method to lay supply lines to the fireground from the hydrant, and the keyed response was option a, Engine 4 perform a forward hose lay. Weisman selected option d, Engine 1 perform a reverse hose lay. In support, Weisman states that *NJ Fundamentals* states on pages 525 - 527 that a reverse lay can be used if additional companies will arrive quickly, and the attack engine can use water from an onboard tank while the supply engine drives to the hydrant. Weisman states that both engines have arrived at the same time, and having the engines work together expedites the water supply. He states that a reverse lay would allow an attack

pumper to begin fire suppression with a supply line to the hydrant and a relay pumper at the hydrant.

In reply, this question asked for the best method to lay supply lines to the fireground from the hydrant. Pages 525-527 of *NJ Fundamentals* state that a reverse lay is used when the attack engine arrives at a fire scene without a supply line, and it is a standard tactic with sufficient hydrants and when additional companies will arrive quickly. Page 523 of *NJ Fundamentals* states, "The forward hose lay is most often used by the first arriving engine company at the scene of a fire. This allows the engine company to establish a water supply without assistance from another company." There is no indication in the question that Engine 1 is without a supply line. Engine 4 is traveling from the hydrant to the fire, so it is most logical for it to lay a forward hose lay on its way to the fire building. It is also faster and more opportune. The engine should never pass up the opportunity to establish a water supply, and if they pass a hydrant they should hook up to it. The hydrant is no more than 250 feet from the house, so there should be little friction loss and no need for a relay pumper. Accordingly, the keyed response will not be changed.

Question 49 indicated that a second 1¾-inch hoseline is stretched. After a few minutes, the candidate notices that one crew member is easily controlling the hoseline. The question asked what is wrong with this situation, and the keyed response was option d, the water flow is insufficient. Weisman selected option a, the nozzle pressure is sufficient. In support, Weisman states that page 553 of *NJ Fundamentals* states that a firefighter could easily handle a 1¾-inch hoseline when water flow is sufficient, and that a 2½-inch line requires two firefighters. He argues that pressure is independent from flow, and you can have correct pressure with inadequate flow, or that automatic-adjusting nozzles can create the correct pressure even when the flow is affected.

In reply, in reference to a 1¾ handline, page 553 of *NJ Fundamentals* states, "Handlines of this size can usually be operated by one firefighter, although a second person on the line makes it much easier to advance and control the hose." The question stated that one crew member is easily controlling the hoseline. *Tactics* states on page 87 that "As a rule of thumb, if one person can control a 1¾- or 2-in. handline, the line isn't delivering its designed flow. It should be *work* to control an attack line. If it isn't, something is wrong." Additionally, sufficient nozzle pressure is not a problem and option a is clearly incorrect. The keyed response is correct.

Question 50 stated that a crew member has partially collapsed from dehydration. It asked what should be done immediately, and the keyed response was double keyed to option a, begin passive cooling, and option b, begin active cooling. Weisman selected option c, provide cold liquids. In support, Weisman states that *NJ Fundamentals* states on page 646 that it is important to prevent

dehydration and correct any fluid imbalance. Weisman argues that only fluid replenishment will work.

In reply, *NJ Fundamentals* states on pages 652 and 653 that, “In addition, drinks that are too cold or too hot may be difficult to consume and may prevent the fire fighter from ingesting enough liquids.” Option c is incorrect as cold liquids should not be provided, and therefore, it is not the best response.

Question 53 indicated that members of the overhaul team find the couches in the living room to be charred from the fire. That question asked what should be done **FIRST** to ensure the fire has been put out, and the keyed response was option b, your team should remove the couch and place it outside. DiGuilio selected option c, your team should hose the couches down. In support, he states that page 184 of *Tactics* indicates that, “Objects that are charred will have to be doused with water and then opened up,” “Items such as mattresses and couches should usually be moved outdoors for overhauling,” and “The items should be wet thoroughly and all visible flame extinguished. ... These materials frequently burst into flames as they reach the door or window and hit fresh air.” He argues that the couch was on fire as it was charred, and therefore should be doused with water before being taken outside by members in full PPE.

