



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Phillip Corsillo, Fire
Officer 1 (PM2389C), Jersey City

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

CSC Docket No. 2023-2268

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: July 24, 2024 (ABR)

Phillip Corsillo appeals his score on the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Officer 1 (PM2389C), Jersey City. It is noted that the appellant failed the subject examination.

This two-part examination consisted of a written multiple-choice portion and an oral portion. Candidates were required to pass the written portion of the examination, and then were ranked on their performance on both portions of the examination. The test was worth 80 percent of the final score and seniority was worth the remaining 20 percent. Of the test weights, 35.90% of the score was the written multiple-choice portion, 22.04% was the technical score for the evolving exercise, 7.45% was the supervision score for the evolving exercise, 5.71% was the oral communication score for the evolving exercise, 23.20% was the technical score for the arriving exercise, 5.71% was the oral communication score for the arriving exercise.

The oral portion of the Fire Officer 1 examination consisted of two scenarios: a fire scene simulation with questions designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of fire fighters and the ability to assess fire conditions and hazards in an evolving incident on the fireground (Evolving Scenario); and a fire scene simulation designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of firefighters and the ability to plan strategies and tactics based upon a building's structure and condition (Arriving Scenario). Knowledge of supervision was measured

by a question in the Evolving Scenario, and was scored for that scenario. For the Evolving Scenario, candidates were provided with a 15-minute preparation period, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond. For the Arriving Scenario, a five-minute preparation period was given, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond.

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. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process.

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.

On the Evolving Scenario, the appellant scored a 4 for the technical component, a 1 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. On the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 2 for the technical component and a 5 for the oral communication component.

The appellant appeals his score on the supervision component of the Evolving Scenario and the technical component of the Arriving Scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenario were reviewed.

The supervision component of the Evolving Scenario involves a "check oil" indicator light coming on during the return from a call, a discovery that the engine's oil is extremely low, and a revelation that the firefighter in charge of the engine's maintenance hasn't recorded doing maintenance checks in two weeks. It then asks what actions the candidate should take. The assessor found that the appellant failed to identify a significant number of PCAs, including, in relevant part, the opportunities to notify the shift commander, monitor the firefighter's future progress, document all actions taken and inform the firefighter of his right to union representation. On appeal, the appellant contends that he covered the PCA of notifying the shift commander by noting that all written reports and documents would be forwarded up the chain of command. He argues that he addressed the PCA of monitoring the firefighter's future progress by stating during a meeting he would come up with a plan to monitor future progress and setting up a plan to monitor his progress and to train him for three weeks. As to documenting actions taken, the appellant presents that he stated that at the conclusion of his meeting and training

program that all documents would be forwarded up the chain of command. Finally, as to informing the firefighter about the right to union representation, the appellant presents that he, the firefighter in question and his proper union representation would be involved in the meeting.

CONCLUSION

In reply, upon review of the appellant's appeal, the Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA) advises that the appellant's statements during his presentation were not specifically sufficient to cover the PCAs of notifying the shift commander or documenting any actions taken, because he merely indicated that completed reports would be sent up the chain of command, rather than specifically stating he would notify the shift commander or document all actions taken. In addition, TDAA submits that the appellant's statements were insufficient to award him credit for the PCA of advising the firefighter of his right to union representation because the appellant did not specifically advise the firefighter of his right to union representation or inform the firefighter that the matter was serious enough to involve the union. Further, TDAA maintains that it would not be appropriate to have the firefighter unaware of union involvement before walking into the meeting, as the appellant indicated he would do here. Nevertheless, TDAA indicates that other statements from the appellant demonstrate that he should have been credited with three additional PCAs. Specifically, TDAA presents that the appellant should have been credited with reviewing the firefighter's personnel/training file, providing firefighter training about proper maintenance procedures and monitoring the firefighter's future progress. The Civil Service Commission (Commission) agrees with TDAA's assessment. Based upon these changes, the appellant's score on the supervision component of the Evolving Scenario shall be raised from 1 to 2.

With regard to the technical component of the Arriving Scenario, the Arriving Scenario involved a report of a fire in a storage unit in a storage facility where the candidate will be the incident commander throughout the incident and will establish command. The question asks what the candidate's concerns are when sizing up this incident and what specific actions the candidate should take to fully address this incident. The SME awarded the appellant a score of 2, based upon findings that that the appellant failed to perform the mandatory actions of securing a water supply and ordering a hoseline stretched to extinguish a fire in the involved unit and that he failed to identify a number of additional PCAs, including the opportunity to indicate that Engine 6 would be delayed. On appeal, the appellant argues that he covered securing a water supply by stating that he would have a water supply officer respond to the incident to secure water and ensure a sufficient water supply during the entirety of the incident. Additionally, he contends that he addressed stretching a hoseline in the involved storage unit by stating that the firefighters under his command would use 2.5 inch hose lines for their reach and penetration to cool the

unprotected steel ahead of them from the flanks as they advanced to extinguish the fire. He further avers that he covered the foregoing PCA by stating that the firefighters under his command would remain in an offensive strategy. Finally, the appellant maintains that he did not explicitly mention the Engine 6 delay because “[t]he fire grounds were a rapidly evolving area, and it was not prudent to tie up valuable air space with a message that [he] already received, understood, and was accounting for in his command.”

In reply, upon review of the appellant’s appeal, TDAA indicates that the appellant should have been credited with the mandatory response of ordering a hoseline stretched to extinguish the fire in the involved unit. However, TDAA also proffers that a review of the appellant’s presentation reveals that he was erroneously credited with identifying the additional PCAs of setting up a command post and giving progress reports to dispatch. Further, TDAA submits that the appellant’s arguments regarding the PCA of acknowledging that Engine 6 is delayed are without merit, as the question specifically asks what the concerns are when sizing up the incident and the delay to Engine 6 would clearly be a concern at that time. Moreover, TDAA states that based upon these changes, the appellant’s score on the subject scenario should be raised from 2 to 3, pursuant to the “flex rule.”¹ The Commission agrees with TDAA’s assessment and scoring change for the subject scenario.

Finally, TDAA advises that with the foregoing scoring changes the appellant has achieved a passing score on the subject examination. Accordingly, the appellant’s name shall be added to the subject eligible list with retroactive effect.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted in part and that the appellant’s score for the supervision component of the Evolving Scenario be raised from 1 to 2 and that the appellant’s score on the technical component of the Arriving Scenario be raised from 2 to 3. It is further ordered that, since the appellant passed the subject examination based upon the foregoing scoring changes, that the appellant’s name be added to the Fire Officer 1 (PM2389C), Jersey City eligible list with retroactive effect.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

¹ Generally, candidates must identify all mandatory responses to receive, at minimum, a score of 3. However, a score of 3 may also be achieved via the “flex rule,” where a candidate provides many additional responses, but does not give all mandatory responses. However, a score higher than a 3 cannot be provided utilizing the flex rule.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 24TH DAY OF JULY, 2024

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