



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Peter Fizer, Fire  
Captain (PM2018F), Woodbridge Fire  
District No. 2

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

CSC Docket No. 2025-2060

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED: July 2, 2025 (ABR)**

Peter Fizer appeals the scoring of the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Captain (PM2018F), Woodbridge Fire District No. 2. 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 Captain 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. It is noted that candidates were told the following prior to beginning their presentations for each scenario: "In responding to the questions, be as specific as possible. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score."

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 2 on the technical component, a 1 on the Supervision component, and a 4 on the oral communication component. On the Arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 4 on the technical component and a 5 on the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his scores on the technical and Supervision components of the Evolving scenario and on the technical component of the Arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test materials, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The Evolving scenario involves a response to a reported fire at a single-story, steel-frame structure where the candidate is the first-level fire supervisor of Engine 5 and Battalion 1 is the incident commander. Beyond the parking area is an adjacent property with debris from a demolished wood-frame building that is in the process of being cleared away. Upon arrival, the candidate sees smoke emanating from the corner of the building between sides C and D. Battalion 1 establishes command and one of the employees informs them that the fire started in the kitchen. The employee also says that the automatic hood suppression system failed to activate. They are unsure if everyone has evacuated the building. Battalion 1 orders the candidate to establish a primary water supply and begin fireground operations. Question 1 asks the candidate, as the supervisor of Engine 5, to describe in detail what orders they will give their crew to complete their orders from Battalion 1. The prompt for Question 2 indicates that during fireground operations, a message over the radio advises that the debris at the adjacent property has caught fire and is growing

rapidly. It further states that Battalion 1 has ordered the candidate and the candidate's crew to control the debris fire. It then asks what immediate actions the candidate should take or ensure are taken.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 2 on the technical component of the Evolving scenario, based upon a finding that the appellant failed to identify a number of mandatory and additional responses, including, in part, instructing crews to search for victims off of hoselines, monitoring trusses and missing opportunities to ensure the hydrant was fully flushed/opened/cleared of debris. On appeal, the appellant argues that he addressed each of these items at specified points. Specifically, he presents that he covered instructing the crew to search for victims off the hoseline by stating that a search off of a search rope was conducted and by placing a hoseline between victims and fire if any victims were found. As to monitoring the truss roof, he contends that he addressed this by stating that the parapet wall would be monitored for the possibility of collapse, roof conditions and soundings, which he maintains would be the same measures taken with truss roof construction. Finally, he argues that he covered mentioning the hydrant was fully open and free of debris by stating that a water source was secured and maintains that per John Norman, Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics 103 (4th ed. 2012), "taking a hydrant" implies that one is certain that the hydrant is clear of debris, flushed, fully open and has evident positive flow.

In reply, as noted above, candidates were told the following prior to beginning their presentations for each scenario: "In responding to the questions, be as specific as possible. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score." Here, none of the actions cited by the appellant were sufficiently specific to cover the PCAs at issue. Initially, with regard to the PCA of instructing crews to search for victims off of hoselines, the appellant specifically stated that "[l]adder companies will conduct a search, a rope systematic search, marking off areas as they search through..." The Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA) notes that the appellant would not be the incident commander. Rather, he would be the first-level fire supervisor in charge of an engine company and would not have authority over a ladder company. With that in mind, TDAA submits that the appellant's engine crew should still be searching off of the line, even if the ladder company is searching off of the rope. As to the PCA of monitoring the trusses, the appellant's statement about monitoring the parapet corresponds to observing the protective barrier extending above the edge of a roof, terrace, balcony or similar structure and does not automatically convey that one would monitor the truss roof itself in this scenario. As such, TDAA advises that the appellant's statements fell short of the scoring standard for this PCA and TDAA maintains that the appellant was appropriately denied credit for this PCA. Finally, for the PCA of ensuring the hydrant was fully flushed/opened/clear of debris, the passage the appellant cites from Norman, *supra*, recalls the actions at a specific incident rather than providing a comprehensive definition of the term "taking a hydrant." Regardless, the appellant's

mere mention of opening the hydrant without specifying that he would ensure that it was fully flushed, opened and clear of debris was insufficient to award him credit for this PCA. Accordingly, based upon the foregoing, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof with respect to the technical portion of the Evolving scenario and his score of 2 is affirmed.

The Supervision component of the Evolving scenario presents that a firefighter who has been the candidate's subordinate for four months asks to speak with the candidate. The firefighter, states that he has been subjected to harassment from his fellow firefighters for the last year, which has escalated to damaging his personal property during the current shift, including defacing the firefighter's private vehicle. Question 1 then asks what specific actions the candidate should take to address the firefighter's concerns.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 1 on the Supervision component, based upon a finding that the appellant missed a number of opportunities, including, in part, reviewing the personnel/training records of involved firefighters, ensuring that the police department is notified, having the crew take any necessary re-trainings and getting a written statement from all involved parties. On appeal, the appellant argues that he addressed reviewing the personnel/training records of involved firefighters by stating that all policies and documentation would be reviewed. He further avers that he covered getting a written statement from all involved parties by stating that the entire incident would be documented and reported to the Fire Chief.

As previously stated, candidates were told the following prior to beginning their presentations for each scenario: "In responding to the questions, be as specific as possible. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score." The appellant's general statement about reviewing "all documents" fell short of the requirement that he specifically identify the need to personnel and/or training records. As to the appellant's arguments regarding the PCA of getting written statements from all involved parties, it is noted that documenting all findings and actions taken was a distinct PCA for which the appellant received credit. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof and his score of 1 on the Supervision component of the Evolving scenario is affirmed.

The Arriving scenario involves a reported fire at a one-and-one-half story single-family residence made of wood-frame construction, where the candidate will be the incident commander throughout the incident. Upon arrival, the candidate sees smoke coming from Side C of the structure and notices a vehicle in the driveway. A neighbor tells the candidate that they called emergency services when they saw the smoke but have not seen the family living at the residence leave the structure. Question 1 then asks the candidate to deliver their initial report to the camera as they would upon arrival at the incident and directs them to use proper radio protocols.

Question 2 queried what the candidate's actions, orders and requests would be to fully address this incident.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 4 on the technical component of the Arriving scenario based, in part, on a finding that the appellant missed the opportunity to mention that smoke was showing from Side C. On appeal, the appellant avers that he mentioned this PCA during a specified point during his presentation.

In reply, upon review of the appellant's appeal, it is observed that the appellant stated that there was fire at the rear C side of the residence but did not specifically mention smoke. TDAA states that because fire in the kitchen would be visible through the rear windows and sliding door of the house when the candidate performed his 360-degree size-up upon arrival, he met the spirit of the PCA. As such, TDAA recommends that the candidate be awarded credit for this PCA. Nevertheless, TDAA proffers that even with the award of credit for this PCA, his score of 4 would remain unchanged. The Commission agrees with TDAA's assessment regarding this scenario.

## **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, except as indicted above, the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

## **ORDER**

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted in part and that appropriate agency records be revised to reflect the above-noted adjustment to the appellant's scoring records for the technical component of the Arriving scenario, but that the appellant's overall score for this component remain unchanged at 4.

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 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2025



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