

questions in both scenarios, and was scored for each. 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.

For the evolving scenario, the appellant scored a 1 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 3 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the technical components of both scenarios. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The evolving scenario involved a report of fire in the basement of a 1½ story, wood frame residence. Two residents were in the cellar when the fire started, and a woman believes her husband and son are still there. As the commander of the first arriving engine, the candidate was ordered to establish a primary water supply upon arrival and attack the fire. Ladder 3 will conduct a primary search, and engine 6 will establish a secondary water supply. Question 1 asked candidates to describe in detail the orders they would give to their crew to complete this assignment. Question 2 indicated that the candidate and his crew were attacking the seat of the fire when they found a resident lying unresponsive on the floor by the couch, and this question asked for specific actions that should be taken now.

The assessor indicated that the appellant failed to charge the hose line before going down the stairs, and failed to check floors and stairs for stability, which were mandatory responses to question 1. It was also noted that he failed to protect Ladder 3 while removing the victim, which was a mandatory response to question 2.

The assessor also indicated that the appellant missed the opportunity to leave room for the truck, which was an additional response to question 1. On appeal, the appellant indicates that he had his engine pull past the house. He also states that he placed the hose team between the fire and the victim.

In reply, a review of the appellant's presentation indicates that he said he would do a size-up when he got on scene, and then he acknowledged his orders with a face to face meeting with the Incident Commander (IC). He checked in with "accountability" to let him know where his crew was going, established a water supply, donned SCBAs and pulled an 1¾ hoseline and found the basement door. Prior to taking these actions, he did not leave room for the truck, nor did he state that he would pull past the house as he indicated on appeal. Once in the door, he found the basement stairs, pulled a backup line to protect egresses and stairwells, and went down the stairs to find the victim. He did not state that he would charge the hose line before going down the stairs, and check floors and stairs for stability before doing so, which were mandatory responses.

In response to question 2, he stated, "I would advise the first crew to try to protect the victim and have the hose line placement in between the fire and the victim. I would have my backup crew at the top of the stairs ah come down the stairs to assist in the victim removal and also um do, have a search, um possibly there was, the son was in the basement as well." His hose placement was to protect the victim, but he does not mention that it was used to protect the crew moving the victim. Nevertheless, the appellant did not properly respond to question 2, as he did not inform the ladder company of the victim's location. A search was the responsibility of Ladder 3, and victim removal would be their responsibility as well. Later on, after responding to question 3, the appellant indicated that Ladder 3 would assist with victim removal, but he did not state that he would protect them with a hoseline. The appellant left the stairwell, the only means of egress, unprotected in order to have his crew remove the victim. The appellant missed three mandatory responses, and his score of 1 for this component is correct.

The arriving scenario involved a single-vehicle collision where the driver hit an electrical pole, went through a fence, and had a lamppost head-on and a lot. Two wires have broken off an electrical pole, and arcs and sparks along the ground by the driver's side door and behind the car can be seen. A child is screaming in the back seat, the driver looks dazed and is holding her head, and she has unbuckled her seat belt and is trying to open her car door. The appellant is the IC. Question 1 asked candidates to use proper radio protocols to perform initial report upon arrival, while question 2 asked for specific actions to be taken after making this initial report.

For the technical component, the assessor noted that the appellant failed to describe the appropriate apparatus/equipment placement (for example, one pole back, on the side of the road, use cones), which was a mandatory response to question 2. It was also noted that he missed the opportunity to appoint a safety officer, which was an additional response to question 2. The assessor used the “flex” rule to apply a score of 3. On appeal, the appellant argues that he stated he would pull short of the scene at a safe distance, and he directed police to put up scene tape.

Regarding the flex rule, mandatory responses are responses that are requirements for a performance to be acceptable (a score of 3). Sometimes, a candidate states many additional responses but does not give a mandatory response. The flex rule was designed to assign a score of 3 to candidates who fail to give a mandatory response but who provide many additional responses. However, a score higher than a 3 cannot be provided in those cases.

At the end of every scenario and prior to the questions, instructions state, “In responding to the questions, make sure your actions directly relate to the scenario. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score.” In his presentation, the appellant stated, “I would give a radio report to dispatch giving the location of the command post, um, at the intersection of Erling and Mattas ave. Um, I want to be upwind uphill um, I will tell my engine operator to pull short due to the electrical hazards, and notify any un ah, incoming units of the hazards of the downed electrical lines.” In this passage, the appellant established command post at the intersection of Erling and Mattas Avenues. He misspoke both street names, which were Ewing Street and Matthias Avenue. Also, that location is right at the hydrant, and an acceptable location would be on Ewing Street. Further, he notified incoming units of the hazards of the downed electrical lines, which was an additional mandatory response for which the appellant received credit. However, he did not indicate appropriate apparatus or equipment placement, and having his own apparatus pull short does not ensure that other apparatus or equipment is properly placed. The appellant called for police for traffic and crowd control. The appellant stated, “Due to the ah danger of the electrical wire I would um, ah tape off the scene, um make it secure and have accountability of anyone um, around it.” The appellant did not indicate that the police would stretch the tape, as stated in his appeal, and he did so for foot traffic. The tape could have been stretched around apparatus and equipment. The appellant missed the actions noted by the assessor. As the appellant did not provide all mandatory responses, his score of 3 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 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2019



Deirdre L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Christopher S. Myers
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Scott Loyek
Michael Johnson
Records Center