In reply, the question asked what should be done **FIRST** to ensure the fire has been put out. Hosing a couch down before placing it outside was a suggestion in *Tactics* if the fire was localized to a mattress or couch. This fire was not localized to a couch, but was in the entire living room. Also, on page 196, after the statement, “Items such as mattresses and couches should usually be moved outdoors for overhauling,” *Tactics* goes on to say, “This eliminates a large source of smoke from the fire area and safeguards the premises from reignition if the job isn’t as thorough as it should be. It is a very difficult to ensure complete extinguishment in mattresses and stuffed furniture. Fire burrows deep within and, often without even a wisp of smoke showing, can remain hidden for hours, only to break out later. It takes a lot of opening up and a good deal of water to make sure that the fire has been completely extinguished.” The couch was charred, was not currently on fire and was currently not smoldering. Before “a good deal of water” is hosed on the couch, it should be carried outside. The keyed response is the best response.

Question 56 asked what must be done **FIRST** upon arrival, and the keyed response was option b, perform a 360-degree walk-around. Weisman selected option a, establish a secure working area. In support, Weisman argues that you establish a secure working area first by positioning an emergency vehicle to direct on-coming traffic away from the scene. Weisman states that page 814 of *NJ Fundamentals* provides information about where to place the emergency vehicles, and that pages 815 and 816 indicate that positioning the emergency vehicle to protect the crash scene is synonymous and interchangeable with establishing a secure working area,

and repeating it in step four does not change the fact that establishing a secure working area was already done in step one. He argues that *NJ Fundamentals* indicates “safety first,” and the scene should be safe before the IC performs a 360-degree walk-around.

In reply, the candidate is the first level supervisor of the first arriving unit, Ladder 2, which is equipped with extrication tools. Engines 4 and 5 are delayed by traffic by five minutes. According to pages 815 and 816 of *NJ Fundamentals*, “The incident commander (IC) will usually perform a size-up of the scene by conducting a 360-degree walk-around of the scene.” The Skill Drill on pages 815 and 816 indicate that positioning emergency vehicles to protect the crash scene is the first step, but that was not an option. Performing a quick assessment was the next step, also not an option, and the key was the third step. Establishing a secure working area and an equipment staging area is the fifth step. Perform a 360-degree walk-around is done before establishing a secure working area. This is a clearly laid out process that give an order of operations for the crew, and steps one and five are different. The keyed response is correct.

Question 59 indicated that the driver’s door of the sedan is mildly damaged, the other doors are all locked, and the windows are not open, but you need to reach the adult victim immediately. It asked which window to instruct the crew to break, and the keyed response was option d, the driver’s window. Weisman selected option a, the front passenger’s window. In support, Weisman states that page 824 of *NJ Fundamentals* states that, “If you must break a window to unlock a door or gain access, cover the victim and try to break a window that is away from the victim. If the victim’s condition warrants your immediate entry, however, do not hesitate to break the closest window.” Weisman states that there were no exigent circumstances warranting quick access, so the priority is the one away from the victims.

In reply, page 824 of *NJ Fundamentals* goes on to say that, “Small pieces of tempered glass do not usually pose a danger to victims trapped in cars.” In this case, the adult victim is unresponsive, and the question told the candidates that this person needs to be gotten to immediately. Breaking the driver’s window will give immediate access, while breaking the passenger window will make the extrication longer. The keyed response is the best response.

Question 71 asked for the **BIGGEST** concern regarding vinyl siding, and the keyed response was option c, the siding will melt from the heat. Weisman selected option a, the siding will produce thick, black smoke. In support, Weisman states that page 173 of *NJ Fundamentals* states that plastics may produce quantities of heavy, dense, dark smoke, and that thermoplastic materials may spread a fire. Weisman argues that smoke will occur more often than melting and should be the

greater concern. He states that vinyl siding is a plastic, and you cannot know if it is thermoplastic or thermoset.

In reply, vinyl siding is a plastic made of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), which is considered to be thermoplastic. The question indicated that the residence had vinyl siding, but did not refer to any insulation. Burning vinyl siding does not cause thick, black smoke. Rather it deforms, droops, burns and drips. The question asked for the **BIGGEST** concern, and the appellant has not indicated how thick, black smoke is a bigger concern than siding that would melt and potentially fall onto crew members.

CONCLUSION

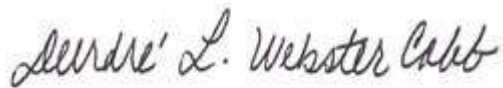
A thorough review of the record indicates that the determinations of the Division of Test Development and Analytics were proper and consistent with Civil Service Commission regulations, and the appellants have not met their burden of proof in these matters.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that these appeals 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 12TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2022



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