



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Wendell Williams,
Fire Captain (PM2009F), Roselle

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

CSC Docket No. 2025-2047

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: July 2, 2025 (ABR)

Wendell Williams appeals the scoring of the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Captain (PM2009F), Roselle. It is noted that the appellant achieved a passing score of 80.530 and ranks fifth on the subject eligible list.

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 3 on the technical component, a 5 on the Supervision component, and a 3 on the oral communication component. On the Arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 2 on the technical component and a 4 on the oral communication component.

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

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 the incident.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 2 on the technical component of the Arriving scenario based on a finding that the appellant failed to identify a number of mandatory and additional PCAs including, in part, the opportunity to mention

potential victims inside in response to Question 1 and ordering the first arriving engine company to establish a water supply in response to Question 2. On appeal, the appellant argues that he addressed these PCAs during his presentation. Specifically, with regard to the PCA of mentioning potential victims inside, the appellant presents that he stated the need for primary and secondary searches, discussed the neighbor on scene approaching and noted the presence of a car in the driveway. He further maintains with the Question 2 PCA of establishing a water supply, he established primary and secondary water supplies.

In reply, a review of the appellant's test materials, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenario confirms that the appellant was correctly denied credit for the Question 1 PCA of mentioning potential victims inside. As noted above, candidates were instructed "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." While the appellant is correct that he ordered a primary search, this was a mandatory response to Question 2 that was distinct from the Question 1 PCA of informing dispatch that there were potential victims inside of the involved building. A review of his presentation confirms that he failed to specifically inform dispatch about the potential victims, as required. However, upon review of the appellant's appeal, the Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA) has determined that the appellant should have been credited with the Question 2 PCA of establishing a water supply. Accordingly, based upon the foregoing, TDAA advises that the appellant's score of 2 should be raised to 4. The Civil Service Commission agrees with TDAA's assessment on appeal.

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 the appellant's score on the technical component of the Arriving Scenario be raised from 2 to 4 with retroactive effect.

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 2ND DAY OF JULY, 2025



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