



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Deon Bascom, Fire  
Lieutenant (PM2366C), Irvington

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

CSC Docket No. 2023-2314

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED: August 14, 2024 (ABR)**

Deon Bascom appeals his score on the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Lieutenant (PM2366C), Irvington. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a score of 80.210 and ranks 12<sup>th</sup> on the 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 Lieutenant 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 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 3 for the oral communication component. On the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 4 for the technical component and a 5 for the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical components of the Evolving and Arriving Scenarios. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The Evolving Scenario involves a fire at a music store. Upon arrival of the candidate's crew, the incident commander reports that the fire was knocked down and orders the candidate's crew to begin salvage and overhaul in the music store as other crews conduct secondary searches. Question 1 then asks what the candidate's initial actions will be and to describe, in detail, how they and their crew will conduct salvage and overhaul operations at this incident. Question 1 further directs candidates to include descriptions of techniques, firefighter safety concerns, and any coordination with other fire personnel. The prompt for Question 2 states that when conducting overhaul operations in the music store, the candidate and their crew discover a severely compromised structural member with the potential for collapse. Question 2 then asks what actions the candidate should take now.

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 2 for the technical component of the Evolving Scenario, finding that the appellant failed to identify multiple mandatory responses, including, in part, ensuring that a hoseline was stretched to extinguish hotspots in coordination with the engine company and the opportunity to implement methods to protect property. On appeal, the appellant maintains that he addressed the subject responses at specified points during his presentation.

In reply, the statement the appellant points to regarding hotspots was insufficient to award him credit for the mandatory response of ensuring that a hoseline was stretched to extinguish hotspots in coordination with the engine company. The appellant discussed looking for hotspots during the portion of the presentation he cites, but did not mention stretching a hoseline to extinguish them. 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.” As such, the appellant’s general statement about hotspots was properly deemed insufficient to award him credit for the mandatory response at issue. Further, even assuming, *arguendo*, that the appellant should have received credit for the additional response of implementing methods to protect property, because the appellant missed multiple mandatory responses, award of credit for this PCA would not change his score of 2 for the technical component of this scenario. Accordingly, the appellant’s score of 2 for the technical component of the Evolving Scenario is affirmed.

The Arriving Scenario involves a response to a single motor vehicle accident on an Interstate Highway where the candidate is the first-level supervisor of the first arriving incident and will be the incident commander and establish command. The prompt further indicates that the vehicle has smashed into the beginning of a metal guard rail head-on and that a fire has started under the hood. The prompt then asks the candidate what action they will take to fully address the incident.’

The SME awarded the appellant a score of 4, based on a determination that the appellant missed several additional PCAs, including the opportunity to identify the vehicle type. On appeal, the appellant observes that the scenario did not indicate the vehicle type. However, he notes that he requested hazmat at a specified point during his response.

In reply, candidates were not expected to state definitively that the car was, for example, a hybrid vehicle. Rather they were expected to articulate the general need to identify the vehicle type because the type of vehicle would dictate the resources and protocols required to extinguish the fire. In this regard, it is noted that International Association of Fire Chiefs and National Fire Protection, *Fundamentals*

of *Fire Fighter Skills and Hazardous Materials Response 679* (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2019) states, in relevant part, that:

Following a [motor vehicle accident] or fire, [alternative-fuel] vehicles present hazards that are not encountered in incidents involving conventional vehicles. It is important for rescuers to recognize the hazards these vehicles pose both to rescuers and to victims and to be familiar with the additional steps needed to mitigate these hazards.

It further states that “[i]t will take more water and a longer period of time to extinguish [electric drive vehicle] fires. Apply water even after the flames are no longer visible; this is necessary to continue to cool the batteries. Batteries can reheat and ignite for a long period of time after the flames are extinguished.” *Id.* at 681. Thus, it was reasonable to require candidates to identify the need to ascertain the type of vehicle when responding to the incident. Further, calling for a hazmat unit was improper here, as the mere fact that the candidate did not know the vehicle type at the outset did not, in and of itself, dictate that it was necessary to call for hazmat and the fact pattern does not suggest that conditions requiring a hazmat unit, such as a fuel leak, are present at the scene in question. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof and his Arriving Scenario technical component score of 4 is affirmed.

## CONCLUSION

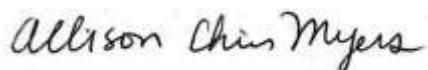
A thorough review of the appellant’s submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

## 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 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2024



---

Allison Chris Myers  
Chairperson  
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries  
and  
Correspondence

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

c: Deon Bascom  
Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration  
Division of Administrative and Employee Services  
Records Center