



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Christian Larmony,
Fire Lieutenant (PM2366C),
Irvington

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

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2023-2597

ISSUED: August 14, 2024 (ABR)

Christian Larmony 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 77.020 and ranks 17th 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 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.

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 4 on the supervision component, and a 3 on the oral communication component. For the Arriving Scenario, the appellant scored a 2 on the technical component and a 3 on 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 operations 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 on the technical component of the Evolving Scenario, finding that the appellant failed to identify multiple mandatory

responses, including, in part, accounting for the whole crew/answers to the PAR from the incident commander, plus a number of additional opportunities, including evacuating the crew. On appeal, the appellant argues that he covered these PCAs at specified points during his presentation. In particular, he points to a request to the incident commander to have his crew exit the structure and relocate outside the building for the purpose of rest, rehabilitation and rehydration as evidence that he should have been credited with the PCA of evacuating his crew in response to Question 2. Similarly, he points to his checking in with the Accountability Officer as evidence that he accounted for his crew in response to Question 2.

In reply, a review of the appellant's presentation confirms the SMEs findings for the Evolving Scenario. The appellant did not order the evacuation of his crew during the portion of his response addressing Question 2. The appellant gave a mayday message and a LUNAR report during the very brief segment of his response where he specifically addressed Question 2. His statement about rest, rehabilitation and rehydration came in response to Question 1 and was clearly for the purpose of rehabilitating his crew, rather than an urgent evacuation following the discovery of the severely compromised structural member presented in Question 2. Similarly, the appellant's statement about checking in with the Accountability Officer was an action he presented during his response to Question 1 and was a distinct action from the Question 2 mandatory response of accounting for the whole crew/answering to the PAR from the incident commander in the aftermath of the discovery of the aforementioned structural issue. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof and his Evolving Scenario technical component score of 2 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 2 on the technical component of the Arriving Scenario, based upon a finding that he failed to identify a mandatory response, plus a number of additional opportunities, including, in part, identifying the vehicle type (gas, electric vehicle, hybrid, etc.). On appeal, the appellant observes that the scenario did not indicate the vehicle type.

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 (4th 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. Accordingly, the appellant has failed to sustain his burden of proof and his score of 2 on the technical component of the Arriving Scenario is affirmed.

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 14TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2024



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