

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 3 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 2 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the technical component of the evolving scenario, and for the technical and oral communication components of the arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The evolving scenario involved involves the handling of salvage and overhaul in the basement and garage of a single-family home after the fire was knocked down. For the technical component, the assessor assigned a score of 3, and noted that the candidate missed the opportunities to secure the garage doors in the open position, in question 1, and to direct the crew to go beyond the collapse zone, in question 2. On appeal, the appellant states that he directed his crew to evacuate the structure, and instructed all chauffeurs to blast the air horns to get all firefighters out of the collapse zone.

A review of the file indicates that the appellant received credit for evacuating the crew from the basement, and to account for the whole crew, which were mandatory responses to question 2. However, the appellant did not state that he would direct the crew to go beyond the collapse zone. 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 notify the, the IC, to evacuate the building, to have dispatch tone evacuation tones, over the radios, and have all chauffeurs ah, blast a long, long horn. I would conduct a PAR of all my members, make sure we’re all still intact, and that we ah, and that we ah, (pause) as a transition, we need to change our tactics to a ah, more a defensive approach and have everyone evacuate out of the building.” The appellant clearly did not blast the air horns to get all firefighters out of the collapse zone as stated in his appeal. Sounding air horns is normally done to evacuate a building, and in his presentation, the appellant did not add that he was doing so to get members out of the collapse zone. Credit cannot be given for information that is implied or assumed. The appellant missed this action and the other action listed by the assessor, and his score of 3 for the technical component is correct.

The arriving scenario involved a fire in building of a mixed occupancy of ordinary construction. Smoke is pouring out of second floor windows, and the owner of the accounting business is not sure if all the customers got out. An adult man is leaning out of an open window. For the technical component, the assessor indicated that the appellant failed to announce that there was a possible/confirmed victim inside, which was a mandatory response to question 1. He also indicated that he missed the opportunities to announce smoke showing, which was another response for question 1, and to make entry through side C, which was another response for question 2. On appeal, the appellant stated that he had a ladder company rescue and remove victims and turn them over to EMS for triage, treatment and transport.

In reply, question 1 asked for an initial report to be given upon arrival at the incident, and candidates were instructed to use proper radio protocols. At no time did the appellant state that there was a victim on side A hanging out of the window on the second floor. In responding to question 1, the appellant established command, called for resources, and indicated he was going in an offensive attack. The appellant then gave initial actions, mixed with size-up factors. In effect, the appellant did not properly respond to question 1. He did not give an initial report upon arrival at the incident using proper radio protocols, and he cannot receive credit in question 1 for actions taken in question 2. The appellant missed this mandatory response as he did not properly respond to question 1, and he did not provide enough additional actions to warrant a higher score. His score of 2 is correct.

As to oral communication, the assessor noted that the appellant had a distracting mannerism of clicking a pen in his right hand during the presentation. The appellant argues that he did not repeatedly click it in a nervous manner, but used

the pen to point towards his notes and then clicked it to stow it as he responded to the questions.

In reply, a factor in oral communication is nonverbal communication. A weakness in this factor is defined as failing to use gestures effectively, thereby causing confusion or distractions, and failing to maintain eye contact with the camera when speaking. The orientation guide that was available to each candidate indicated that oral communication, the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, was a component of this portion of the exam. Further, it is noted that test conditions were standardized in their application to all candidates, i.e., nonverbal communication was assessed for all candidates.

Throughout the arriving scenario, the appellant held a pen in his right hand. He read from his notes, which were on the table in front of him, and kept his pen in his hand, pointing to his notes each time he started another action. He waved it around and pointed with it while presenting topics. The pen had no use during the presentation, as writing was not involved in giving responses. At some point, he started to click the pen repeatedly with his forefinger while speaking. With the hand waving, the listener was sidetracked from the information being presented and it was difficult not to watch the hands rather than the presenter. The appellant did not put the pen down during his presentation, but used it as a pointer for his notes or fiddled with it throughout the presentation. This was a behavior that detracted from his presentation and his score will not be changed.

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



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